

# Unwilling Moderns

On the Nazarene artists of  
the early nineteenth century



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## **Unwilling Moderns: On the Nazarene Artists of the Early Nineteenth Century**

Widely acclaimed in their own time, the so-called “Nazarene” artists of early nineteenth century Germany are virtually unknown to the museum-going public in most Western countries today. Even among art historians only a few are likely to have much familiarity with them or their work. A pioneering monograph in English by Keith Andrews, a curator at the National Gallery of Scotland (*The Nazarenes*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), cannot be said to have substantially changed this situation and has been allowed to go out of print. The first question to be addressed in any reconsideration of the Nazarenes is therefore historiographical: How did they fall into almost total oblivion outside their native land? Most judgments of their work by those who do know it are, in addition, ambiguous at best. That of a French art historian writing in 1900 -- “pastiches partiels et oeuvres de bonne foi”<sup>1</sup> -- is fairly characteristic. A further necessary step must therefore be to reconstruct the situation to which the Nazarenes were responding and the choices they faced. In order to look at them fairly, we have to try to understand what they hoped to achieve in their art and what they set themselves against. Finally, we need to approach their work esthetically, through open, unbiased interpretation and judgment of individual works of art.

### I

After achieving celebrity in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the Nazarenes were already falling into disfavor in Germany by the early 1840s. Jacob Burckhardt, for one, judged them severely. Like Goethe before him, he disliked what he saw as their subordination of the visual to the conceptual, especially their placing of art in the service of religion, their cult of the Italian so-called “primitives” and of German and Netherlandish art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and their rejection of the direction in which painting had evolved since Raphael. The Nazarenes and their principal advocates, notably Friedrich Schlegel, denounced the great Venetian colorists as marking the first step in a progressive degradation of art in modern times, whereas Burckhardt deeply admired the Venetians’ “Existenzbilder” (as he called them) for their sensuous celebration, even in painting on ostensibly religious themes, of the beauty of worldly existence and for the contribution this represented, in his view, to the emancipation of both humanity and art.<sup>2</sup> In the early 1840s Burckhardt was still young and enthusiastic enough to have been put out, in addition, by the

Nazarenes' turning their backs on the dynamic processes of history. Their relative distance from the optimistic progressivism of their own tumultuous time was expressed artistically in the still symmetry of their compositions, the flatness of their paint application, and, more generally, their resolve to break with the artistic tradition of the Baroque and the Rococo and seek inspiration instead in the art of the early Renaissance (Michelangelo and the young Raphael on the one



Fig.1

hand, Dürer on the other) and in the Italian “primitives” -- albeit their actual debt to the latter was far less than their frequently professed admiration for their simplicity and authenticity might lead one to expect. In practical terms, their critical distance from the passions of their time was reflected in their decision, at the height of the political and social upheavals of the Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, to leave Germany for Rome -- “eternal” and universal despite (or because of) its loss of worldly power. Their support of German nationhood, though sincere, had a distinctly anachronistic flavor and was, in any case, embraced more fervently by some than by others.<sup>3</sup> To Burckhardt, as to many in the *Vormärz* period -- among them, Burckhardt's teacher and friend, the Berlin art historian Franz Kugler, and his future colleague at Zurich, Friedrich Theodor Vischer -- the Nazarenes' work (fig.1) compared unfavorably with the lively and patriotic history paintings of the Belgian Romantic school, which created a sensation on being exhibited in Germany in 1842<sup>4</sup>. (Fig. 2, P. 1\*) In particular, Burckhardt claimed, the Nazarenes' paintings, drawings, and frescoes on themes from Classical and old German history and legend, notably those being produced for Ludwig I of Bavaria by Peter Cornelius and Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, were pedantic and bookish. (P. 2, P. 3)

Even later detractors of the Nazarenes were nonplussed by the enthusiasm the Belgian Romantics aroused in Germany in the 1840s. Richard Muther, for instance, a judicious and responsible art historian writing at the end of the nineteenth century, who favored modern French art, found little of value in the the works of Louis Gallait and Edmond Bièfve, whom Burckhardt had praised unreservedly, and deplored their influence on German painting. The “unsophisticated and



Fig. 2

\* P denotes accompanying *Portfolio* plate

unpretentious works“ being turned out by native German artists at the time were at least as good as the work of the Belgians, he declared, and “in any event reflected intentions far superior to the overworked, pasty trivialities produced later under Belgian influence.” The Belgians’ vaunted painterly technique, he argued, in no way merited the praise heaped upon it.<sup>5</sup>

It is not easy to form an independent opinion in the matter, since the Nazarenes are, to say the least, poorly represented in our great public collections, and one must either travel to Germany to see them or content oneself with reproductions in books and exhibition catalogues. In fact, the virtual absence of paintings and drawings by the Nazarenes from public collections in the United States, Great Britain, and France, the almost total dearth of any courses about them or, for that matter, about nineteenth century German art in general, in our college and university art history programs, and the resulting general public ignorance of this body of work constitute in themselves a curious problem of historiography as well as esthetics. One would like to know why the Nazarenes are unrepresented in our major collections, not taught in our art history courses, to all intents and purposes absent, until quite recently (around the 1970s), from most general histories of art in English and French, and discussed only fleetingly (and usually dismissively) in the few histories where their existence is acknowledged. (See Appendix A) Were Burckhardt and Kugler, Heine and Friedrich Theodor Vischer right, in the end, when they spurned them as insipid and uninspired?

The question is the more puzzling as, in their time, these now almost forgotten painters enjoyed a European reputation.<sup>6</sup> From about 1830 on, they were much admired in France. Ingres himself frequented them during his first stay in Rome (1806-1824), shared their keen interest in the Italian “primitives,” and yet, like them, was most influenced by Raphael. His “Jésus remettant les clés à Saint Pierre,” painted in Rome some time between 1815 and 1820 draws on a cartoon by Raphael on the same theme (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London), but also shows strong affini-



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

ties with the Nazarenes. (Fig. 3) His “Entry of the Dauphin, the future Charles V, into Paris” is said to have been influenced by Friedrich Overbeck’s “Entry of Christ into Jerusalem,” which Ingres almost certainly saw in Rome (figs. 4, 5), while his “Paolo and Francesca” may well owe something to the drawing on this theme among the Dante illustrations of Joseph Anton Koch, an artist close to the Nazarenes, which in its turn was adapted from one of John Flaxman’s illustrations for Dante’s *Inferno*. (P. 3-5) But it was among Ingres’ students and followers that the Nazarene influence was particularly strong, forming a little known link between the art of the master, who was often accused by his critics in the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century of being regressive or “gothique,” and Puvis de Chavannes toward the end.<sup>7</sup> (Figs. 6-8, P. 6, P. 7) One student of Ingres, the gifted but now forgotten Louis Janmot, acknowledged this affinity with the Nazarenes when he adopted the characteristic Nazarene garb, as represented in Overbeck’s portraits of Pforr and Cornelius, for his own self-portrait. (Figs. 9, 10)

By the mid-1830s a conscious effort was being made in France to revive the Christian inspiration of art. After a slow start, Alexis-François Rio’s *De la Poésie chrétienne* (1836), which highlighted the Christian roots of art until the late Renaissance, began to wield considerable influence.<sup>8</sup> It was about this time that in the liberal Catholic circles around Lamennais and Lacordaire the Nazarenes were adopted as models of the modern Christian artist. As early as 1832 Overbeck had been hailed as “le Pérugin ressuscité” by Lacordaire’s friend, the politician and publicist Charles-René Forbes, comte de Montalembert, who had visited the artist’s studio in Rome,<sup>9</sup> and in an open letter to Victor Hugo the following year Montalembert sang the praises of the “new German school...of painting, which, under the dual direction of Overbeck and Cornelius, shines every day more brightly.” Thanks to these artists, he declared, Germany was set to become the home of a new renaissance of art -- “la patrie de l’art régénéré, la seconde Italie de l’Europe moderne.”<sup>10</sup> Steel engravings and lithographs of works by Overbeck on religious themes continued in fact to circulate widely in France until quite late in the century.<sup>11</sup> (Fig. 11)



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

The popularity of the Nazarene artists was not confined, however, to Christian revivalist milieux, though it was probably strongest there. Heine tells of running into Victor Cousin in 1840 gazing enraptured at some Overbeck prints in a Paris gallery window.<sup>12</sup> Such was the prestige of the Nazarenes that one of Ingres' students, deploring the hostile reception of his master's work by the salon critics, claimed in 1846 that Ingres was the only artist in France "qui puisse tenir tête aux Overbeck et aux Cornelius."<sup>13</sup>



Fig. 9

Across the Channel, in the land of Constable and Turner, but also of Flaxman, Blake, and Samuel Palmer, the *Art Journal* in 1839 declared the Germans "assuredly the greatest artists of Europe." There was hardly a number of the *Art Journal*, Quentin Bell noted in his lectures on Victorian art in the mid-1960s, that did not carry some account of the life and works of the Nazarenes. Friedrich Overbeck, in particular, their spiritual leader over six decades, was described in it as "a truly great man, whose works have elevated his country."<sup>14</sup> Pugin's pronouncement in his *Contrasts* (1841) that Overbeck was "the prince of painters" doubtless reflected shared religious convictions and a shared view of the function of art.<sup>15</sup> However, the admiration of Sir Thomas Lawrence, the portrait painter, then at the peak of his European fame, is unlikely to have been motivated by any but artistic considerations.<sup>16</sup> At any rate, it is easy to document the influence of the Nazarenes on nineteenth century English artists, such as William Dyce and Charles Eastlake, the first Director of the National Gallery in London and a President of the Royal Academy (figs. 12-14, P. 8-10), as well as on various members of the future pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, notably Holman Hunt and Ford Madox Brown.<sup>17</sup>(Figs. 15, 16, P. 11-14) Dyce, Eastlake, and Hunt all sought out the Nazarenes in Rome and were personally acquainted with several of them; Brown went to Munich in 1840 hoping to study with Cornelius.<sup>18</sup> As the artist chiefly responsible, along with the architect Leo von Klenze, for executing the grandiose artistic projects by which Ludwig I of Bavaria hoped to transform his undistinguished provincial capital into a new Athens and at the same time create a sense of Bavarian and German nationality, Peter Cornelius was consulted by the British Parliamentary select committee charged with making recommendations for the decoration of Barry's newly rebuilt Houses of Parliament and may even have been sounded out about undertaking the work himself.<sup>19</sup> In Théophile Gautier's words, Cornelius "enjoyed a celebrity such as few artists enjoy in their lifetimes," being admired, as Gautier put it rather caustically in 1855, "as if he were already dead."<sup>20</sup> When Ruskin's father offered the manuscript of the first volume of *Modern Painters* to the prominent London publisher John Murray in the early 1840s, the latter is said to have turned it down with

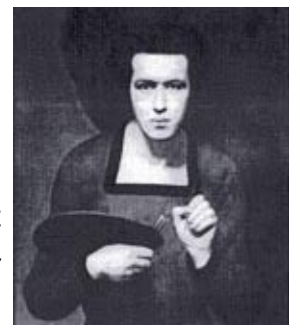


Fig. 10

the remark that he might have been more interested if Ruskin had offered him a manuscript on the Nazarenes.<sup>21</sup> The painter Adolf Naumann in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (Book II, chapter 22), from whom Will Ladislaw has been taking lessons -- one of the "long-haired German artists at Rome" -- is generally taken to be modeled on Overbeck. Like many visitors to Italy, Eliot, in 1860, had visited Overbeck's studio in Rome.<sup>22</sup>

Speaking before an Oxford audience in 1965, Quentin Bell wondered, understandably enough, "Who were these painters and why did they attract so much attention at a time when Ingres and Delacroix, Géricault, Corot and Daumier were so little regarded by Englishmen?"<sup>23</sup>

Unlike their French, British, and American counterparts, German art historians have naturally always had something to say about the Nazarenes, though in the hundred years from the mid-nineteenth until the mid-twentieth century, what they said was usually quite negative. Often their judgments appear to have resulted from ideological preferences rather than close attention to the paintings themselves. Even the National Socialist art historian Kurt Karl Eberlein, who might have been expected to promote a major national school of painters, preferred the bolder and more "virile" North German Romantics (especially Caspar David Friedrich) to the "softer," Italianate Nazarenes.<sup>24</sup> The acceptance by the latter of traditional Christian topoi from the Old and New Testaments (explicitly defended by Friedrich Schlegel, who denounced attempts to invent new myths as arbitrary and subjective<sup>25</sup>) and their return, formally, to Fra Angelico and Perugino, but above all, the young Raphael and Michelangelo -- was contrasted with the bold and original use of Christian and "old German" symbols by the Northern Protestant artists to create a new Romantic imagery and mythology and with the vigor of the Renaissance artists themselves. In general, the Nazarenes came to be seen as lacking vitality and energy -- "devoid of warmth and life," as a French critic repeated quite recently<sup>26</sup> -- qualities highly prized in all European countries in an age of rapid social change and industrialization, and not least in the Germany of the *Gründerzeit*, by liberals and conservatives alike. (See Appendix B) To many, the Nazarenes did not have the courage to be truly modern, truly of their time. Caspar David Friedrich himself had criticized them on this score as early as 1830. "The works of \*\*\* remind me of playing cards," he wrote in his journal. "Shuffled now this way, now that, the cards always remain the same. And so I recall



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

having seen all these figures many times before; even the backgrounds are familiar to me from old pictures and engravings. One picture smacks of Raphael, another of Michelangelo and the predecessors of both. Would it not be better if they all carried on their brow the stamp of their creator? But perhaps he has no stamp of his own?"<sup>27</sup>

Likewise it seemed to Heine in 1829 that Peter Cornelius was like a ghost from the age of Raphael who had risen from the dead to create a few more works -- "ein toter Schöpfer" (a dead creator), whose pictures "look out at us with eyes from the fifteenth century. The draperies are ghostly, as if rustling past us at midnight; the bodies are magically powerful, drawn with dream-like accuracy; except that they are bloodless, colorless, devoid of the pulsing of life." With Cornelius, according to Heine, it is as though his works "did not have long to live and had all been born an hour before their death."<sup>28</sup> Visiting Overbeck's studio in Rome in 1854, the historian Ferdinand Gregorovius found everything muted and lifeless, "still und tonlos...entlebte Menschen, entlebte Kunst, Rede ohne Worte, Bilder ohne Farbe" ("motionless and noiseless...human beings who have drained the life out of themselves, art that has drained the life out of itself, speech devoid of words, images devoid of color").<sup>29</sup> Still in the same vein, at the end of the century, Richard Muther, while acknowledging "a certain authenticity and sincerity of sentiment" in the work of the Nazarenes, faulted them for having "deprived their figures of blood and being, in order to lend them only the abstract beauty of line."<sup>30</sup> Finally, in the early years of the twentieth century, Burckhardt's student, Heinrich Wölfflin, distinguished between "a primitivism of the beginning" and "a primitivism of the end," marked by "the childishness of old age" and "the simplicity that comes from exhaustion." The famous frescoes of the Casa Bartholdy in Rome, usually considered a major achievement of the young Nazarenes, had none of the freshness of Spring, he declared, but were rather faded and lifeless, like sparkling water gone flat.<sup>31</sup>

The late nineteenth century in particular was the heyday of "Renaissancism," and the Nazarenes had rejected precisely those aspects of the Renaissance that the Age of Nietzsche most admired. Liberal art historians like Muther, Cornelius Gurlitt, Julius Meier-Graefe, and Karl Scheffler all subscribed -- as many art historians still do, whether consciously or not<sup>32</sup> -- to a modernist narrative that began with Vasari, was consecrated by the historical arrangement of the collections in the new art museums founded at the end of the eighteenth century, such as the Louvre in Paris or the



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Belvedere in Vienna, and finally acquired philosophical authority, thanks to Hegel, in the early nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> According to this narrative, the development of painting since Giotto was inexorably in the direction of ever greater psychological or visual realism and “painterliness,” i.e. emphasis on the qualities -- such as color, movement, light and atmospheric effects, paint texture, etc. -- that distinguish painting from sculpture and drawing.<sup>34</sup> In this “Entwicklungsgeschichte” of art, those artists who contributed to the development of “modernity” and the fulfillment of the telos of painting received high marks, those who were perceived as having obstructed or opposed it (not only the Nazarenes, but radically neoclassical artists like Asmus Carstens) got low marks. Even David came in for a good deal of criticism. His ideas were all wrong and his influence bad, it was said, and he was saved as an artist only despite himself, as it were, by his innate painterly instincts, his involvement in the momentous events of his time, and the strength of the painterly tradition in France.<sup>35</sup>

Since the 1970s such progressivist “Whig” histories have been challenged, in almost all areas of the humanities.<sup>36</sup> Correspondingly, English and French art histories have begun to recognize the existence of the Nazarenes and a few have been remarkably sympathetic.<sup>37</sup> Monographic studies have also begun to make an appearance. The pathbreaking monograph of Keith Andrews has become something of a classic in German art historical scholarship. Since the 1970s there have been exhibitions of German Romantic or nineteenth century art in New Haven, Cleveland, and Chicago (1970-71), Paris (Orangerie des Tuileries, 1976-77), New York (Metropolitan Museum, 1981; Pierpont Morgan Library, 1988), and most recently London (National Gallery, 2001) and Washington, D.C. (National Gallery, 2001).<sup>38</sup> There have even been some recent acquisitions of Nazarene paintings by public galleries in the U.K. and the U.S.A.<sup>39</sup>

Of course, it is not only the Nazarenes, it is German art of the nineteenth century as a whole that was sidelined by the enormous success of Impressionism and the canonical Paris-centered history of modern art that grew up around it-- not only in France, Great Britain, and America, but in Germany itself, as nationalist art critics complained and modern scholars acknowledge. (See Appendix C) In the process of rediscovery and rehabilitation, however, it has been chiefly those nineteenth century German artists who “speak” in some degree to our modern sensibility that have achieved modest recognition: Friedrich, startlingly but persuasively compared by Robert Rosenblum to Rothko (figs. 17, 18)<sup>40</sup>, or Menzel in whose work the critics of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* recently perceived and inevitably admired an anticipation of Impressionism.<sup>41</sup> (Fig. 19, P. 15) In fact, that was already the reading of Menzel proposed by Meier-Graefe on the occasion of the great national exhibition of “German Art 1775-1875” in Berlin in 1906,<sup>42</sup> as well as by some nationalist art historians, who apparently decided that instead of attacking Impressionism as un-German, they

would serve their ends better by demonstrating that it was actually a German “discovery” which the French had stolen, elaborated, and presented as their own!<sup>43</sup> That perverse variant of the history of modern painting accorded well with the standard nationalist view of the Germans as free, inventive, individual geniuses, unspoiled creators of *Kultur*, and of the French, in contrast, as disciplined producers of *Zivilisation*, with a particular talent for institutionalizing the insights of inspired individuals so that they could be disseminated in easily appropriated form among the abstract, uniform *Massenmenschen* of modern times.<sup>44</sup> All in all, one should not exaggerate the impact of the recent exhibitions or their success in bringing German art, let alone the art of the Nazarenes, into the general public perception of the history of art. There were no lines outside the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. for the Nineteenth Century German Art exhibition when I visited it at the end of June 2001, and I have not come across any new insights on the part of the newspaper reviewers (whose line, unsurprisingly, was to look for signs of “modernity”). Beyond Germany and Scandinavia, the average gallery-goer still knows very little, if anything at all, of Carstens, Otto Runge, Carl Blechen, Hans von Marées, Wilhelm Leibl, Max Slevogt or even Anselm Feuerbach and Lovis Corinth. The Swiss Arnold Böcklin was long the best known “German” artist of the nineteenth century, largely on account of one work, the celebrated “Isle of the Dead,” which achieved popularity through kitschy reproductions. As for the Nazarenes – Friedrich Overbeck, Franz Pforr, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, Friedrich and Ferdinand Olivier, Peter Cornelius, Philipp Veit (the step-son of Friedrich Schlegel), to mention only a few – they have still not come back into favor to this day. What they produced, according to the *New York Times* reviewer of the recent show in Washington. D.C., was “dreadful, fancy calendar art” that might at best have a certain “kooky glamor.”<sup>45</sup>

Even an experienced and reputed art historian could hardly expect to initiate a significant revival of interest or a review of such judgments. Tellingly, Andrews’ gracefully written and judicious monograph has long been out of print. Our experience as viewers of art and the way our sensibility has been shaped almost guarantees a tepid response to the Nazarenes’ conscientious, beautifully balanced, but undramatic compositions, in which movement, physical and psychological, often seems either held in suspension or highly conventionalized.<sup>46</sup> With their use of flat local colors and their refusal of all dramatic light and color effects, the Nazarenes seem almost to want to deny the materiality of the painting and to direct the viewer’s attention instead to more abstract and “spiri-

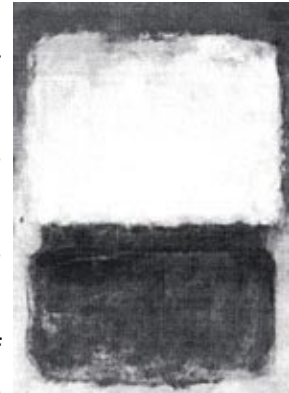


Fig. 17



Fig. 18



Fig. 19

tual” qualities like line, composition, color harmonies, and, ultimately, moral and religious meaning. This is vividly illustrated by Overbeck’s and Johann Anton Ramboux’s versions (figs. 20, 21) of the “noli me tangere” theme (the encounter of Mary Magdalen with the risen Christ) when compared with those by two of the post-Raphaelite artists whose rich painterly manner the Nazarenes consciously rejected -- Titian and Correggio.<sup>47</sup> (Figs. 22, 23) Ramboux in particular appears to have modeled his work on the Old German master Martin Schoengauer. (Fig. 24) To Franz Pforr the painter’s brushstrokes were “a necessary evil, no more than a means to an end,” and he considered it “nonsense to praise an artist’s audacity in this area or find something to brag about in it.”<sup>48</sup> Peter Cornelius, a champion of the flat colors and forms of fresco, declared that “the brush has become the ruin of [the painter’s] art. It has led from Nature to Mannerism.”<sup>49</sup>

In contrast, by the 1840s and 50s, there was already a considerable emphasis, notably with Menzel, on materiality -- both of the texture of the work itself and of what is represented in it -- and this tendency continued to gain strength in the course of the century. It is a far cry from the Nazarenes to the stimulating and exciting work of a Corinth, for example, with its intense psychological realism and bold, nervous brush strokes. In a recent study of the role of Rembrandt as a model for modern German painters, the powerful renditions of Biblical themes by Corinth and his contemporary Max Slevogt in the early twentieth century -- such as the return of the prodigal son, the capture of Samson, or the attempted seduction of Joseph by Potiphar’s wife -- are seen as close in spirit and manner to Rembrandt and are contrasted favorably with the formally elegant, more conventional versions of the same themes for a popular *Bible in Pictures* by the Nazarene artist Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld.<sup>50</sup> Where Schnorr, using conventional figures, gestures, and composition, directs the viewer’s attention to the spiritual “meaning” of the scenes, the focus of Corinth and Slevogt is on the reality of human experience. The father in Schnorr’s “Return of the Prodigal Son,” for instance (fig. 25), is clearly God the Father, not a “real” human father, as in Slevogt’s work. (Fig. 26) Similarly, Schnorr’s Joseph conforms completely to the Bible narrative; there is no sign that his virtue was ever shaken by the feminine charms of Potiphar’s wife. (Fig. 27) Corinth, in con-



Fig. 20



Fig. 21



Fig. 22



Fig. 23



Fig. 24

trast, tries to communicate the disturbing tumultuousness of the seduction scene. (Fig. 28) Schnorr -- like Philipp Veit in his fresco on the same subject at the Casa Bartholdy (fig. 30) or the Jewish painter Moritz Oppenheim, who came under the influence of the Nazarenes during a stay in Rome, in an oil painting of 1828 in the Hanau Museum, or, for that matter Philippe de Champaigne in a painting of the mid-seventeenth century attributed to him in the Princeton University Art Museum -- allows the viewer to look on the image from the safe distance, as it were, of its meaning; in contrast, Corinth and Slevogt clearly want to draw the viewer into the world of the picture. Schnorr's and Veit's images *signify* an attempted seduction but do not aim to *represent* it or *recreate* in the viewer feelings equivalent to the experience of it. In this important respect the art of the Nazarenes may now appear prim and insipid to the modern viewer.<sup>51</sup>

In addition, it should not be overlooked that Nazarene art was not intended for exhibition in museums and galleries. It was part of the program of the founders of the movement, the original *Lukasbrüder* or Brothers of St. Luke, to combat the modern transformation of art into a commodity to be enjoyed and displayed by private individuals in their homes or put up for sale in galleries. Art for them was not a de luxe product of consummate artistic technique, it was not an investment or an object of exchange to be bought and sold and transferred at will from one owner and one location to another, nor was it simply a source of pleasure. Like some of the neoclassical artists and theorists of the time -- notably Quatremère de Quincy in France, who was bold enough to attack Napoleon's policy of pillaging the churches and palaces of Europe in order to build up the Louvre into a repository of world art<sup>52</sup> -- they believed art at its best had been and should once again become part of the fabric of a community's daily life and an expression of its highest values, inseparably linked to the public building -- church, town hall, palace -- or the private purpose, such as prayer or remembrance, for which it had been commissioned. Their belief that art is inseparable from the context for which it was designed led them to initiate a revival of fresco painting. Indeed, it was the frescoes they created for the residence of the Prussian consul in Rome, Salomon Bartholdy, and for the Casino Massimo, the Roman residence of an Italian nobleman, that put them on the map of the art world. In an often quoted letter to Görres in 1814 Cornelius speculated



Fig. 25



Fig. 26



Fig. 27

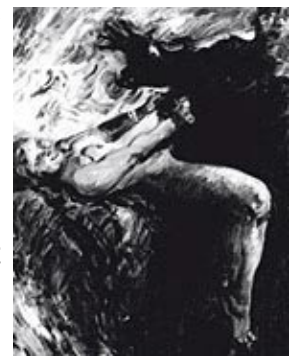


Fig. 28



Fig. 29

that through a revival of fresco painting it might be possible to restore the old (and far healthier) relation between art and the people that had obtained in the Middle Ages so that art, instead of adorning the private chambers of the well-to-do, would once again speak to the German people “from the walls of our high cathedrals, our peaceful chapels and solitary cloisters, from our town halls and warehouses and markets.”<sup>53</sup> The Nazarenes’ work is thus not “at home” in the abstract space of a gallery or museum where it must compete for the viewer’s attention with works in many different styles.

As they were not at first overwhelmed by public and ecclesiastical commissions, the Nazarenes also cultivated a quite different genre from fresco and history painting. Though they produced a relatively small number of commissioned portraits -- in line with their view of the proper function of art -- they made innumerable drawings (as well as occasional oil paintings) of and for each other, offering them to each other and to their friends as gifts. These small-scale, intimate, and unassuming works testify to a tension between the Nazarenes’ goal of restoring art to the people, their desire to create a great public art, on the one hand, and, on the other, given the elusiveness of that goal, an inclination to reconceive the public world as an ideal community of friends and artists -- a *Malerrepublik*, as the poet Friedrich Rückert put it -- of which the *Lukasbund* or Brotherhood of St. Luke, the original nucleus of the Nazarene movement, was no doubt the model.<sup>54</sup> What was common to both the “public” and the “private” art of the Nazarenes, however, was the demand for absolute authenticity of feeling in the artist and it may well be that this emphasis on inner feeling was better suited to their private than to their public art. In the view of some critics at least, their best work is to be found not in the ambitious, full-scale paintings of scenes from the Old and New Testaments for which they are (and wanted to be) best known, but in innumerable smaller, finely contoured portraits, with minimum modeling, which they drew of and for each other, group portraits of two or more friends, and pen and pencil sketches of places they liked to frequent, such as Olevano, a little town in the Alban hills just beyond Palestrina, that seem almost cubist in their stripped down essentiality.<sup>55</sup> (Figs. 30-37, P. 16-27) Like the domestic memorials or *Zimmerkenotaphe* that were popular in Germany at the turn of the century, these small-scale works have nonetheless an important feature in common with the Nazarenes’ larger, more obviously public works: they were not made to be exhibited or offered for sale at art salons and galleries.<sup>56</sup>



Fig. 30



Fig. 31



Fig. 32



Fig. 33



Fig. 34



Fig. 35

Their opposition to the appropriation of the artist's work as the private property of wealthy or powerful individuals also led the Nazarenes seemingly in the opposite direction from that just described, that is, toward the role of illustrators, purveyors of easily reproduced, relatively inexpensive *Bilderbibel* (Bibles in pictures) and religious images that could be reproduced cheaply for distribution among the people.



Fig. 36

Modern art lovers, ill-disposed to the use of art in the service of anything, be it a religion or a political cause, suspicious of popular art (except in the sophisticated, avant-garde form of "pop art"), and more likely than not to be put off by conservative Saint-Sulpice style Catholicism, tend to view these works as kitsch, and there seems not much doubt that the very success of the Nazarenes in this area aggravated the disfavor into which they fell around the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>57</sup> A similar fate befell the many nineteenth century French artists who devoted their talents to religious painting. As they are hard to accommodate within the canonical evolutionary history of art, they are simply ignored and the question of the artistic quality of their work is not even raised.<sup>58</sup> Thus one of the issues the Nazarenes force us to think about is the conditions in which we are exposed to artworks and the way we are predisposed -- by our own culture in general and by our particular artistic experience and education -- to respond more vigorously and intensely to certain styles than to others. As Charles Eastlake put it in an article in the *London Magazine* in 1820: "For simplicity, holiness and purity, qualities which are the characteristics of scriptural scenes, no style was better adapted than that of the Germans. This style has little or nothing to do with reality. It diffuses a sort of calm and sacred dream. To censure it for being destitute of colour and light and shade would be ridiculous; such merits would, in fact, destroy its character."<sup>59</sup>

I would like to show that the Nazarenes were intensely serious artists, who made highly self-conscious choices and thought a great deal about what they were doing and about what they wanted the place of art to be in the modern world. According to our still essentially developmental version of the history of European art, the path they chose proved to be a cul de sac, at best a by-road in art as it evolved throughout Europe in the course of an age that was more and more avid for new experiences and new sensations and less and less willing, until the revival of symbolism at the end of the century, to look for "spiritual meanings" "behind" them. The essential question raised by the Nazarenes is: Do they, as artists, deserve the fate they have suffered as a result of their refusal to swim with what, in retrospect, has been perceived as the tide? Were they simply "bad" or "mediocre" artists, as is quite often suggested? If not, what qualities will a sympathetic viewing allow us to discover and still respect, admire, perhaps even respond to; and what qualities, if any, could conceivably prove significant to living artists, if not now, then at some other time? In grouping them together in a single category as "the Nazarenes," I shall inevitably pay insufficient attention

to the differences among them: Overbeck and Pforr, for instance, though they were joined in an intense friendship and shared common purposes and goals, differ significantly in their artistic production,<sup>60</sup> as do Overbeck and Cornelius, who were sometimes seen by contemporaries as the Raphael and the Michelangelo of the movement. In general, each of the Nazarene artists -- *pace* Caspar David Friedrich -- has distinctive stylistic features, no less than Monet and Sisley, for instance, among the Impressionists.

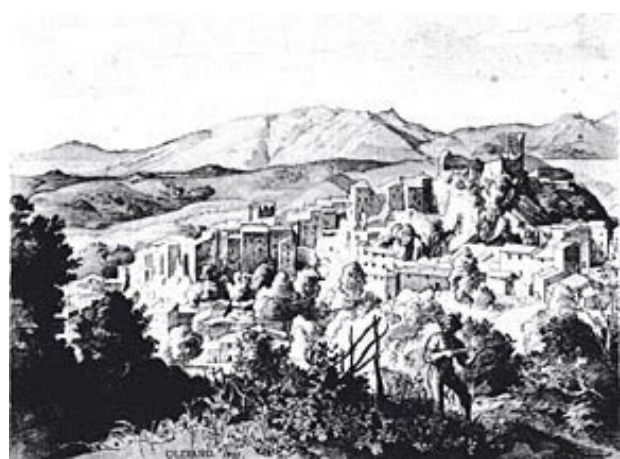


Fig. 37

## II

In the brief factual account of the Nazarenes which follows I shall focus on the cultural (artistic, ideological, social) context in which they developed as young artists, the challenges to which their work was a response, and the goals they hoped to achieve. I hope to show that, for a time at least, despite their Christian orientation and their association with the conservative Restoration, the Nazarenes were part of a broader anti-traditional movement in art in the Age of Revolution -- a movement that aimed to break radically with the continuity of art since the Renaissance and that was in fact launched by neoclassical artists, such as Carstens, Flaxman, and Canova, not to mention David, the most famous.<sup>61</sup> In his *History of the French Revolution*, Michelet makes much of what he calls the “religion” of the Revolution, emphasizing that it required something like an act of conversion on the part of its adherents. In the Nazarenes’ case, revolutionary impulse and impulse toward conversion are similarly connected as a desire to transform the individual and to transform culture itself, to begin anew, in their case as in that of the neoclassical artists, by reconnecting with an earlier past. The role conversion played in the lives of many of them, including Overbeck, Schadow, the Riepenhausen brothers, Johann and Philipp Veit (the two sons of Dorothea Schlegel), and the Schlegels themselves, all of whom converted to Catholicism, is well documented. Rebirth, resurrection, being reawakened from deathly sleep (Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus) is likewise a recurrent theme of their art.<sup>62</sup> In contrast, Benjamin Constant, their slightly older contemporary, writing from the point of view of liberal progressivism, denounced the futility of attempts, such as those of the Jacobins during the Revolution, to reverse the flow of history and resurrect a political order that may have been appropriate to another, remote time but was anachronistic or “unzeitgemäss” (to borrow the German term made famous by Nietzsche) in the thoroughly altered conditions of modern Europe.

Though the order they wished to resurrect in place of the ancien regime was certainly different from that of the Jacobins and their emphasis was, in any case, far more on inner conversion than on institutional change -- in that regard they resembled many other, often mutually competing groups in Germany, including neohumanists and Pietists<sup>63</sup> -- the Nazarenes were similarly faulted for being un-modern, not of their time. A genuine work of art, according to Caspar David Friedrich, must carry "das Gepräge seiner Zeit" ("the imprint of its time"). In Friedrich's view, this ruled out the use of traditional religious images and forms from an earlier time, since it was the character of the new age to be "am Rande aller Religionen" ("at the outer boundary of all religions"). The days of the glory of the Temple and its servants have passed, Friedrich insisted, and from the fragments of that shattered whole a new time and a new demand for clarity and truth have emerged.<sup>64</sup>

The archaism of the Nazarenes was nevertheless a response, a different one from Friedrich's to be sure, to the very historical fissure Friedrich was evoking, for the deliberate choice of a style that is no longer a living tradition can only be an acutely "modern" gesture, in that it asserts the artist's refusal or inability to be determined by history and tradition, his freedom (whether desired, struggled for, and won or imposed and, in a way, suffered) to select and define the style he wants. That is the real root of the much criticized intellectualism of the Nazarenes. If their painting was "Gedankenmalerei" ("painting of ideas"), that was because the artistic tradition as it had evolved in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was no longer accepted by them unthinkingly as "natural," an inheritance to be assumed and enhanced. When Overbeck claimed that "it is no less impossible to conceive of a fully developed artist who is unphilosophical than it is to conceive of one who lacks poetic imagination,"<sup>65</sup> what he meant was not simply that the artist aspires to convey religious or moral or political ideas but that, at a time when so much that had once appeared to be "natural" was being put into question, an authentic modern artist could not afford not to reflect on the form and function of his work. The potentially tragic consequences, for the artist, of this situation, are the theme of E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale *Die Jesuitenkirche in G*, written between 1815 and 1816. In the words of a modern Italian scholar: "The Nazarenes are the first manifestation of a historical disorientation, in which reference to a style from the past, albeit in the illusory conviction of fidelity to it, exposes, by its arbitrariness, a historical fissure, a radical a-historicity."<sup>66</sup> In that respect, despite appearances, the Nazarenes may well have been far more "modern" -- than the Belgian school of history painting, the enormous success of which in Germany in the early 1840s precipitated their fall into disfavor. Insofar in fact as "modern" signifies a certain relation to the past -- its transcendence, but also its culmination -- the situation of the Nazarenes might even be more usefully viewed as analogous to the "post-modern."



First, then, who were the Nazarenes? The nucleus of the movement was a small group of six young men, students at the Vienna Academy of Art in the second half of the first decade of the nineteenth century. Dissatisfied with the teaching they were receiving there, they dreamed of a reform of art based on a return to the older models -- notably Dürer and the early Raphael -- lauded by Wilhelm Wackenroder in his enormously influential *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1797), and on a new relation between art and the community, in which the artist would express the highest values of his people, serving it as guide and educator, instead of prostituting his God-given talents, as the young rebels saw it, by pandering to the pleasures and vanities of wealthy individuals or a cosmopolitan court aristocracy. It is worth recalling that similar speculations about the role of the artist and the place of art in society -- admittedly with a more Enlightenment-humanitarian than Romantic-popular emphasis -- had characterized the neohumanist generation preceding the Nazarenes, achieving memorable literary expression in Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Mankind* (1795). Schiller's vision of the educative and harmonizing function of art had, in turn, been given pictorial representation in one of the most popular paintings of the age, "Apoll unter den Hirten" ("Apollo among the Shepherds," 1806-1808), by the poet's fellow-Württemberger, the neoclassical artist Gottlieb Schick, who was subsequently to be one of the first to befriend the young Nazarenes on their arrival in Rome in 1810.<sup>67</sup> (Fig. 38)

The two founding members of the Vienna student group were Johann Friedrich Overbeck, the son of a senator from the old Hanseatic free city of Lübeck, later its Bürgermeister, and Franz Pforr from the Imperial free city of Frankfurt am Main, who came from a family of painters. (His father was a respected animal painter, his mother was the sister of Johann Heinrich Tischbein the Younger.) On the basis of their common view of art -- as well as intimate conversations about the ideal female partner each envisaged for himself -- the two extremely moral and chaste young men formed an intense friendship of the kind that was then not uncommon in Germany. (One thinks of Wackenroder and Tieck, Füssli and Lavater, Bonstetten and Johannes von Müller, Ferdinand Olivier and Wilhelm von Gerlach or Schnorr von Carolsfeld.<sup>68</sup>) In contravention of the rules of the Academy, which required a long period of training and copying of established works in a variety of genres before the student was permitted to undertake original work on his own, the two youthful enthusiasts worked together privately at developing their own ideas for paintings, mostly Biblical scenes in Overbeck's case,



Fig. 38

scenes from history, legend, Shakespeare, and Goethe in Pforr's. They critiqued each other's work, offered advice and suggestions, and discussed their ideas about art and modern life, as well as more personal matters, in long nocturnal "bull sessions," as the young people of our own time used to say. Both state explicitly that it was never part of their plan to proselytize among the students of the Academy but only to extend the hand of friendship to any who might approach them of their own free will. This ideal of unregimented co-operation -- in the sense that in joining with others to pursue common goals, each individual retains his or her distinctiveness and autonomy -- would remain important to the Nazarenes, as we shall see, and is expressed formally, I believe, in their work.

Four others at the Vienna Academy soon associated themselves with Pforr and Overbeck. They were Joseph Wintergerst, a Swabian; Joseph Sutter, an Austrian; Ludwig Vogel, the son of a master baker in Zurich; and his friend, Franz Hottinger, the son of a citizen of Zurich who had settled in Vienna and with whom Vogel had taken lodgings. The group thus represented a cross-section of German youth at the time from various cities and states. Sutter and Wintergerst, aged 27 and 25 respectively, were the oldest. The other four were very young when all six first began to gather for regular drawing sessions and discussions in Overbeck's lodgings in the summer of 1808. Overbeck himself had just turned 19; Pforr, Vogel and Hottinger were a year older. On the first anniversary of their meetings, in 1809, the six agreed to regularize their association by solemnly swearing an oath of brotherhood and forming a *Bund*, to which they gave the name of Luke, the patron saint of painting. They thereby affirmed an essential, at once revolutionary and conservative axiom of their program: namely, that art must serve only the highest of ends, which, in their case, meant religion, and not the vanity of courts or wealthy individuals. In forming an egalitarian, non-hierarchical society, whose members were bound together by a conscious act, the swearing of an oath, rather than by the invisible, organic bonds of tradition and history, they also executed a revolutionary gesture, for oath swearing, by medieval Swiss heroes and members of the French Revolutionary Assembly alike, inevitably implied rejection of established ways.<sup>69</sup> At the same time, by modeling their society on a medieval guild or even a monastic order, they affirmed a specific relation to history, viewing it not as a continuous evolution but as discontinuous, marked by breaks and repetitions. The simultaneously revolutionary and backward-looking character of their artistic principles was thus repeated in the institutional form they adopted for their new association.

A few months later, In October 1809, when Wintergerst had to move to Bavaria and thus became the group's first "apostle," Overbeck created a diploma for him as well as for the five other members of the *Bund*. It bore the signatures, brief motto, and particular symbol of each one (an owl in the case of Wintergerst, an eye in the case of Sutter, a skull topped by a cross in the case of Pforr, a palm branch in the case of Overbeck, and so on), together with a stamp depicting St.

Luke (to whom Overbeck gave the features associated with Dante) at work and inscribed with the initials of the six founding members in its border, which had the form of an arch. At the top of the arch stood the letter W -- for *Wahrheit*, the fundamental principle of any art worthy of the name, according to the Brotherhood. Canvases by individual members that won the approval of the entire group were to be stamped on the back with this seal. (Fig. 39)



Fig. 39

Meantime, the occupation of Vienna by the French in early 1809 led to the closing of the Academy and when it reopened in February 1810, financial constraints and a shortage of wood for heating prevented the readmission of all foreign, i.e. non-Austrian students. This provided a good excuse for Overbeck and Pforr to realize a plan they had been mulling over for some time: namely, withdrawing from the Academy, with its highly regulated instruction in current artistic practices, and pursuing their artistic vocation freely, according to their own lights, in Rome, where, as they saw it, the fashions and customs of the day paled before the enduring truths of art and religion. They were joined in their move to Rome by Vogel and Hottinger. Sutter, as a native Austrian the only one of the group to be readmitted to the Academy, did not have the funds to go along.

The departure of the *Lukasbrüder* for Rome is often referred to as the first *Sezession* in the history of German art.<sup>70</sup> In fact, the leave-taking was carried out politely, courtesy visits being paid to most of the professors. But a year later Sutter had a bitter run-in with his teachers, in which he accused them of having turned down a work he had submitted for a prize (he badly needed the money) not on the basis of the merits or otherwise of the work itself but out of hostility to the artistic goals of the Brotherhood.<sup>71</sup>

The goals of the Academy and those of the *Lukasbrüder* were in fact radically opposed. The Vienna Academy, it should be noted, was one of the most highly regarded in Germany at the time. Its Director, Heinrich Füger, enjoyed a considerable reputation and had been commissioned to paint a portrait of Nelson. Füger followed an eclectic line, favoring the classicizing manner of Mengs or Gavin Hamilton in his history paintings, mostly on subjects from Greek and Roman antiquity, and a highly painterly, still visibly rococo handling of color and light in his portraits. (Figs.40, 41) The method of instruction at the Academy was traditional: a long period of training in drawing and copying from other artists was required before permission was granted to undertake independent original compositions. In Füger's words, the student "must first practice his hand and appropriate the techniques



Fig. 40

of several graphic styles before he can pass on to painting and the higher branches of the painter's art" and "these preliminary exercises may occupy him for several years."<sup>72</sup> Two decades of political, social, and cultural revolution and upheaval had had their effect, however, and Overbeck and his friend Pforr rejected Director Füger's academic *ancien régime*.

As early as 1805, when still a sixteen-year old living at home in Lübeck, Overbeck already had misgivings about the instruction he was receiving from his art teacher at the time, Joseph Nikolaus Peroux. Though Peroux had great talent, the young Overbeck confided to the writer and critic August Kestner -- a family friend who had introduced him to the Riepenhausen brothers' drawings of works by Giotto, Masaccio, and Perugino -- he concentrated so much on brilliance of execution that he was incapable of imagining anything artistically grand or serious. "Seine Manier scheint mir ganz und gar falsch zu seyn," Overbeck wrote, adding that he feared having to follow this "kleinliche Manier" and becoming in turn enslaved to it.<sup>73</sup>

It had been fifteen years since Kant had argued for the autonomy of art and, by implication, the artist.<sup>74</sup> In 1796 the unconventional neoclassical artist, Asmus Carstens -- to whom Overbeck's father, a successful minor poet as well as a Lübeck notable, had lent a helping hand at a difficult time in the artist's life in the 1780's -- had proclaimed the freedom of the artist in a stinging letter to the Director of the Berlin Academy: "I must inform your Excellency that I do not belong to the Berlin Academy but to humanity. It never occurred to me, nor did I ever promise, to debase myself into becoming the bondsman of an Academy for the sake of a few years' financial support to enable me to develop my talents."<sup>75</sup> A few years before, in 1791, another neoclassical artist, Joseph Anton Koch, had fled the art academy of the famous Ducal Hohe Carlsschule in Stuttgart after the discovery of some caricatures in which he exposed the professors as cruel tyrants and lampooned the content of their instruction. One of the drawings depicts the artist, like Hercules, at the crossroads, having to choose between the extravagance of the rococo and the simplicity of the classical. (Fig. 42) Koch, a fiery champion of freedom and the French Revolution at the time, later became a good friend and champion of the Nazarenes in Rome and Vienna. The young Overbeck, whose birth in 1789 coincided with the outbreak of the Revolution, was no less inspired by the idea of freedom than Carstens, Koch -- or, for that matter, Caspar David Friedrich. "The most important thing for a painter," he wrote to Kestner, "is to have a free hand."<sup>76</sup>



Fig. 41

As a student at the Vienna Academy, Overbeck had not lost his taste for freedom. Here is how he justified to his father his and Pforr's breaking of the Academy's rules by embarking, as early as their second year, on compositions of their own in oil:<sup>77</sup> "Must it really be so harmful to test

one's capabilities, even when one undertakes tasks that are beyond one's capabilities? And in the event that one stumbles and falls, so what? One picks oneself up again. One doesn't break one's neck; and at least one will have taken the measure of one's capabilities." The cautious or overly protected child who holds on to guiderails or leans on others will ultimately learn to walk, to be sure, but he will probably never have the confidence and independence



Fig. 42

of the child who has learned by himself. The aim of his and Pforr's experiments with work of their own was "not to produce masterpieces, just to push ourselves to the limit and do the best we can." For one "learns more from working on a single picture of one's own, however much one has to suffer before achieving something acceptable, than from copying twenty pictures, even pictures by Raphael, Titian, Correggio, Van Dyck, etc." Besides, "by exercising one's own talent, one arrives at a fuller appreciation of the achievement of the great masters, and discovers ten times more in them than if one had spent all one's time slavishly copying them." Most important, the student who experiments with compositions of his own will develop his own individual talent. Speaking for himself, Overbeck insists, even if he "doesn't learn to use paint like Titian, or become as expert in chiaroscuro as Correggio, the most important thing is that he become an Overbeck."<sup>78</sup> "Das wäre doch beim Himmel mehr werth als wenn man sich einen zweiten Rafael oder Correggio oder dgl. nannte," he declared. ("That would be worth far more, by Heaven, than being called a second Raphael or a second Correggio or such like.") These words are worth emphasizing in view of the later criticism from Caspar David Friedrich, Vischer, Heine, and others, that the Nazarenes had no character or style of their own but simply copied earlier masters like Raphael and Dürer. Overbeck concedes that sustained study and indeed copying of the classics who have gone before develops both the student's taste and his skills. "One would need to be a fool not to exploit this advantage, which we artists of the present time enjoy with respect to our predecessors." Still, the true model, he told his father, is nature. "Just think how much time is lost learning the 'tricks of the trade,' to quote your own expression, since these are unique to each great master."

Above all, "the eclecticism of the academies is a complete misunderstanding of art. Any one who expects a young artist to make every effort to learn to compose like Raphael, because Raphael was greatest of all in composition, to learn to paint like Titian, because Titian was the greatest master of paint, to learn to use light and shade like Correggio because Correggio was unrivalled in the use of chiaroscuro, to appropriate Michelangelo's style because of its grandeur and power, and furthermore to combine all of those qualities in himself, shows that he understands

nothing about art, since he has not understood that those qualities so contradict each other that it is not possible to think of them all together... Take a figure from Michelangelo, paint it in the manner of Titian, and you will no longer have a Buonarrotti. The external contour would not work with the inner flesh tones that Titian would have to introduce if he were to paint like Titian.”

In a later letter in April 1808, Overbeck generalized his critique of art academies. “The slavish kind of study required at our art academies leads to nothing of any value. If -- as I believe is the case -- there has not been a history painter since the time of Raphael who has found the right road, that is nobody’s fault but that of our leading academies; they teach you to paint wonderful draperies, to draw figures correctly, to use perspective, they teach you the styles of architecture; and yet all this produces no great painters.”<sup>79</sup> The *Lukasbund* did not intend to repeat the errors of the ancien regime at the Vienna Academy. No single style was imposed, both Overbeck and Pforr insist, no one was urged to imitate another’s manner: instead, each individual was encouraged to follow his own bent and talent in the pursuit of their common goals. What these young artists dreamed of founding in Rome, two decades after the French Revolution, was a free community of artists, “eine Künstlerrepublik,” in Overbeck’s own words.<sup>80</sup>

On his side, Franz Pforr explained to his guardian, the Frankfurt merchant Sarasin, that technical skill was not enough to make a good artist. “We get together every evening ,” he wrote, describing the close friendship he had established with Overbeck, “and discuss art. To my friend’s concern with virtue and morality I owe my conviction that, to achieve greatness, a painter must be not only an artist but a human being... We found that our [earlier] approach to art no longer seemed satisfactory to us, and that the work we had been producing no longer gave us the pleasure our innermost being now demanded of a work of art.” At the reopened Imperial art collection in the Belvedere Palace the two friends noted a similar revolution in their judgments of earlier works of art. “As we entered, I can truly say that we were stunned. Everything now seemed different. We hurried past a large number of paintings, which we had previously admired, with a feeling of dissatisfaction; other works, in contrast, which had formerly left us cold, now drew us irresistibly. Neither of us dared to reveal his thoughts to the other for fear that his judgment had been affected by vanity or pretentiousness. Finally we opened our hearts and discovered to our amazement that we had been thinking the same thoughts. Works by Tintoretto, Veronese, Maratti, even many by the Caracci, Correggio, Guido, and Titian that had once filled us with admiration, now made a feeble impression on us. It seemed to us that a cold heart lay behind their bold brushstrokes and striking color effects and that the painter’s highest aim had been to excite a voluptuous sensibility. In contrast, we could hardly tear ourselves away from a...Pordenone, some works by Michelangelo and Perugino and one painting from the school of Raphael...The painters of the Dutch school

seemed to us to have chosen unworthy subjects or to have treated noble ones in a vulgar way, What we once took to be nature in them, now seemed like caricature. As we hurried from there to the German school, how pleasantly surprised we were; with what purity and charm the latter seemed to speak to us! Much here had once struck us as stiff and forced, but now we had to recognize that our judgment had been distorted by familiarity with paintings in which every artistic technique, however common, has been exaggerated to the point of ridiculous affectation, and that as a result we had taken gestures, which were drawn from nature as she truly is, to be stiff and lacking in appropriate movement. Their noble simplicity [*edle Einfalt*] spoke directly to our hearts.”

The unmistakable allusion here to Winckelmann in connection with fifteenth century German painting, which recurs in connection with Dürer in particular in a letter to David Passavant<sup>81</sup> -- painter, apprentice banker, future art historian, and close friend of Pforr's childhood and youth -- is remarkable as a sign not only of the Nazarenes' reinterpretation of Winckelmann's ideal but, more important perhaps, of the common ground shared by the seemingly opposed positions of late eighteenth century neoclassicism and early nineteenth century preraphaelism. Both were sharply critical of the painting practices of the baroque and the rococo. “There were no bravura brushstrokes here,” Pforr continued, “there was no attempt on the artist's part to impress the viewer with the boldness of his technique; everything was simply there as though it had not been painted but had simply grown.”<sup>82</sup>

In 1820, eight years after Pforr's death, his and Overbeck's critique of academies was taken up in a long section of the vigorous defence of the Nazarenes' goals and achievements with which David Passavant responded to the highly publicized critique by Goethe and his friend Meyer of what they dubbed dismissively “*neudeutsche religiös-patriotische Kunst*” (1817).<sup>83</sup> It was only much later, after most of the rebellious energy of the early *Lukasbrüder* had been spent and their art had achieved a kind of official status, that they themselves became directors of the institutions -- academies and museums -- they had once derided. To speak in connection with the *Lukasbrüder* of a *Sezession*, in sum, is somewhat dramatic, but not essentially false.<sup>84</sup>

There were differences, of course, between the neoclassical artists and the Nazarenes. The former tended to accept the Kantian view of the autonomy of art. Beauty, for them (as, still, for Burckhardt), was its own end, and the work of art served no purpose other than itself. Following Schiller's lead, many did, however, look to art as a means of reconciling philosophical oppositions, harmonizing social and psychological conflicts, rehumanizing men at a time of increasing specialization and division of labor, and bringing peace and order to society. The Nazarenes wanted the artist to be freed from subservience to courts and powerful patrons. But they did not argue for the total autonomy of art. Perhaps they suspected that the autonomy of art might not be unrelated to

the rising influence of the art market, which Diderot had commented on astutely in the decades before the French Revolution. The decline of traditional sources of patronage, accelerated by the Revolution, had certainly given artists greater freedom but it had also made their social situation acutely problematical by depriving them both of whatever economic security they had once enjoyed and of a clear function and direction for their work<sup>85</sup> -- save perhaps in France itself, where the revolutionary state awarded commissions and prescribed programs. The early Nazarenes responded to this crisis by trying, in the *Lukasbund*, to constitute an artistic community similar to the artists' guilds of the Middle Ages. The aim of the community was twofold: on the one hand to provide support for artists who would otherwise find themselves isolated, insecure, and at the mercy of unfavorable circumstances, and on the other to restore art to its proper high place in the world by ascribing to it the mission of transforming culture and society.<sup>86</sup> Art, it was hoped, would once again become a vital part of the life not of a Court, nor of an abstract humanity (epitomized by the universal norms of classical antiquity), but of a particular, concrete, historical community (epitomized by the Christian art of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance), articulating and disseminating the highest values of that community -- its morality and its religion. In the event, of course, the German artists in Rome did not succeed in escaping the destiny of the modern artist as "free" agent. By withdrawing from the world in order, as Overbeck put it, to save their art -- "Oh, the sweetness of solitude and seclusion from the world; only in such conditions is it possible for art to thrive nowadays," he noted in his Journal<sup>87</sup> -- they created, in the end, not an artists' guild but something much closer to an artistic Bohemia, the center of which, in the Eternal City, was no church or convent but the crowded, smoke-filled Caffè Greco on the Via Condotti.

In Rome, where four members of the *Bund* arrived in the summer of 1810 they found temporary lodgings, with the help of a compatriot of Vogel's, the Zurich sculptor Heinrich Keller and his Italian wife, in the Villa Malta, a favorite haunt of German travelers, including, Overbeck reports, Goethe. "From my window," Overbeck wrote to Sutter, "I can see the Pantheon, the Antonine and Trajan columns and a crown of villas on the surrounding hills. From the upper rooms, where the others are lodged, you can see St. Peter's, the Vatican, the Capitol, the palaces of the Popes and the high hills around Tivoli and Frascati."<sup>88</sup> By the fall of the same year, however, the Brothers had to move out, the Villa Malta having acquired a new owner. Fortunately they found inexpensive accommodation, still on the Pincio, in the disused convent of San Isidoro, whose Irish Franciscan occupants had been expelled by Napoleon. For two years, they lived a monastic existence there, each with his own cell to work in and a smaller one for sleeping. They took their frugal midday meal, which they prepared themselves, together. "God grant that I may live all my life as I do now," Overbeck wrote in his diary on October 31, 1810. "I would never desire more than a patriarchal meal of porridge or some tasty



and healthy vegetable, neither stews nor pastries nor any other spice than salt, for the face of a friend is a better spice with a meal than all the spices of the Indies.”<sup>89</sup> In the evenings they gathered in the refectory to draw together, discuss each other’s work, and present short talks to each other on questions of art and esthetics. Lacking money to engage live models, except for a boy called Severio, to whom Pforr in particular became very attached, they modeled for each other. There was no question of female models. Overbeck had ruled them out as likely to induce impure thoughts and thus affect the quality of their art.

Because of their ascetic way of life, their piety, and their aim of purifying both their art and their lives, as well as the way they wore their hair -- “alla Nazarena,” that is to say, long, to the shoulders, and with a parting down the middle, in deliberate imitation not so much perhaps of Christ as of Raphael, and as a sign, in addition, of allegiance to Dürer and the German artists of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries<sup>90</sup> -- they were soon being referred to by unsympathetic or skeptical members of the artists’ colony in Rome as “i Nazareni.” The name may have been given them mockingly, but it stuck, and soon lost whatever bite it might have been intended to have. The *Lukasbrüder* themselves, however, never described themselves as “Nazarenes.” For as long as the *Bund* survived, its members addressed and referred to each other only as “Bruder.” They also dressed in “old German” style, as a further sign of their identification with the German artists of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In general, the appearance they adopted seems to have been intended to signal their goal of reviving and combining their two chief models, Dürer and Raphael, the best of Germania and the best of Italia, as in Wackenroder’s *Herzensergiessungen* or Overbeck’s well-known painting of “Italia und Germania.” Overbeck’s self-portraits and his celebrated portrait of Pforr (fig. 9) show both the characteristic hair style and dress.

At this point it is necessary to say a word, however brief, about the artistic context in which Overbeck and Pforr led their quiet mutiny at the Vienna Academy in 1806. The young Germans’ rejection of academic norms was part of a revolutionary Europe-wide break with the ancien regime baroque style which subordinated all the elements of a picture to the production of an overriding and overpowering illusionist effect. The break began somewhat hesitantly with Winckelmann, Mengs, and the Scottish painter Gavin Hamilton in Rome in the middle decades of the eighteenth century and became more radical with Flaxman in England and David and his school in France. In his wonderful New York University Ph.D. dissertation of a half-century ago, *The International Style 1800*, Robert Rosenblum showed how an entire movement of art at this time aimed to get back to fundamentals by re-emphasizing the role of the artist’s spontaneous and unmediated vision in the creation of a work of art rather than the technical skill with which the cultivated, academically

trained painter was able to recreate and confirm conventional empirical perceptions of the world. Technique came in fact to be regarded with suspicion bordering on disdain as the handmaid of illusionist painting and the mark of the artist's subservience to powerful clients, who dictated his subjects to him and used him to represent the world as they wanted it to be seen. Sometimes, as with Asmus Carstens, a virtue was even made of the lack of it. No sensible person, Blake wrote, "ever supposes that copying from Nature is the Art of Painting; if Art is no more than this, it is no more than any other Manual Labour; anybody may do it and the fool often will do it best as it is a work of no Mind."<sup>91</sup> Likewise Caspar David Friedrich: "A painter should paint not only what he sees in front of him, but what he sees within. If he sees nothing within himself, he should desist from painting what he sees in front of him."<sup>92</sup> To the Nazarenes purity of mind and soul were essential prerequisites for the production of any art that aimed to be more than pleasing or flattering ornament.

Many artists chose to demonstrate their contention that the artist's vision and not painterly technique in the service of illusionist effect is the essential element in a work of art by placing the subject parallel to the surface of the painting and thus provocatively signaling their refusal to produce the illusion of depth and therefore of reality that was the crowning achievement of painterly



Fig. 43

technique. In drawing, contour and line were emphasized, with a minimum of modeling -- that is to say the most abstract and ideal aspects of art. The Nazarenes, in particular, preferred hard pencil to chalk. Color was considered secondary and was always subordinate to line. In the painting of the Nazarenes color is always local color. Though Pforr and Overbeck developed a theory of color symbolism and used color as an integral element of their composition, a few, like Carstens and, in his later life, Cornelius, tended to avoid color altogether. (Cornelius often let his students and associates apply color to his cartoons and notoriously held that the cartoon was the true work of art.) The goal was to reveal the essential truth of things as perceived by the artist's imagination -- *Wahrheit*, it will be remembered was the Nazarenes' motto -- rather than reproduce or enhance the sensuous pleasure produced by external appearance. Even where elements of depth are retained, there is a clear effort to represent the essential forms of things rather than their passing appearances, as in the almost cubist land and townscapes of Ferdinand and Friedrich Olivier. (Fig. 43, P. 28, P. 29) As a modern scholar noted, it was the "rejection of traditionally life-like drawing" in the stylized, stripped down illustrations of the English artist and sculptor John Flaxman that had appealed to the philosophical mentor of the Nazarenes, Friedrich Schlegel.<sup>93</sup>

In this idealizing emphasis on line and surface, in opposition to the illusion of depth produced by modeling, chiaroscuro, and subtle paint transitions, neoclassical artists and Nazarenes were at one. It was Winckelmann, after all, who had declared that “in the figures of the ancient Greeks, the noblest outline embraces or circumscribes all aspects of natural and ideal beauty.”<sup>94</sup>

To this movement in art corresponded a similar movement in music. In the debate about the relative value of melody and harmony in the second half of the eighteenth century -- the *Querelle des Bouffons* or *Querelle de la musique française et de la musique italienne* -- the defenders of harmony explicitly compared harmony in music to color and chiaroscuro in the visual arts,<sup>95</sup> while the champions of melody, foremost among them Rousseau, saw in melody, the pure succession of simple notes, the very essence of music -- music as it was before its corruption by the ever greater refinements of harmony. To Diderot -- consistently materialist -- harmony was an integral part of musical language and, like color and chiaroscuro in painting, a technical instrument that the artist sensitive to the complexity of nature could not do without; to Rousseau, with his strong idealist tendencies, it was melody that was the primary musical language, the language that reflected not external nature but the innermost feelings and intuitions of the human soul.

Even historical writing shows signs of an aspiration to return to basics. In the second and third decades of the nineteenth century a new school of historians in France, led by Prosper de Barante and Augustin Thierry, rejected the sophistication of “philosophical” history and advocated a return to the simple narrative form of the late medieval Chroniclers.<sup>96</sup>

It is impossible to mistake the connection between these various calls for a return to the simpler, purer forms of an earlier era and the revolutionary project announced in the opening page of Rousseau’s Preface to his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* of 1755, with its explicit allusion to Plato’s *Republic*: “How shall man contrive to see himself as nature formed him, through all the changes that the succession of times and things must have wrought in his original constitution; how shall he separate out what belongs to his very being from the additions or changes made to his primitive condition by circumstance and his own progress? Like the statue of Glaucus, so disfigured by time, sea water, and storms that it resembled a wild beast rather than a god, the human soul, degraded in the womb of society by a thousand continually renewed influences, by the acquisition of a vast quantity of knowledge and error, by changes in the constitution of bodies, and by the continual impact of the passions has, so to speak, so altered its appearance that it has become almost unrecognizable.”

Rosenblum presents the gist of his thesis in his opening remarks on the English artist, sculptor, and illustrator, John Flaxman, whose reputation and influence in France and in Germany reached a high point -- and it was very high, especially in Germany -- at the turn of the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries. “Flaxman’s drawing,” Rosenblum writes,

completely eschews the intricate formal vocabulary evolved by previous generations in their attempt to render the subtleties of optical experience. Favoring an art of radically reduced means, it seems to reject consciously that rich variety of spatial, luminary, and atmospheric values which post-medieval painting had achieved...Tendencies towards oblique movement are rigorously avoided, so that figures are seen in either strictly frontal postures...or in profile. At all costs the illusion of three-dimensionality is minimized. Even the pedestals on which ... statues rest are drawn as rectangles, not cubes, so that no suggestion of depth may intrude...One may well speak of a wilful effort to efface the complexities of style and expression which Western art had attained by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Preceded by a period which had reached a maximum of facility in the recording of the most transient and subtle images of the optically perceived world, Flaxman’s drawing would seem to substitute a conceptual, linear art, founded upon basic symbols of reality rather than upon illusions of it, an art whose severity of means and expression suggests a pure and early phase of image-making.<sup>97</sup> (Figs. 44, 45, P. 30)

The immense success of Flaxman’s illustrations of Homer and Dante was complemented by the similar success of publications containing illustrations of Greek vase paintings or of works by Cimabue, Giotto, Masaccio, Orcagna, and other early Italian painters, the linearity of which was thrown into even greater relief by their reproduction in the form of engravings. (Fig. 46) There was in fact considerable interest in Italian artists before Raphael -- they were not yet known as “primitives”<sup>98</sup> -- in artistic circles as well as in the general public. Flaxman, David, and Ingres were among those who studied them attentively and with respect. Vivant Denon, appointed Director of the Louvre by Napoleon, complained that the fifteenth century had been “négligé par les dissertateurs et les compilateurs” (as he described those who had written on the fine arts in the eighteenth century) and he made amends by devoting generous space in the new museum to Giotto, Fra Angelico, and Perugino. There was a corresponding revival of interest in early Flemish and German painting, especially, naturally enough, in Germany.<sup>99</sup> Even Goethe -- notoriously hostile to what he decried as the “regressive” character of the “modern German religious-patriotic school” -- was astonished when he saw the art works collected by the Boisserée brothers.<sup>100</sup> Rosenblum makes the important point that interest in early Italian painting “evidenced the same seeking out of artistic processes which motivated the interest in antique art...Giotto and Masaccio corresponded, in their frieze-like disposition of figures within a relatively shallow space and in their monumental treatment of the human form, to the comparable formal groupings of the reformers Hamilton, Vien, Greuze, West, and Mengs.”<sup>101</sup>



Fig. 44



Fig. 45

It is not surprising therefore that the earliest artistic efforts of one of the leading Nazarenes, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, executed (he was not yet ten years of age) under the supervision of his father, the painter Veit Schnorr von Carolsfeld, were direct copies of Flaxman or in the highly linear style of the English artist. (Fig. 47) Even Schnorr's mature work, such as his designs for the decoration of the Residenz in Munich (1830s), is characterized by a mingling of classical, Renaissance, and medieval formal elements. (P. 31) It is not surprising either that Paillot de Montabert, author of a "Dissertation sur les peintures du moyen âge et sur celles qu'on a appelées Gothiques" (1812), in which he argued that medieval painting was not the negation of the antique but preserved its greatest virtue – i.e. an unmistakably Winckelmannian "disposition noble, simple et une"<sup>102</sup> -- emerged from the studio of David, and that he was closely associated with a group of radical artists, also from David's studio, known as "Les Primitifs" or "Les Barbus" because of their provocative renunciation of "modern" ways in both art and life. (They allowed their beards to grow, adopted loose-fitting Greek dress and open sandals, and espoused vegetarianism.) Like the *Lukasbrüder*, the "Barbus" believed that the inner transformation or conversion of the artist himself was a necessary prerequisite for the reform of art. Though virtually nothing of their work survives, they are known to have accused David of having failed to free himself sufficiently from the despised and decadent rococo.<sup>103</sup>

Given this background it is easier to understand why, despite the ridicule or hostility their personal and artistic style provoked in some, the *Lukasbrüder* won the sympathy and active encouragement, soon after their arrival in Rome, of important members of the artistic community there, and in particular of leading representatives of the neo-classical movement: the sculptors Thorvaldsen and Canova (who later commissioned them to help decorate the lunettes of the Galleria Chiaramonte in the Vatican<sup>104</sup>) and three German painters who had studied with David in Paris -- Gottlieb Schick, Joseph Anton Koch, and Eberhard Wächter.<sup>105</sup> All three in fact worked increasingly with Christian as well as classical themes; Koch, for instance, modeled one painting, "Abraham bewirtet die drei Engel," on scenes from the Old Testament by Benozzo Gozzoli -- the assistant of Fra Angelico -- whose work he had admired, and sketched, in the Campo Santo in Pisa.<sup>106</sup> (Figs. 48-50) In his turn, Philipp Veit, one of the most convinced and loyal of the *Lukasbrüder*, later found inspiration in Greek vase painting for his decoration of the Städelsches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt.<sup>107</sup> (Fig. 51)

We can now return to our narrative account of the Nazarenes. Wintergerst, who had had to leave Vienna before the move to Rome, rejoined the community at San Isidoro early in 1811. Other German artists followed, attracted by the goals and early productions of the Brothers and by

reports of the encouragement and kindness with which they welcomed newcomers and the atmosphere of freedom and equality they fostered. “The best masters are open-hearted,” the young Carl Philip Fohr wrote to his patroness Wilhelmine von Hessen-Darmstadt in February 1817. “Every day one has easy access to their circles and receives the most generous instruction from them. The studios, especially those of the Germans, are outstandingly well organized. Every one who participates pays a share of the costs and every one is simultaneously a director and an apprentice.”<sup>108</sup> Over the decade from 1810 to 1820 the *Bund* increased its membership. The gifted and highly strung Pforr died of tuberculosis in 1812, only weeks after his 24th birthday. Another of the original founding members (Hottinger) became discouraged and gave up art. But new members were sworn in. They included, in 1812, the energetic and enterprising Düsseldorf Peter Cornelius (1783-1867), who quickly took over Pforr’s role as co-leader of the movement with Overbeck; Wilhelm Schadow (1788-1862), the son of the well regarded Berlin sculptor Gottfried Schadow, in 1814; Giovanni Colombo (1784-1853), the only Italian in the group, and the Viennese, Johann Scheffer von Leonhardshoff (1792-1822), both in 1815; Johannes Veit (1790-1854) and Philip Veit (1793-1877), the sons of Dorothea Schlegel from her first marriage, as the fifteen year-old daughter of Moses Mendelssohn, to the Berlin Jewish banker Simon Veit, in 1816; Friedrich Olivier (1791-1848) and his brother Ferdinand (1785-1841) from Dessau, in 1818; Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, the son of a well known painter from Leipzig, an intimate friend of the Olivier brothers, and, along with Cornelius and Overbeck himself, probably the most successful of the group, also in 1818. In addition, many German artists visiting Rome for short or long periods fell under the influence of Overbeck and his fellow-*Lukasbrüder* or sought association with them: Johann David Passavant (1787-1861), a former student of David and Gros in Paris, already mentioned as the childhood friend of Pforr and an eloquent champion of the group in print (he was also the author of the first major art historical monograph on Raphael [1839] and in 1840 took over the direction of the Städelsches Kunstinstitut in his native Frankfurt); Johann Anton Ramboux (1790-1866) from Trier, who had also studied with David in Paris; Carl Philip Fohr (1795-1818) from Heidelberg and Franz Horny (1798-1824) from Weimar; the Bohemian Joseph Führich (1800-1876); the Hamburger Friedrich Wasmann (1805-1886); Gustav Heinrich Naecke (1786-1835), later a professor at the Dresden Academy; Moritz Daniel Oppenheim 1800-1882), from Hanau, one of the first modern



Fig. 46



Fig. 47



Fig. 48



Fig. 49



Fig. 50

Jewish painters; the Holsteiner Theodor von Rehbenitz (1791-1861) who along with Friedrich Olivier and Schnorr von Carolsfeld made up a sub-group of the Nazarenes known as “I Capitolini” because they took lodgings in the Palazzo Caffarelli on the Capitol instead of on the Pincio, where the founding brothers had lived and Overbeck and Veit continued to live. The “Capitolini” appear in fact to have banded together in order to resist the wave of conversions that had carried other Nazarenes -- Schadow and Overbeck and the two Veit brothers, along with sympathizers, such as Karl Friedrich Rumohr (1785-1843), the critic and historian of art, and the brothers Franz (1786-1831) and Johannes (1788-1860) Riepenhausen from Göttingen, early amateurs and champions of the Italian “primitives” and long-standing German residents of Rome -- into the arms of the Catholic Church.



Fig. 51

In addition to the encouragement of established artists, the youthful newcomers attracted the support of leading German officials and visiting celebrities in the eternal city. Barthold Georg Niebuhr, the great historian of antiquity, at that time Prussian ambassador to the Holy See, and his first secretary Christian Bunsen, later ambassador to London, entertained them, sometimes quite riotously, in their residences, and often rubbed shoulders with them at their favorite haunt, the Caffè Greco on the via Condotti, a few steps from the Piazza di Spagna. In 1816 the Prussian Consul General for the Italian states, Jacob Salomon-Bartholdy gave the young *Lukasbrüder* -- Overbeck, Cornelius, Johannes Veit, and Wilhelm Schadow (Pforr had already been dead four years) -- their first important collective commission: the decoration of some rooms in his residence, a seventeenth century palazzo by the brothers Taddeo and Federico Zuccari at the end of the Via Sistina where it meets the Piazza della Trinità de' Monti.<sup>109</sup> He let himself be persuaded to allow them to experiment with large historical frescoes, instead of the purely decorative motifs he originally had in mind, and they chose to illustrate scenes from the Old Testament story of Joseph. (Figs. 52-54)

They made that decision partly in deference to Bartholdy's Jewish origins (he had converted to Christianity in 1805), but also because they believed Old Testament scenes, as prefigurations both of New Testament ones and of later events and situations, threw light on the meaning of all human history. The choice of an Old Testament theme for their first major work would thus emphasize the Nazarenes' view that the aim of history painting is to disclose the Truth of events, not to create a purely visual representation of them. As for painting a *fresco*, the technique had survived the rise of oil and easel painting among local artists in Austria and Italy, but relearning it and renewing it was, as we saw, an important part of the Nazarenes' program for the revival of art as an integral part of a people's culture rather than a source of momentary pleasure and stimulation for the well-to-do. In short, both the medium of fresco and the subject matter selected pointed to a relation to history

at odds with the secular progressivism and individualism of many contemporaries. Both tended to diminish the significance of the spectacular historical incidents of their own agitated time. In general, the symmetry, stillness, and deliberate archaism of the religious paintings of the Nazarenes and their followers convey a sense of timelessness or rather of sacred time, of history as a scene in which typical actions and dilemmas constantly recur, that is in stark contrast to the dramatic agitation and reference to contemporary events in the work of the Belgian Romantic painters admired by Burckhardt.



Fig. 52

Between 1818 and 1820, the artists also saw a good deal of Dorothea Schlegel, who had come to Rome to be near her sons and who was related through her brother Abraham Medelssohn to Salomon-Bartholdy. It was at the Schlegels' that Overbeck met Nina Schifflhuber-Hartl, a pious young woman whom Dorothea had taken under her wing and who had been earlier wooed unsuccessfully by Friedrich Schlegel's brother August Wilhelm. In 1818 he married her. Other eminent German women -- Dorothea's friend Henriette Herz ("Tante Herz" to the two Veits) and Wilhelm von Humboldt's wife Caroline, who took lodgings under the same roof as Schadow and Thorvaldsen<sup>110</sup> -- also strongly supported the young artists and sometimes purchased samples of their work.

Most intimate with the artists was the young Crown Prince of Bavaria, later Ludwig I. Ludwig, who visited Rome no less than 27 times in the course of his adult life, was a genuinely enthusiastic amateur of art. Believing he could use art to enhance his prestige, impart an identity to his relatively new kingdom, and transform his capital Munich -- which, in contrast to Nürnberg, lacked historical depth in the eyes of the young generation -- into a German Athens, he cultivated the artists; and they in turn cultivated him, most notably by organizing an elaborate festive farewell for him in April 1818, on his departure from Rome after a six-month residence in Italy. In as much as one of the Nazarenes' aims was the creation



Fig. 53



of a new public art, Ludwig, they must have thought, offered them their best chance. In 1819 Cornelius accepted an invitation to become director of the Academy in Munich, whither he was followed a decade later by Schnorr von Carolsfeld. Ultimately, however, the relations of both to the monarch turned sour. For the wall decorations in the Munich *Residenz*, Schnorr proposed combining the then popular stories around Rudolf of Habsburg with scenes from the Old Testament in the spirit of the Nazarenes' figural understanding of history. Ludwig judged this plan too "theosophisch," and insisted that the artist simply provide accurate depictions of the historical events -- which prompted Schnorr to complain that removing all symbolic allusion would transform what he had envisaged as a coherent work of art ("zusammenhängende Kunstschöpfung") into a mere record ("Verzeichnis von Gegenständen"), little more than the equivalent of a newspaper report on the Middle Ages ("Zeitungsartikel des Mittelalters").<sup>111</sup> The vision of history he was trying to convey would thereby be reduced from a universal, broadly human one to a merely German national one. In the end Schnorr complied with his master's demands, but the experience exposed the illusoriness of the Nazarene dream of a great renewal of the arts to be realized through the collaboration of German artists with the German princes. Cornelius's experience was also, in the end, one of disillusionment. Impressed by the enthusiastic reception of the Belgian history painters in the German art world, Ludwig suddenly took note of complaints that Cornelius was not really a painter, since he considered his cartoons to be the true works of art and was often content to leave the application of color to apprentices. "Ein Maler soll aber malen können" ("A painter should know how to paint, after all"), the king announced. Sensing the way the wind was blowing, Cornelius left for Berlin after twenty years of working for Ludwig's new Athens.<sup>112</sup>

By the 1840s many other Nazarene artists or artists sympathetic to the Nazarenes had found positions as directors of academies and museums, but this seeming success in fact marked the end of the movement's most vital period.<sup>113</sup> The early *Lukasbrüder* had, after all, been rebels and enemies of all academic instruction. The weakening of their original impulse had set in as early as the second decade of the century. For the "Nazarenes" had come to designate a larger, less cohesive, and more heterogeneous group



Fig. 54



Fig. 55

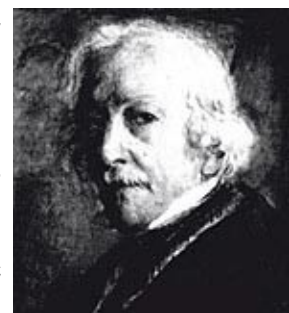


Fig. 56



Fig. 57



Fig. 58

than the *Lukasbrüder*. The balance in the original *Lukasbund* between “religion” and “patriotism” (as Goethe had put it), symbolized by the friendship of Overbeck and Pforr, was not maintained in the larger and looser association, nor was their ascetic way of life. As illustrated by Carl Philipp Fohr in 1818 (P. 32) or as described by Felix Mendelssohn in December 1830,<sup>114</sup> the gatherings at the Caffè Greco had a rowdy “Bohemian” character hardly compatible with the earnestness and piety of the *Bund* founded in Vienna by Overbeck and Pforr. As early as 1817, a duel between the gifted young Fohr, a former member of a Heidelberg *Burschenschaft*, and his close friend Ludwig Ruhl had unsettled the German artistic community in Rome and revealed tensions and pressures incompatible with the spirit of the original *Lukasbrüder*. Above all, the idealizing artistic impulse of the founders gradually gave way, in many, to the prevailing realism of the age. This development is clearly visible in two self-portraits by Philipp Veit, one dating from 1816 and the other from more than a half-century later, 1873. (Figs. 55-56) A recent retrospective of the work of the Jewish artist from Hanau, Moritz Oppenheim, showed a similar development from the artist’s Roman period in the 1820s, when he was visibly under Nazarene influence both in choice of subject matter and in style, to his work in the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s, when he appears to be striving to achieve the realist painterly and light effects of a Menzel.<sup>115</sup>

By the second half of the century, Overbeck was virtually alone in having refused all invitations to return to Germany and kept faith with the original principles of the *Bund*, but his isolation may have arrested his development as an artist. His art became more and more didactic and seemed to lose a good deal of the sincerity and simplicity that had once characterized it. His celebrated “Triumph der Religion in den Künsten” (fig. 57), with its strong references to Raphael, was provided with an elaborate accompanying explanatory text designed to explain the “meaning” of every aspect of the painting to the viewer. Burckhardt, in particular, objected that such explanatory texts signified a radical failure of art.<sup>116</sup>

### III

Before the Brothers’ move to Rome the 21-year old Overbeck had produced, in addition to a large number of drawings, two oil paintings, a “Self-Portrait with the Bible” (fig. 58) and a “Resurrection of Lazarus” (fig. 59) as well as the cartoon for his later “Entry of Christ into Jerusalem.” (Fig. 5) Pforr too had made many drawings, including a series of illustrations for Goethe’s *Götz von Berlichingen*. He had also completed two oil paintings, already strongly reminiscent of Old German and Netherlandish work (P. 33), one depicting “St. George slaying the dragon” and one the popular

theme of “Der Graf von Habsburg und der Priester,” the back of which carries the *Lukasbund* stamp of approval. (Figs. 60-61) The two friends brought several unfinished canvasses with them from Vienna, and spent the first two years in Rome completing these while also starting work on others. By the end of 1810, Overbeck had completed his “Portrait of Franz Pforr” (fig. 9) and Pforr his “Entry of Emperor Rudolf of Habsburg into Basel, 1273” (fig. 1), both of which had been begun in Vienna. The following year Pforr produced the oil painting entitled “Sulamith und Maria” (title page), which he intended as a gift to Overbeck and a token of their friendship. It was the last work he was able to paint before his death.



Fig. 59



Fig. 60

Several of the works the two men created in these early years stand in a close and complex relation to each other that testifies to the unusually close personal friendship and collaboration of their authors. A drawing by Pforr of “Raphael und Dürer vor dem Thron der Kunst,” inspired in part by Wackenroder’s enthusiastic evocation of the two artists in the *Herzensergiessungen*, was copied in his own manner by Overbeck (figs. 62, 63) and seems to have been intended as a representation of the friendship of the two art students, of their distinct but complementary artistic ideals -- Raphael in the case of Overbeck, Dürer in the case of Pforr -- and of their common dedication to a vision of art so close to the most sublime of values, religion, as to be almost indistinguishable from it. “Die Kunst” before whom the two artists are shown kneeling is indistinguishable from a representation of the Virgin. Very soon after, the two young men began to use two contrasting and yet complementary female figures in order to represent their personal friendship and their personal and artistic ideals. Though the idea appears to have originated with Overbeck,<sup>117</sup> Pforr opened the series in 1808 with a typical outline drawing, entitled “Allegorie der Freundschaft.” It depicts two female figures, seated on a bench, turned toward each other, and looking into each other’s eyes, one with her left arm around the other’s shoulder. (Fig. 64) Around them various symbolic figures and objects in the manner of the Old German masters: on a ledge, an eagle -- the attribute of the Evangelist John (of all his friends and family members Pforr alone always addressed Overbeck by his first Christian name, Johannes) -- and behind it a church steeple and a rising sun (the triumph of faith); on the wall above the two figures, a representation of the Last Supper; on the ground, an open purse (generosity), a winged



Fig. 61



Fig. 62



Fig. 63

heart encircled by a snake biting its tale (eternal friendship), a dog (fidelity), a sword laid flat (peace). The dress of the two women, their headgear, and the church in the background (in a copy of the drawing that Pforr made for David Passavant<sup>118</sup> the Gothic steeple in the original was changed to the circular roof of an Italian chapel) suggest that the homeland of one of them is Northern and of the other Southern.



Fig. 64

In 1810 this drawing of Pforr's was reworked by Overbeck into a simpler study of two large seated female figures, clasp hands, and now clearly distinguished by hairstyle and ornament as Northern and Southern. (Fig. 65) The various symbolic items in Pforr's "Allegorie" were eliminated from this more Italianate version and the two figures fill the entire space. Overbeck entitled it "Sulamith und Maria" -- a reference to the many discussions in which he and Pforr had tried to imagine and describe their ideal partners: Pforr his as a fair-haired German maiden (Maria) and Overbeck his as a darker-complexioned Mediterranean type, to whom it seemed appropriate to give the name not only of the Beloved in the Old Testament Song of Songs but of the central figure, who becomes the poet's muse, in two odes by Klopstock, a much loved poet in the strongly Pietist Overbeck household.<sup>119</sup> As a sign of the close connection between the two female figures, however, it is the figure of Shulamit that, of the two, most resembles a Madonna.



Fig. 65



Fig. 66

Now it was again Pforr's turn to develop the theme. In 1811, shortly before his death, he painted the small picture entitled "Sulamith und Maria." Once again two female figures represented the bond of friendship uniting the two men and the complementarity of their artistic ideals -- early Italian Renaissance in Overbeck's case, old German in Pforr's. After Pforr's death, Overbeck also returned once again to the "Sulamith und Maria" theme, this time working up his earlier drawing into one of his best known paintings, "Italia und Germania." (Fig. 66) Even though Overbeck gave this picture a new, less private, and more generally understandable title and did not complete it until 1828, sixteen years after Pforr's death, it is not fanciful to see in it a continuation of the dialogue with Pforr and a renewed testimony to the friendship which had been the foundation of the *Lukasbund* as an art movement and which Overbeck continued to cherish for fifty-seven years until his own death in 1869.<sup>120</sup>

Pforr's so-called "Self-portrait" may also bear witness to the unusually close collaboration of the two men. On the back of a small oil painting of Pforr in the Städelsches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt (fig. 67) -- to which we shall return shortly -- there is an inscription: "Franz Pforr gemalt von Over-

beck in Rom” (“Franz Pforr, painted by Overbeck in Rome”). On the basis of that evidence the painting was attributed, until recently, to Overbeck. The discovery of what appears to have been a preliminary drawing bearing the inscription “Pforr ipse fec.” (fig. 68), combined with the stylistic evidence of both drawing and painting, has led to the reattribution of the painting to Pforr. (The high degree and nature of the stylization and the defiance of realistic perspective in a portrait that appears to be frontal, three-quarters, and profile at the same time is more characteristic of Pforr than of Overbeck). It is now seen as a self-portrait. However, given the intensity with which the two men discussed their work and their desire, as a mark of the bond between them, to incorporate elements of the other’s work in their own, it is not inconceivable that Overbeck painted the oil portrait after Pforr’s drawing. Moreover, Overbeck’s portraits of two of the other original *Lukasbrüder*, Joseph Wintergerst and Joseph Sutter, show a similar concentration on the face and a similar tendency to extreme simplicity and abstraction. (Fig. 69)



Fig. 67



Fig. 68

In any case, these early works by two very young artists opened a new chapter in German painting. A brief commentary on a few of them seems called for.

Overbeck’s “Portrait of Franz Pforr” (fig. 9) contrasts strikingly with most portraits of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, not only late rococo works but even works by artists who had turned against the rococo and adopted a more severe neoclassical style. (Figs. 70-72, P. 34) With its clear outlines and simple local colors, renunciation of all sensuous and illusionist light and tone effects, use of symbols, and incorporation of a Gothic window frame into the picture, it harks back to the old German school.<sup>121</sup> Its aim is clearly not to produce, like most portraits of the time, a lively, appealing or seductive image of the subject and to represent the latter’s social status and social persona by the most sensuous possible depiction of dress, background, flesh tints, gesture, expression, etc., but to signify the subject’s essential character, values, and commitments. The emphasis is not on the optical impression of the passing moment but on the enduring spiritual essence that lies behind it and is visible only to the inner eye. The eyes are indeed the dominant feature of Overbeck’s Pforr, but while they look outward directly and seriously at the viewer, they also, in contrast to most portraits at the time, do not seek to engage with the viewer and resist any attempt to engage with them. There is no complicity with the viewer, no attempt to manipulate the viewer’s



Fig. 69

reaction. Instead the viewer must read the portrait for himself or herself and strive to divine its inner character.

Paradoxically, the effect of the old German costume and of the historical anachronism of the style and setting is to erase the entire question of historical reality and definition, emphasizing that what the artist has aimed to provide is not an impression of his subject as a readily decipherable empirical presence but a vision of his subject both in all the mystery of his unique individuality and as the epitome of the Christian artist. The incorrect, non-geometric perspective, with its flat receding planes, effectively excludes any impression of illusionist space. The relations among the pictorial elements, in other words, do not attempt to mirror empirical physical reality, but point to another, immaterial reality. Even the sitter's gender is not well defined by physical body or dress. These may in fact strike us as quite androgynous. It is *signified* by the implied relation to the fair-haired woman in a different part of the picture, possibly the subject's wife or a *Traumbild* of the wife he would like to have, reading – Madonna-like -- in an open book as she knits. There is plenty of documentary evidence to show that in creating this female figure Overbeck carefully followed Pforr's own description of his ideal spouse: "a young, beautiful, fair-haired, tender, and extremely appealing maiden, simply but tastefully attired;...in short, such a maiden as Germany might have produced in the Middle Ages." At the same time, it might not be irrelevant that in 1808, in a letter to his father relating how he and Pforr had tried to imagine their ideal partners, Overbeck explained that, in his own case, he did not know, "whether I should call mine male or female. All I could say is that it was an earnest, yet gentle being,...with dark hair, and only the head and hands visible; at its heart something holy, unearthly, in its stance and gestures something mysterious – in short, a being that one could not only love but revere, and the sight of which would arouse in one the holiest of feelings."<sup>122</sup> The sitter represented in Overbeck's portrait has at least some of the features of that ideal and it is striking that Overbeck kept this image of his beloved friend by him for the rest of his life, along with the painting of "Sulamith und Maria," which Pforr had made for him.

Some similarities to the *Lukasbund* stamp, which had also been designed by Overbeck -- the arched framing of the portrait, for instance, or



Fig. 9



Fig. 70



Fig. 71



Fig. 72

the view of a steep Mediterranean coastline through the window at top left -- may well have been intended to suggest an identification of Pforr with the patron saint of the *Lukasbrüder* (to whom in turn, as noted, Overbeck had given the features of Dante). Pforr himself had associated the artistic vocation and the religious one: "I would ask anyone planning to dedicate himself to art the same question one would ask of someone who wanted to be a monk: 'Can you take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and keep them? If so, you are welcome.'" <sup>123</sup> The possibility that the image of Pforr was intended to convey the sacred character of art and the qualities of purity and dedication required of the artist is supported by the wine-red of Pforr's garment, a color which, according to the color symbolism worked out by Overbeck and Pforr in Vienna, alluded to the Eucharist and was supposed to communicate a feeling of holiness. <sup>124</sup> As a favorite color of Pforr's it also *signified* the sitter, rather than representing him. In the same way, the coloring of the woman appears to have been chosen to signify gentleness, for, according to Pforr, the artist should not use color simply to create sensuously pleasing effects but in order "to produce a harmony of the individual being represented and his or her clothing." <sup>125</sup> The saintly, religious character of the image and the scene is further reinforced by the lily and the lectern beside the woman, both characteristic attributes of the Virgin. Other symbols -- the vine (signifying artistic fulfillment perhaps), the cat (gently related in its slightly forward position on the sitter's left, by the slanting bust of the sitter himself, to the female figure situated slightly behind him on his right -- "il gatto della Madonna"? <sup>126</sup>), the domesticated falcon (used by Pforr himself in his illustrations for Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* and applied here probably in its traditional meaning of the Gentile converted to Christianity <sup>127</sup>), the juxtaposition of a medieval German townscape with an Italian coastline (signifying the central theme for Overbeck and Pforr of the union of Raphael and Dürer, Italia and Germania, and, at the same time, the theme of their own friendship) as well as the engravings on the frame, which include Pforr's personal emblem of a skull topped by a cross (the victory of faith over death) -- also point away from any realistic intention. In addition, independently of their meaning, the very presence of so many small symbolic items in the picture might well be in itself an allusion to one of the characteristics of Pforr's Dürer-like art, rather than Overbeck's own, more Raphael-like manner.

Pforr's *Entry of Rudolf of Habsburg into Basel in 1273* (fig. 1) is, if anything, even more radical in its defiance of contemporary norms. The obvious reference to fifteenth and sixteenth century German painting and popular *Bilderbogen*, for instance -- with their single woodcut sheets depicting tournaments, processions, and battles in uncompromisingly flat, two-dimensional design; their flat, heraldic local colors applied in pattern one next to the other; and their hard, decisive contours -- underlines the deliberate, conscious rejection of the illusionist tradition <sup>128</sup> and forces the viewer

to approach the work in a completely different spirit, to read it in a different way from a naturalistic image. While a certain suggestion of space is created by the turn of the procession into the street leading to the square in the middle left, which the welcoming party of the burghers of Basel is about to enter from a narrow street “beyond,” the rejection of correct geometric perspective and the seemingly arbitrary relative proportions of buildings and figures effectively block any naturalistic illusion. The line of the houses *signifies* depth, but the buildings are *perceived* as stretched across the flat surface of the painting. In the terms Rosenblum used about Carstens, Pforr’s painting communicates “an idea of a space, rather than an illusion of a space.”<sup>129</sup>



Fig. 1

As the dominant formal element in the work, contour gives to each element a precise definition, allowing the figures, despite a certain degree of plasticity, to be integrated into the surface plane. The impression of a bright surface image, with no illusionist ambitions, is reinforced by Pforr’s application of color, which is always firmly contained within the precise contours of figures and buildings, by the typically Old German accuracy of detail, and by the absence of light effects. The even distribution of light also prevents the subordination of any one part of the painting to any other. At the same time, the figure of Rudolf is given special importance by being placed at the center of the picture, where the diagonals formed by the groups on the left and the right intersect and the procession shifts direction – though this movement is indicated only by a slight inclination of Rudolf’s horse’s head. The artist’s use of color also focuses attention on Rudolf as the strikingly colorless, grey central point of the entire bright pageant.

If the painting does not aim to create an illusion of reality, it also does not aspire to historical or antiquarian realism. Never having been to Basel, Pforr asked David Passavant to describe the Rathaus to him and Passavant sent him a sketch of it. Pforr thanked him, but went on to explain that “he could not make use of it because the architectural style was not appropriate.”<sup>130</sup> Instead, Pforr appears to have found inspiration for the street scene and the architecture in late fifteenth and early sixteenth century German painting and illustrations. Likewise, the dress of the figures in the picture is not that of 1273 but that of the early sixteenth century. Pforr’s intention, in short, appears to have been to create neither a visually realistic nor a historically accurate image, but a symbolical one, exploring and exhibiting the meaning of the event depicted.<sup>131</sup> Picking up on Schiller’s ballad on the subject, Pforr had already painted the legendary episode of “Rudolf of Habsburg and the Priest” (1808-1809; fig. 60) -- in which Rudolph dismounts from his horse and helps a priest carrying the



sacraments to a sick person to cross a stream. As the Habsburgs were widely considered the chief defenders of German independence against Napoleon in those years, this subject had achieved great popularity and was painted over and over again in the first four decades of the nineteenth century (by Ferdinand Olivier [1816] and by Pforr's friend Josef Wintergerst [1822] among others). Rudolph came to symbolize the good monarch, modest, compassionate, helpful, and, as a bringer of peace and order, a particular friend of burghers and townspeople -- a kind of German *roi bourgeois*. Pforr's "Entry" has thus to be read not as a realistic portrayal of an historical moment or event but as a portrayal of its meaning. The grey of the Emperor's costume at the center of the colorful painting, for instance, signifies the hero's legendary modesty.

A well-developed series of wall-paintings within the painting is likewise richly significant, rather than merely serving as historical *couleur locale*. On the furthest wall of the first row of houses on the right, a large painting of St. Christopher (who, according to legend, carried Christ [*Christum ferit*] in the form of a child, across a river) serves as a prefiguration of the story of Rudolf and the Priest. A further series of smaller wall paintings stretching from just beyond the first oriel window on the right to the extreme right of the painting depicts episodes from the Old Testament story of Joseph in Egypt: the furthest away, largely concealed by the protruding window, most likely Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers; the next, Joseph resisting Potiphar's wife; the next again, Joseph interpreting the dreams of the chief butler and the chief baker in prison; then, on the wall parallel to the picture surface, Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dream of the lean and the fat kine and being made governor of Egypt; and finally, Joseph's recognition by his brothers.

From early Christian times, Joseph in Egypt had commonly been interpreted as a figure of Christ: as Joseph was sold into slavery, then thrown into prison, then raised by Pharaoh to rule over Egypt, and finally reunited with his brothers, so Christ was betrayed by Judas, then crucified and buried, then resurrected to rule with his Father, and reunited with his Church. By the high Middle Ages, the figuration had been extended to encompass secular rulers, as in the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, where the Joseph story alludes to the piety, justice, and generosity of Louis IX (Saint-Louis), the royal donor. In Pforr's painting, the scene of Joseph being elevated to governor of Egypt, to which the viewer is directed by the pointing index finger of the bearded man in the last but one window on the right, prefigures the election of Rudolf as Emperor, which has just occurred at the time represented in the picture and which Rudolf is marking by forgiving an offence against him by the burghers of Basel. Far from being the illusionist representation of a singular moment of history (as the specificity of the date might lead one to expect), "The Entry of Rudolf of Habsburg into Basel, 1273" has a temporal dimension that extends from the Joseph story of the Old Testament through the life of Christ and the legend of St. Christopher to the election of Rudolf of Habsburg

in 1273, and beyond that depicted event, to the time of the artist's construction of the scene in the style of Old German, "primitive" painting of the early sixteenth century, the role of the Habsburgs as German Emperors (until Napoleon's dissolution of the Empire in 1806), and the widespread hope of the artist's generation that a new, wise, peace-loving emperor would arise, reunite the German nation, and liberate it from the Napoleonic yoke.<sup>132</sup> Overbeck's fondness for representing his fellow artists and members of his family among the secondary figures in his religious paintings, such as the "Entry of Christ into Jerusalem," or even directly as a particular Biblical figure, as in the drawing "Ruth and Boas" (1818; Lübeck, Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte), where Ruth has the traits of his new wife Nina (in fact, the drawing was intended to be sent to Lübeck and to introduce Nina to his parents)<sup>133</sup>, bears witness to a similar figural or typological view of history as a scene of repetition rather than a process of evolution.

As with Overbeck's "Portrait of Franz Pforr" or Pforr's "Entry of Rudolf of Habsburg," the deliberate "primitivism" of the dyptich "Sulamith und Maria" obliges the viewer to approach the work in a different spirit from that with which he would approach a visual representation of empirical reality. Pforr makes no appeal to the modern viewer's desire to find in art a representation of reality. His work refers not to reality but, through its reminiscences of Martin Schöngauer and Dürer (figs.73-75), to other, earlier art works, and that artistic reference is essential to its meaning. In fact, this unusual work was not intended for the general viewer, but



for an artistically informed one. As already noted, it was painted by Pforr as a gift of friendship for Overbeck and was accompanied by a hand-written tale of two young artists and their twin sister brides -- the dark-haired Shulamite and the fair-haired Maria -- likewise composed by Pforr for Overbeck alone, along with various other drawings illustrating scenes from the tale. Both the surprisingly small dimensions (32x34 cm) and the diptych form of "Sulamith und Maria" recall a medieval portable altar. The picture was clearly meant to accompany its owner everywhere and to be kept always close by him as something precious, even sacred. Friendship acquires here an earnest, almost religious character that distinguishes it from the sentimental, *schwärmerisch* friendships of the late eighteenth century.<sup>134</sup> It becomes the symbol of a universal love, in which man and woman, North and South, Old Testament and New Testament are brought together without losing anything of their distinctiveness.

Pforr's work signifies this formally. The two friends are not represented directly, but through their ideal spouses, and even the latter are not depicted with arms around each other or clasping hands, but are kept separate, each in her own panel of the painting. (In this respect the earlier "Allegorie der Freundschaft" and Overbeck's "Italia und Germania" are more sentimental than Pforr's painting.)<sup>135</sup> In fact each panel is relatively independent of the other -- the "Sulamith" panel lighter, more open, more Italianate, the "Maria" panel darker, more enclosed and domestic, more Dürer-like. Each could easily constitute an autonomous painting on its own. Yet the two are united not only by the frame and the presiding figure of Saint John (Johannes, the true first name of Overbeck) as scribe in the third, top section of the work, but by a series of formal and thematic harmonies: the repeated reds and whites, the symmetrically inclined heads of the two brides, the representation of the Shulamite with infant in a *hortus conclusus*, while her husband, as Overbeck, enters from the right, suggesting an Old Testament prefiguration of Mary. Each panel is independent, yet incorporates parts of the other and is thus part of a single coherent whole, just as each of the two friends retained his personal and artistic independence and yet was inseparably bound to the other in a brotherhood of love and dedication to "holy art" (as in Pforr's drawing of Raphael and Dürer kneeling before "die heilige Kunst" in the form of the Virgin). The other symbolic elements in the painting -- the lily, the lamb, the falcon, the dove and the swallow, the cat (a reminiscence, as Pforr himself noted, of the cat Overbeck had placed in his portrait of Pforr) never threaten the essential unity of the work. To me, this is a painting of wonderful delicacy and charm, even though I have seen it only in reproduction. "Fancy calendar art" (*New York Times*) seems a woefully inadequate description of it.<sup>136</sup>



Fig. 73



Fig. 74



Fig. 75

Finally, the haunting, starkly simplified portrait of Pforr of 1810 (fig. 67) -- another small canvas of only 22x17cm -- once again stands in vivid contrast to most late eighteenth and early nineteenth century portraiture, recalling rather, like other Nazarene portraits, late Gothic or early Renaissance representations of the human face. (P. 35, P. 36) It may even strike the contemporary viewer as extraordinarily "modern" in its high degree of stylization and almost Picasso-like disregard of naturalist perspective. The color range is of extreme sobriety, essentially varying degrees of brown,

relieved only by the pale green of the intensely clear, questioning eyes and the white of the collar and shirt front. The face fills the painting's surface, absorbing all the viewer's attention, with no distracting background to suggest social context and minimal modeling to suggest physical depth. Nose and mouth appear almost in profile, but the side of the face that in a profile would be concealed from the viewer has been pulled forward, while the side that is turned toward the viewer lacks perspectival foreshortening. Within this strangely flat image, with its multiple viewpoints and bold defiance of coherent perspective, the clear, well-defined lines of nose, mouth, eyes and eyebrows, hairline and slightly waving hair, jaw, shirt collar, and shirt front create a striking linear rhythm that gives the work an intense unity.<sup>137</sup>

#### IV

Later work by the Nazarenes bears out Richard Muther's judgment that "nobility of grouping and fine arrangement of lines," together, in most cases, with "a harmony of colours,"<sup>138</sup> were major objectives of their painting. It is true that the extreme abstractness, purity, and fluidity of line characteristic of Flaxman and Carstens was slightly compromised by the inclusion, along with the human figures that are the central subject of most Nazarene painting, of various symbols and of some spare references to the natural and historical environment -- background landscape, architecture, animals, etc. -- often painted with meticulous attention to detail. But the chief charm of the Nazarenes' paintings and drawings -- certainly the aspect of them that appealed strongly to me when I first encountered them -- does still lie, I believe, as Muther suggested 100 years ago, in their calm linearity and in the sense of order without constraint or violent and dramatic subordination that they communicate to the viewer. All the figures in a Nazarene painting or drawing, while united in a single unified composition, retain their independence and clarity of outline. Without assuming, like "Sulamith und Maria," the form of a diptych, the canvas is often divided by strong verticals into relatively distinct spatial units and groups.<sup>139</sup> (Figs. 76-82, P. 37-40) Secondary figures are drawn and painted with the same meticulous care and distinctness as primary ones. In contrast to much Baroque and Romantic painting, it seems as though no one and nothing is sacrificed to the production of a single overall effect. All appear equally in the same light; but all are held together in an unforced and untheatrical unity by the characteristic firm yet flowing lines, by repetitions and equivalences, by patterns of color,



Fig. 76



Fig. 77

and by the balance and transparency of the composition.<sup>140</sup>

These formal features correspond, it seems to me, to the Nazarenes' figural view of history, which also allows for repetition with difference and for unity without violent subordination of the parts to the whole. One might say that their vision of the world was closer to that of Herder or Ranke – in which “jede Epoche,” every moment and aspect of existence, is “unmittelbar zu Gott” – than to that of Hegel (although recurrence plays a greater role in their work than in Herder and Ranke); to an older version of Empire or international order as an agglomeration of independent yet not dissimilar entities, as in the Holy Roman Empire, than to the new version represented by the Napoleonic Empire; to the national ideal of a *Staatenbund* rather than to that of a *Bundestaat*, or, worse yet, a centralized state such as France; and to the political ideal of the German and Swiss liberals of the Restoration period rather than to modern mass democracy. Their work, in my view, is thoroughly anti-absolutist and anti-imperialist -- and no less opposed to the imperialism of the individual subject than to that of a total system, be it Hobbesian-baroque or Hegelian-romantic. As one critic observed disparagingly, there was something “*kleinstädtisch*” about these young artists from Frankfurt and Lübeck and Hamburg.<sup>141</sup> Schlegel's comment on the early Italian masters in his “Report on the Paintings in Paris, 1802-1804” seems to capture the spirit of Nazarene painting. “No confused groups, but a few individual figures, finished with such care and diligence as bespeak a just idea of the beauty and holiness of that most glorious of all hieroglyphic images, the human body; severe and grave forms, sharply outlined, and standing out in clear definition; no contrast of effect, produced by blending chiaroscuro and dark shadows (the brilliant reflection of light-illuminated objects being thrown in to relieve the gloom of night), but pure masses and harmonies of colour; draperies and costumes that seem to belong to the figures and are as sober and naïve as they are.”<sup>142</sup>

To conclude: There *is* a tension in the Nazarenes' work between the values of formal beauty on the one hand and moral and religious truth on the other, between artistic freedom or esthetic autonomy and moral and religious obligation. The artists' aim was to put together again what they believed had come apart, to restore unity gracefully and without violence to a divided universe. They presented a model of this



Fig. 78



Fig. 79



Fig. 80



Fig. 81

in their art by re-establishing a mild hierarchy, in which truth exercises a gentle, almost sisterly authority over beauty and the order and significance of the principal theme or action and the centrality of the leading figures are maintained without sacrifice of the relative autonomy of subordinate figures or actions. They would have objected strenuously to any attempt to distinguish radically between esthetic and traditional moral and religious values or to demand that in art one must dominate the other; and they would not, in any circumstances, have considered themselves decorative artists, aesthetes or champions of *l'art pour l'art* (a notion that was already forming in their time). In this sense they probably *should* be distinguished from many of the later English Pre-Raphaelites. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood came into existence at the very moment (1848) when the Nazarenes were succumbing to the pressure of naturalism and realism. As the context of their revolution was different, so was their response. The principles and practices the Nazarenes were in revolt against -- "materialism" and, in artistic terms, subordination of all aspects of painting to the production of a single overwhelming and, in their estimation, sensational effect -- were associated in their minds and in the minds of their viewers with a modern civilization of power, which might take the form of worldly seduction, ancien regime absolutism, Jacobin republicanism, or Napoleonic imperialism. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, it was the utilitarian materialism of an advanced commercial and industrial society that the English Pre-Raphaelites were chiefly in revolt against. The decorative element in their work was an affirmation -- albeit, perhaps, an ambiguous one -- of the value of the non-utilitarian.



Fig. 82

Yet it may be to the formal qualities of the Nazarenes that the sympathetic modern viewer, who does not necessarily share their Christian faith and piety or their idealized vision of Old Germany, is chiefly responsive. For by their very archaism, these formal qualities stand out and demand the viewer's attention. The form of a work may in turn suggest meanings independently of the work's ostensible subject matter. To my mind, the work of the Nazarenes still bears the imprint of certain key features of German neohumanism. Their subject matter may have been Christian rather than Greek or Roman, but "edle Einfalt und stille Grösse" (Winckelmann), modified by a Dürer-like attention to individual detail, are still the Nazarenes' supreme artistic values. No less than the neo-classical works of Canova, Flaxman or Danecker, their art may be seen as one artistic response to the problem of reconciling the freedom and autonomy of the part with the unity of the whole, subjectivity with objectivity, the real with the true. Wrestling with that problem has been the distinctive and not negligible contribution to human culture of German neohumanism and early Romanticism alike.

## Appendix A

### The Nazarenes in General Histories of Art

A sampling of popular art histories turned up no reference to the Nazarenes at all in Laurie Adams, *A History of Western Art* (1994, 2001); Elie Faure, *Histoire de l'art* (1909, 1911, 1921, 1924, 1926, 1927, 1939, 1947, 1964, 1972, 1985, 1987; Eng. trans. 1921, 1924, 1937, 1948); Louise Gardner, *Art Through the Ages* (1926, 1948, 1959, 1975, 1980, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001); Sir Ernst Gombrich, *The Story of Art* (16 editions between 1950 and 1995); Frederick Hartt, *A History of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture* (1976, 1985, 1989); Marilyn Stoksted, *Art History* (1995, 1999); and David G. Wilkins et al., *Art Past and Present* (1990, 1997). The briefest of mentions is to be found in Germain Bazin, *Histoire de l'art* (1953; Eng. trans. 1958, 1959); Stephen F. Eisenman, Thomas Crow, Brian Lukacher, Linda Nochlin and F. K. Pohl, *Nineteenth Century Art: A Critical History* (1994); Hugh Honour and John Fleming *The Visual Arts: A History* (1982, 1986, 1991); and H.W. Janson, *History of Art* (1962, 1977, 1986, 1991, 1997). The *Histoire de l'Art* (1985, 1990, 1996, 1998) of Albert Châtelet and Bernard Philippe Groslier contains a short passage on the Nazarenes and another on "les élèves d'Ingres et le préraphaélisme français." Likewise the *Praeger Picture Encyclopaedia of Art* (1958) has a short section on the German Romantics, including the Nazarenes (as befits the German origin of this work), as do Lorentz Eitner, *Outlines of Nineteenth Century Painting: from David through Cezanne* (1986, 1987, 1992) and the Random House *Library of Painting and Sculpture*, edited by David Piper (1981). The latter even offers a couple of illustrations. There is a somewhat fuller treatment in *Painting and Sculpture in Europe 1780-1880* by the Viennese scholar Fritz Novotny (1960 -- one of the volumes in the Pelican History of Art). Two primarily literary scholars, Marcel Brion in *Art of the Romantic Era* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966) and Wylie Sypher in *Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature* (New York: Random House, 1960), do at least devote several pages to the Nazarenes, even if the treatment is superficial. In general, compared even with a century ago (for instance, Edmund von Mach's *Outlines of the History of Painting*, published by Ginn in Boston, New York, and Chicago in 1906), German nineteenth century art has been almost totally ignored by the authors of the most popular and accessible general histories. It is not surprising that it is virtually unknown to the general public. "German Painting: The Forgotten Century" is the appropriate title of an article by Françoise Forster-Hahn in *Art News*, 1970, 69:50-55. A few recent popular art histories devoted to German painting or even German Romantic painting specifically (Marcel Brion, *German Painting* [New York: Universe Books; Paris:

Pierre Tisne, 1959]; Ulrich Finke, *German Painting from Romanticism to Expressionism* [London: Thames and Hudson, 1974]; William Vaughan, *German Romantic Painting* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980) inevitably contain sections devoted to the Nazarene artists and may be an indication of growing receptivity, but public -- and even professional -- interest remains modest.

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## Appendix B

### Ideological criteria in German judgments of the Nazarenes

Cabanne's judgment repeats that of many German art historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The vocabulary of their writing on the Nazarenes appears dominated by the categories and values of "Lebensphilosophie." "Life" was opposed and preferred to "thought," the immediacy of sensuous experience to reflection, movement to tranquillity, energetic engagement with the world to distance from it. "Gedankenkunst" became the term of abuse applied to an art which was accused of being removed from the reality of visual experience and of being the creation of theorists, theologians, and philosophers, the product of *Begriff*, rather than *Anschauung*, in the language used by the early twentieth century art critic Karl Scheffler, a protégé of the doughty defender of Impressionism, Julius Meier-Graefe

That the art of the Nazarenes was too much driven by ideas and theories was a charge made against it as early as 1841 by an earlier "progressive" critic. In a review of Overbeck's "Der Triumph der Religion" (Frankfurt am Main, Städelsches Institut) Friedrich Theodor Vischer denounced the claim that "die Kunst muss Ideen darstellen." This was, he declared, "totally false! For it means that the artist must first have an idea, that is to say, he must first cook up some abstract thought and then hang clothing on it." The inevitable consequence of such a drastic separation of idea and visual image ("*Idee*" and "*Bild*"), according to Vischer, was allegorical painting. (*Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst*, 5 August 1841, 30:117) By the end of the nineteenth century this critique had become commonplace. The French art historian Léon Rosenthal, writing in 1900, noted the Nazarenes' "disdain for color" and "the customary usage of the palette." Their art, he declared, "is not addressed only or even primarily to the eye" and even where they show formal inventiveness, they are "preoccupied above all with an idea." (*La Peinture romantique. Essai sur l'évolution de la peinture française de 1815 à 1830* [Paris: L. Henry May, 1900], pp. 306-307)



Liveliness and movement are defining criteria in Karl Scheffler's *Deutsche Maler und Zeichner im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1909). Scheffler opens his book on a contrast of *Anschauung* and *Begriff* or the visual and the conceptual, terms that appear to have some affinity with Schiller's "naïve" and "sentimental." Essentially, the Nazarenes are viewed as having come on the scene at an unfavorable moment, when the artist no longer had a natural relation to his public and art itself had become problematical. Thus we learn on the first page of the section devoted to the Nazarenes that "what was lived naively and as a matter of practical experience in earlier centuries is now lived in an overwhelmingly critical-theoretical mode." It is characteristic of the domain of thought, according to Scheffler, that it will not wait, "until life creates things organically, but must force developments intellectually." (p.9) The result is that those artists who are thinkers and theorists, rather than men of *Anschauung*, being out of touch with life, resort to eclecticism, both intellectual and artistic (pp. 7, 10, 13, 15-16) – that is, being unable to create appropriate styles and values of their own out of the immediate experience of their time (since they have turned away from their time), they pick and choose consciously and at will among styles and values spontaneously produced by earlier artists, who had been truly in tune with and expressive of their times. Thus the monumental art that the Nazarenes tried to revive "has become a museum art and as such is viewed with bored respect." A truly "living monumentalism is to be found only where...it can create the material it uses...out of living myth." (pp. 32-33).

The reproach is ultimately similar to that of Burckhardt and Vischer: the Nazarenes tried – and inevitably failed – to realize an art which they dreamed up in their minds but for which the real historical experience of their time provided no warrant. The Nazarenes did not even understand what was essential about the Renaissance itself, Scheffler claimed. "What was great and living in it was understood in the provincial spirit of the small-town dweller, according to rule and in a literary way ('*kleinstädtisch, grundsätzlich und literarisch*'). The Nazarenes picked their way with cautious, Biedermeier steps among the splendors of Rome and were able to draw from all the visually stimulating colossal grandeur only pleasing proprieties and sweet sentimentality." (p. 17) Even Peter Cornelius, who introduced a certain "element of struggle and combat" into the movement, could not much affect its "measured" and "lethargic" ('*gleichmässige*' and '*schläferige*') character. (p. 21) The same point about the incapacity of the "kleinstädtisch" German artists of the nineteenth century to understand the liveliness and energy of the early Renaissance artists they claimed to admire had been made shortly before by Cornelius Gurlitt in his *Die Deutsche Kunst des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (1899): "When the historically informed viewer of 1900 compares the Germans of 1800, all of them from small towns ('*Kleinstädte*'), with the Florentines of 1500 and takes note of the political and social conflicts from which each of the two groups emerged, he cannot refrain from smiling

at the pretention of those from Weimar and Dresden, who imagined they could look down upon the Florentines and judge them as simple men. Shut up in the narrow circle of his small-town life, the German of 1800 could not begin to understand the driving metropolitan momentum of fifteenth and sixteenth century Florence or of Rome in the great days of the Renaissance. He could not see how a Botticelli could tingle with nervous energy in every limb, and how religious piety already led a Perugino to reach backward toward an earlier form of art and to deliberately oppose the old and, according to him, worthier manner of the past to the young Florentines striving forward to the new..." (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1900], p. 224).

The theme of "Kraftlosigkeit" ('impotence') echoes through all the literature on the Nazarenes of the first half of the twentieth century. The nationalist, right-wing, anti-Semitic Henry Thode found fault with most of the Nazarenes on grounds not unlike those of his arch-enemy, the liberal, modernizing, and francophile Meier-Graefe. Though Thode maintained, against Meier-Graefe, that truly German art seeks the inner essence of things and cannot be content to represent their sensuous appearance ("eine realistische Kunst," according to him "ist keine Kunst" ['a realist art is no art']), he still found Overbeck "mild" ('*sanftgesinnt*') and "lifeless" ('*kraftlos*') and Philipp Veit "timid" ('*schwachmüthig*'). Peter Cornelius, in contrast, found favor in his eyes on account of his "energetic German feeling and powerful German imagination" ('*kraftvolles deutsches Gefühl und starke deutsche Phantasie*'). (*Böcklin und Thoma: Acht Vorträge über neue deutsche Malerei* [Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1905], pp. 37-38, 75-76) In his lectures at the University of Berlin in 1911, Heinrich Wölfflin declared that the viewer cannot but smile when he sees the frescoes at the Casa Bartholdy, "for there is nothing revolutionary about them, not even the freshness of spring, rather something stale, hackneyed, and faded" ('*sie haben nichts Revolutionäres, sogar nichts Frühlingsfrisches, eher etwas Abgestandenes, Abgeblasstes*'). (*Kunstgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts; Akademische Vorlesung*, ed. Norbert Schautz [Alfter: VDG Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 1993], p. 9) Menzel, in contrast, is admired for representing "movement, life, something of the endless agitation, the perpetuum mobile of the population of a great metropolis" ('*Bewegung, Leben, ein Stück Unaufhörlichkeit, ein Stück des Perpetuum mobile einer Grossstadtbevölkerung*') (p. 18), and in a comment on Max Liebermann, Wölfflin announced that modern painting has to do not with ideas but with "movement, creations of air and light, the eternally beating waves of life" ('*Bewegung, Geschöpfe von Luft und Licht, ewiger Wellenschlag des Lebens*'). (ibid.) Because in David painterly instinct and active involvement in the life of his nation overcame theoretical dogma, the French artist towers above his sickly, solitary, and excessively reflective German contemporary, Jakob Asmus Carstens. (p. 27) The glory of Delacroix was to have represented "life as such intensely experienced." (p. 66)

Writing a decade or so later, just after the First World War, Hans Hildebrandt faulted Overbeck for having banished from his work “all passion and dynamic action, all harshness but also all strength.” (*Die Kunst des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* [Wildpark-Potsdam: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1924], p. 77) Paul Ferdinand Schmidt lamented that “a Faustian revolutionary drive was alive in the thinkers and poets, but not in the modest formats of the painters” and attributes the “mediocre eclecticism” of painters of religious subjects to the “inner weakness and spiritual void” of the established Churches of the time. In the spirit of Nietzsche and other champions of “life” over dogma or even morality, he claims that if the nineteenth century Church had had leaders as energetic as a Julius II or the Spanish Inquisitors, the art of the Führichs, the Steinles, and the Overbecks, would have been quite different. (*Biedermeier Malerei* [Munich: Delphin Verlag, 1923], pp. 166-68). In the catalogue of a major exhibition of Overbeck’s work in his home town of Lübeck in 1928, the Director of the Lübeck Museum, Georg Heise – who was to be dismissed from his post in 1933 because of his support of modernists like Nolde and Barlach -- managed to praise the artist for remaining “true to himself.” The final judgment, however, was reserved: “His energy drained away at an early stage” Even in the 1830s his work was already the product of “thinblooded aristocratic proficiency.” In general, the Nazarenes were not bold enough to go through the “dark night of pain and suffering” in order to emerge stronger from the struggle. Their cast of mind was “pure, to be sure, but devoid of audacity, perilously narrow, often the product of inner weakness.” (*Die Malerei der deutschen Romantiker und Nazarener im besonderen Overbecks und seines Kreises*, Introduction by Georg Heise [Munich: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1928], pp. 10, 13)

The charge of weakness, softness, and sentimentality was not likely to be dropped during the Nazi period. On the occasion of the Overbeck exhibition in Lübeck in 1928, Kurt Karl Eberlein had still sung the praises of the Nazarenes on nationalist grounds: “Any one who has not seen the glorious, radiant frescoes in the Dante, Tasso and Ariosto rooms [of the Casino Massimo] can hardly have an idea what this new art of the Nazarenes was capable of.” (Ibid., text by Kurt Karl Eberlein, p. 19) At a time when Germany was torn by strife and war, he claimed, the Nazarenes, by withdrawing to Rome, had been able painstakingly to construct “in exile, on foreign soil, in the confines of a convent... a new idea of the nation and a new idea of humanity.” (p. 22) In at least one respect, moreover -- the value they placed on discipline and community -- they were a model for a generation of artists eager to regain their balance after the turbulence of Expressionism (soon to be characterized as “degenerate”): “I would only point to the fact that, as after the storm of Northern Romanticism, we too, after the storm of Northern Expressionism, find ourselves confronted by a young generation that unites scrupulously careful execution, quiet sobriety, and stylization of natural forms with a new artistic intention. The new, the inner Man is not yet fully reconstituted; there is

still need for humanity, reverence, love; it is still the voice of the singer, not the word that is heard -- and yet we have a strong sense that it is in this new art that the new, the good European, in whom Taboo and Tao, I and Thou, Life and Idea will be brought together in smiling harmony and reconciliation, will utter his first words." (p. 25) By 1938, Eberlein had moved on to an explicitly National Socialist position. Acknowledging that he has learned from the Führer and other Nazi luminaries, such as Alfred Bäumler and Christoph Steding, he now distinguished in Romanticism "das Weiblich-Nehmende" and "das Männlich-Gebende," "das Sentimentale und das Naïve, das Feige und das Heldische, die Flucht und die Tat" ('womanly taking and manly giving,' 'the sentimental and the naïve, the cowardly and the heroic, flight and action'). Among the Romantics, it was especially necessary to separate "the discoverers from the seekers...and the fugitives from the vanguard. In everything there are the sick and the hale, but especially among the Romantics, for Romanticism is an end *and* a beginning, it is weakness *and* strength. One group fled from their own time and searched for treasures by digging in the past, since they were incapable of discovering the new. In their flight, they sought out the community and the Middle Ages. They owed their finds to their flight...There can be passion in the rediscovery of what has been lost, but it always marks an end. The creative individual does not re-discover, for action presides over beginnings. Only he who has no fire seeks it in ashes." What was found by the fugitives from their own time was indeed wonderful: the great German "Volksgemeinschaft," the great "We" from which modern Germans had been cut off around 1530 "by the betrayal of the race." Nevertheless, the Gothic of "the cowards and the fugitives was weakness and a refuge, flight into the community of the Middle Ages. Their flight from life was historicism. Every historicism is flight. But far from those weaklings whose loyalty to the Reich took only the form of study and learning, there stood the warriors and creators." (*Caspar David Friedrich, der Landschaftsmaler: Ein Volksbuch Deutscher Kunst* [Bielefeld and Leipzig: Belhagen & Klasing, 1939], pp.11-120) Though Eberlein excludes the Nazarenes from the Romantic movement (p. 13), it is obvious that they have more in common with the "weaklings" than with the heroic "warriors." In its very excessiveness Eberlein's text highlights the ideological character of a great deal of the art historical discourse on the Nazarenes and the rarity of concrete analyses or discussions of particular works. Not surprisingly, in 1942, their art was dismissed in Hans Weigert's *Geschichte der deutschen Kunst* (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag) as "flau und blutlos, eine Kunst der Resignation" ('insipid and bloodless, an art of resignation'). (p. 473)

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## Appendix C

### The standard of French Impressionism and the invisibility of German art.

American scholars of German painting and museum curators mounting exhibitions of nineteenth century German painting are unanimous on the subject of the almost blinding effect of French Impressionism on American collectors, the American public, and even American scholarship. According to Françoise Forster-Hahn, "Impressionism made such a strong impact that American artists and collectors became almost exclusively oriented toward France and thus contributed to the virtual identification of 19<sup>th</sup> century art with Paris." ("German Painting: The Forgotten Century," *Art News*, 1970, 69:50-55. p. 50) The author of the introduction to the catalogue (1952) of the Charles and Emma Frye Collection in Seattle, one of the few in the U.S. with considerable German nineteenth-century holdings (most of them purchased from the estate of Josef Stransky, a Bohemian-born conductor of the New York Philharmonic who collected German art), presents a similar case: "The attention of the student, the critic, and the layman has been focused largely on the movement of Impressionism in France and the trends which followed it there." Kermit and Kate Champa, curators of an exhibition of "German Painting of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century" at the Yale Art Gallery, the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago in 1970, write in their introduction to the catalogue that "for most non-Germans,... nineteenth-century painting is understood historically and esthetically in terms of a French tradition beginning with Jacques Louis David and terminating in an open-ended question in the art of Paul Cézanne." That French tradition, they argue, is in fact the base line in every country for assessing both its own national art and the art of other Western countries in the nineteenth century. (*German Painting of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* [1971], p. 5) Over a decade later, introducing an exhibition of German paintings and drawings from the nineteenth century at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Director, Philippe de Montebello, still had to note apologetically that "the exhibition will come as a revelation to most of those who view it because few German paintings from this period are in American museums. Their neglect here is due to the almost total concentration of American collectors on artists of the French school and should not be taken as an indication that German nineteenth century painting lacks...luster or significance..." (*German Masters of the Nineteenth Century: Paintings and Drawings from the Federal Republic of Germany* [New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art/Harry N. Abrams, 1981], p. 6.) Nothing apparently had changed by 1988 when the Pierpoint Morgan Library organized an exhibition of "German Drawings 1780-1850." In the first essay of the catalogue Peter Betthausen could still assert that "German artists of this period are scarcely known outside their native land, and even less so in

America than in Europe.” As long as the “highest criteria” of judgment are “formal qualities and painterly values,” Betthausen conceded, “their works cannot sustain comparison with those of the great French painters or with Goya in Spain or Constable in England.” As he nevertheless pleads that they “deserve to be better known than they are, as this exhibition will confirm,” the implication is that the accepted criteria may have been conceived too narrowly. (*The Romantic Spirit: German Drawings 1780-1850 from the Nationalgalerie [Berlin] and the Kupferstichkabinett [Dresden]* [New York: Pierpoint Morgan Library/Oxford University Press, 1988], pp. 20-21)<sup>143</sup> And not only too narrowly for German painting. In an essay on a major work by the English Pre-Raphaelite painter Burne-Jones, recently acquired by the Württemberg State Gallery in Stuttgart, Kurt Löcker comments on the similar marginalisation (at least until the late twentieth century) of the English Pre-Raphaelites: “People have become accustomed to looking at nineteenth century painting with eyes trained by frequenting painters like Matisse or Picasso and have hacked a pathway back through the dense undergrowth of phenomena, on which the chief stops bear the names Cézanne and Manet, Courbet, Delacroix and Géricault. Only now that Surrealism has won general interest is the painting of the late nineteenth century, at once sensual and symbolically encoded, beginning to come back into our field of vision. If the interest of the Naturalists and Impressionists was focused entirely on the object and its appearance, Burne-Jones explores the meaning that is reflected in them...” (*Der Perseus-Zyklus von Edward Burne-Jones* [Stuttgart: Staatsgalerie, 1973], p. 19)

Among certain German art historians the dominant francocentric perspective and its strongly Impressionist orientation, even in German art history, was the object of sustained criticism. This criticism came mostly, but not exclusively, from the nationalist Right. In a notorious attack on Meier-Graefe at the beginning of the twentieth century Henry Thode denounced his and Richard Muther’s evolutionist view of art history and their assumption of a natural and inevitable evolution toward Impressionism (*Böcklin und Thoma*, 1905, pp. 3-5). During the National Socialist years Hans Weigert again challenged the “dogma” imposed on his generation, according to which “the goal of the entire development of art was this Impressionism [i.e. French Impressionism], in which art finally achieved its complete fulfilment.” (*Geschichte der deutschen Kunst*, 1942, p. 496) A more moderate tone was struck by Gustav Pauli in the fourth volume of Georg Dehio’s monumental *Geschichte der deutschen Kunst* which appeared in 1934, but was written substantially before the coming to power of the National Socialists. Pauli tried to judge the art of the period more generously than Meier-Graefe and pointed to the profound differences of aim and intent between Romantic and Impressionist artists. “An artistic taste formed by the experience of Impressionism can no more do justice to a Böcklin than a taste formed by Classicism,” he wrote. “Its criteria inevitably fall short before the Romantics. In the eyes of both the Impressionists and the Neoclassics, illustrative

values count for nothing; they are even suspect, a pack of ideas burdening pure form..." (quoted by Schmolz, "Deutsche Malerei des 19. Jahrhunderts in heutiger Sicht," p.128) There are probably many periods and schools of painting which must remain inaccessible to those whose taste has been chiefly formed by Impressionist art.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Léon Rosenthal, *La Peinture romantique. Essai sur l'évolution de la peinture française de 1815 à 1830* (Paris: L. Henry May, 1900), 305.

<sup>2</sup> On Burckhardt's concept of the "Existenzbild," see my article "The *Existenzbild* in Burckhardt's Art Historical Writing," *MLN*, 1999, 114: 878-929, also *Basel in the Age of Burckhardt: A Study in Unseasonable Ideas* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 375-81. The Venetians had themselves proclaimed that the production of pleasure was the chief object of painting and that even its moral and religious effect derived from that source. (L. Dolci, *Dialogo della pittura*, 1557) To Sperone Speroni, who was himself portrayed by the master, Titian's painting represented "il paradiso del corpo" (*Dialoghi*, 1558); see Daniel Arasse, "Le Corps fictif de Sébastien et le coup d'oeil d'Antonello," in *Le Corps et ses fictions*, ed. Claude Reichler (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1983), 55-72.

<sup>3</sup> Some recent studies may overemphasize the nationalist, "Germanic" tendency of the Nazarenes. The latter were certainly aware of being "Teutsche," they sought out and gave support to other "Teutsche," and they generally supported some kind of German national unity (Napoleon had disbanded the old Reich in 1806), but there was nothing narrow or exclusive about their patriotism and it was a far cry from the aggressive nationalism of the later nineteenth century. There is not even much evidence that the Nazarenes were especially active in the *Befreiungskriege*, even though they all lamented the misery and humiliation inflicted on their nation by the French invasions. Only Philipp Veit, Friedrich Olivier and Scheffer von Leonhardshoff appear to have taken an active part. Overbeck's school friend, Gustav Martini, who later turned up in Vienna and whose tales of battle fascinated Franz Pforr, even served as a doctor in Napoleon's armies. So too, when Lübeck was sacked in 1807, the Lübeckers saw themselves as victims of the Prussians as well as the French. The fact that so many of the Nazarenes were Catholic or converted to Catholicism is in itself a sign that their patriotism bore no resemblance to modern demagogic nationalism, as is the frequent association, in their imagery, of figures representing the union in friendship of Germany and Italy, Nuremberg and Rome, Dürer and Raphael, and even -- in the case of Joseph Anton Koch, who hoped to complement his "Landschaft mit dem heiligen Martin" (1815) with a "St. Bonifatius fällt den Jupiterbau," thus representing both the patron saint of France and the apostle to the Germans -- Germany and France. (See *Die Nazarener* [Frankfurt am Main, 1977], 63; Catalogue of the Exhibition held at the Städelsches Kunstinstitut, April-August 1977) Above all, the decision to settle in Rome marks a striving toward what was believed to be fundamental, enduring, and universal and an opting out of the dramatic history of political and national rivalries and ambitions that these ardent and idealistic young men judged as ephemeral and superficial as the representations of the immediate experience of things on canvas, which they rejected in art. To Wilhelm Wackenroder, whose *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1797) was one of the chief sources of inspiration of the Nazarene movement, the fact that Odin and Thor were "vaterländische Götter" seemed an odd justification for the current interest in Germanic mythology. "Was will man denn in unsern Zeiten mit dieser Vaterlandsliebe?" he scoffed. "Doch scheint jetzt eine gewisse Mode hierin zu herrschen. Gemeine Schullehrer scheinen wirklich zu glauben, dass sie wer weiss wie grosse Fortschritte in der Pädagogik gemacht haben, wenn sie ihren 8-jährigen Knaben jetzt die Brandenburg[ische] Gesch[ichte] d[es] Vaterlands recht weitläufig erzählen. Ein Bürger...braucht doch in unseren Zeiten im Grunde die vaterl[ändische] Gesch[ichte] so wenig als eine andre, und es würde, nach meiner Meynung, also zweckmässiger seyn, wenn man irgend eine *interessante* Gesch[ichte], ohne Rücksicht ob dieses



oder jenes alten oder neuen Volks, in unteren Schulen vorträge.” (Letter to Ludwig Tieck, 5 May 1792, in *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, ed. Silvio Vietta and Richard Littlejohns, vol. 2 [Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1991], 30) Seventy years later, in 1865, with nationalist sentiment growing ever stronger in Germany, the now elderly Overbeck, still resident in Rome, reaffirmed that he was a Christian first and only “demnach Deutscher” and that, without any diminution of his affection for his homeland, he considered that “the heavenly fatherland was incomparably higher than the earthly one.” (Margaret Howitt, *Friedrich Overbeck. Sein Leben und Schaffen. Nach seinen Briefen und andern Documenten des handschriftlichen Nachlass geschildert*, ed. Franz Binder, 2 vols. [Freiburg i. B.: Herder, 1886; rpt. Bern: Herbert Lang, 1971], 2:385) The liberal art historian Karl Scheffler even claimed that the Nazarenes had no “lebendiges nationales Empfinden,” and that “Es tritt eine nicht eben liebenswürdige Gleichgültigkeit gegen die politischen Schicksale Deutschlands zutage.” Scheffler’s claim that “nicht einer der Nazarener hat an den Freiheitskriegen teilzunehmen den Drang gehabt” is, however, false. (Karl Scheffler, *Deutsche Maler und Zeichner im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* [Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1920; 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1909], 16-17)

<sup>4</sup> See Leonore Koschnick, *Franz Kugler (1808-1858) als Kunsthistoriker und Kunstpolitiker*, Diss. Freie Universität Berlin, 1985, 121-35; Jacob Burckhardt, “Bericht über die Kunstausstellung zu Berlin im Herbst 1842,” *Kunstblatt*, 12 Jan. 1843, and article “Overbeck (Friedr.)” in the Brockhaus *Conversations-Lexikon*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 1846, 10:614-15; Friedrich Theodor Vischer, review of Overbeck’s “Der Triumph der Religion in der Kunst,” *Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst*, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 August 1841 (nos. 28, 29, 30, 31, 31, pp. 109-111, 113-114, 117-120, 121-124, 125-28), and *Aesthetik*, ed. Robert Vischer, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Munich: Meyer & Jessen, 1923), vol. 4 (“Kunstlehre: Bildnerkunst/Malerei”) #739, 481-85.

<sup>5</sup> *La Peinture belge au XIXème siècle*, trans. Jean de Mot (Brussels: Misch et Thron, 1904), 12-23. The original German text was unfortunately not available to me.

<sup>6</sup> For a rapid overview of their influence on the Italian “Puristi,” the students of Ingres in France, and the English Pre-Raphaelites, see Herbert Schindler, *Die Nazarener: romantischer Geist und christliche Kunst im 19. Jahrhundert* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1982), 68-72; see also on the Nazarene influence in Italy and England the contribution by Günther Metken and in France that by Henri Dorra in *Die Nazarener* (Frankfurt a.M.: Städelsches Kunstinstitut [Catalogue of the Exhibition, April - August 1977]), pp. 327-36, 355-64, 337-54.

<sup>7</sup> On Ingres as “gothique,” see Robert Rosenblum, *The International Style of 1800. A Study in Linear Abstraction* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1976; Ph.D. Thesis, New York University, April 1956), 178-79; Uwe Fleckner, *Abbild und Abstraktion. Die Kunst des Porträts im Werke von Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1995), 55-57. On Ingres and the Nazarenes, see Rachel Eisner, “Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Zeit: Überlegungen zu Overbeck und Ingres,” in *Johann Friedrich Overbeck 1789-1869. Ausstellungskatalog zur 200ten Wiederkehr seines Geburtstages*, ed. Andreas Blühm and Gerhard Gerkens (Lübeck: Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt, 1989), 54-62. Jean Alazard rejects the view that the Nazarenes may have exerted an influence on Ingres, claiming instead that it was the French artist who, as a longtime admirer of the Italian Quattrocento and a staunch champion of “la ligne sensible” and “le contour expressif,” was the instigator of the movement that led to German and then English Preraphaelism. (*Ingres et l'ingrisme* [Paris: Albin Michel, 1950], 69, 129. In similar vein Bruno Foucart recalls that after his visit to Overbeck’s studio in 1833, Hippolyte Flandrin expressed both admiration and criticism. Overbeck, in Flandrin’s view, “se sert de la peinture, il ne tient qu’à rendre ses idées, à les écrire.” (Quoted in “Saint Hippolyte Flandrin,” in *Hippolyte, Auguste et Paul Flandrin. Une*

*fraternité picturale au XIXe siècle* [Paris: Editions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1984], 35-46). In Foucart's reading, Flandrin followed French art critics and historians, such as Delaborde and Delécluze (both themselves also painters, the former a student of Delaroche, the latter of David) in rejecting what they saw as the Nazarenes' subjection of painting to philosophy, theology, and archaizing archaeology, while at the same time by picking up the religious tradition of early Italian painting in his own way, he neutralized Nazarene influence in France: "Il n'acclimate pas en France l'Ecole de Francfort et de Munich, il les rend inutiles." (p. 41) On the the general question of the relation between Ingres and his students and the Nazarenes, see Michel Callort, "De la séduction nazaréenne, ou Note sur Ingres et Signol (Rome, 1835)," *Bulletin du Musée Ingres*, December 1983, 51/52:53-73; Maurice Denis, "Les élèves d'Ingres" (first published in *L'Occident*, 1902) in his *Théories 1890-1910: Du Symbolisme et de Gauguin vers un nouvel ordre classique* (Paris: C. Renart et J. Watelin, 1920 [4<sup>th</sup> ed.]), 94-95; Henri Dorra, "Die französischen 'Nazarener'," in *Die Nazarener* (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), 337-54; id., "Montalembert, Orsel, les Nazaréens et 'l'art abstrait,'" *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, série 6, 1975, 85:137-47; Bruno Foucart, *Le Renouveau de la peinture religieuse en France (1800-1860)* (Paris: Arthéna, 1987), 27-28, 202-204 et passim; M. Lamy, "L'Italie vue par les élèves d'Ingres, précurseurs de Puvis de Chavannes," *Revue de l'Art Ancien et Moderne*, 1922, 42:219-25; Daniel Ternois, "Le Préraphaélisme français," in his edition of Amaury-Duval, *L'Atelier d'Ingres* (Paris: Arthéna, 1993), 385-406.

<sup>8</sup> Full title: *De la poésie chrétienne dans son principe, dans sa matière et dans ses formes. Formes de l'art. Peinture* (Paris: Debécourt, 1836). The second volume, published in 1851, bore the revised title: *De l'Art chrétien* (Paris: A. Bray). An English translation appeared as *The Poetry of Christian Art* (London: T. Bosworth, 1854.). A new and revised edition in 4 volumes was published by Hachette in 1861-67 and reprinted in 1874.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Henri Dorra, "Montalembert, Orsel, les Nazaréens et 'l'art abstrait,'" 137. See also Daniel Ternois, "Le Préraphaélisme français," 388. On the growing vogue of the Nazarenes in liberal Catholic circles, see also Michel Callort, "De la Séduction nazaréenne, ou Note sur Ingres et Signol (Rome, 1835)," 59.

<sup>10</sup> Charles-René Forbes, Comte de Montalembert, "Du Vandalisme en France: lettre à M. Victor Hugo," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 2<sup>ème</sup> série, 1833, 1:421-468, at p. 425.

<sup>11</sup> See Sigrid Metken, "Nazarener und 'nazarenisch' -- Popularisierung und Trivialisierung eines Kunstideals," in *Die Nazarener* (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), pp. 365-88, at p. 373; also Jens Christian Jensen, "Bemerkungen zu Friedrich Overbeck," in *Johann Friedrich Overbeck 1789-1869. Ausstellungskatalog zur 200ten Wiederkehr seines Geburtstages*, ed. Andreas Blühm and Gerhard Gerkens (Lübeck: Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt, 1989), 12-19, at p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> *Lutezia: Berichte über Politik, Kunst und Volksleben*, XXXV, 19 May 1841, in Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Werke in zwölf Teilen*, ed. Paul Beyer et al. (Leipzig: Hesse & Becker, n.d.), 10:141.

<sup>13</sup> Eugène Emmanuel Amaury-Duval, "L'Exposition du Bazar Bonne Nouvelle en 1846," *Revue Nouvelle*, February 1846, 7:77-94. The passage quoted is from the draft version of the manuscript, reproduced in Amaury-Duval, *L'Atelier d'Ingres*, ed. Daniel Ternois, Annexe 3, 410-15, at p. 412. In the final version this was modified to read that France should be proud to be able to "opposer un grand nom français aux Overbeck et aux Cornelius." (p. 415)

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Quentin Bell, *Victorian Artists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 15-16.

<sup>15</sup> "The great Overbeck, that prince of Christian painters..." Augustus Welby Pugin, *Contrasts, or A parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages and Corresponding Buildings of the Present Day, shewing the Present Decay of Taste* (London: Charles Dolman, 1841), 18. In a footnote, Pugin recommends that "all those who are interested in the revival of Christian art should prepare engravings from the work of this great artist." On Overbeck's influence on Pugin's drawing and decoration, see Phoebe Stanton, *Pugin* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 140.

<sup>16</sup> William Vaughan, *German Romanticism and English Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), 21.

<sup>17</sup> Ruskin was a notable exception with his claim that there was nothing of artistic value in the "muddy struggles of the unhappy Germans." (*Modern Painters*, II, 1, in *Complete Works*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn [London: George Allen, 1903-1904], 39 vols., 3:350) They lack not only "mechanical means and technical knowledge" (*ibid.*) but insight and imagination, with the result that Overbeck, for one, "degrades the subjects he intends to honour" *Modern Painters*, IV,3, in *Complete Works*, 5:50. In "Notes on German Galleries" (1859), a Virgin by Overbeck in Cologne Cathedral is judged "execrable beyond all contempt" and an obvious plagiarism of a Titian. (*Complete Works*, 7:488)

<sup>18</sup> David Brown, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Marcia Pointon, *William Dyce 1806-1864. A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); G.H. Fleming, *Rosetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1967), 75 (on Brown and the Nazarenes); Teresa Newman and Roy Watkinson, *Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelite Circle* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1991), 33 ff.

<sup>19</sup> William Vaughan *German Romanticism and English Art*, 5-7; Günter Metken, "Ein nationaler Stil? England und das nazarenische Beispiel," *Die Nazarener* (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), 355-363; Cornelius Gurlitt, *Die deutsche Kunst des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1900), 302-303.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted from "Les Beaux-Arts en Europe," (1855) in *Die Nazarener* (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), 413.

<sup>21</sup> Reported in Tim Holton, *John Ruskin: The Early Years 1819-1859* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 72. See also on Ruskin and the Nazarenes, 237, 277. It is noteworthy that Margaret Howitt, who was selected by Overbeck's widow to write the artist's biography, was an Englishwoman with literary and artistic interests and that the original text of her still indispensable work of documentation was in English and was intended for publication in Great Britain.

<sup>22</sup> George Eliot had already encountered the Nazarenes on her visits to Germany in 1854 and 1858. In the novel, Naumann is said to have projected a work to be entitled "Saints drawing the Car of the Church" -- probably an ironical reference to Overbeck's celebrated, but also much criticized "Der Triumph der Religion in den Künsten" (1833-40). See Hugh Witemayer, "George Eliot, Naumann and the Nazarenes," *Victorian Studies*, 1974, 18: .

<sup>23</sup> Quentin Bell, *Victorian Artists*, 16.

<sup>24</sup> Kurt Karl Eberlein, *Caspar David Friedrich, der Landschaftsmaler: Ein Volksbuch Deutscher Kunst* (Bielefeld und Leipzig, 1939: "Es gab weibisch-feige Romantiker, die in das Universale und Internationale flohen, kurz gesagt: Literaten; und es gab männlich-tapfere Romantiker, die in das Nationale und Deutsche

stürmten, kurz gesagt: Künstler.” (p. 6) This “true German” Romanticism is “deutsche Kampfkunst, ist Opferkunst.” What Eberlein admires in Friedrich and the Northern Romantics is “Lichtliebe, Steinliebe, Grabliebe...Naturkult,” together with a “Greek” element: “kämpferisches Wesen,...Untergangswillen,... Schicksals- und Todesliebe.” (p. 2) It would have been virtually impossible for Eberlein to find those features in the work of the Nazarenes.

<sup>25</sup> See on Schlegel’s rejection of a new Romantic mythology and on the difference between the Northern Romantics (Novalis, Runge, Friedrich) and the Nazarenes in this regard, Käthe Brodnitz, *Nazarener und Romantiker: Eine Studie zu Friedrich Overbeck* (Berlin: Emil Ebering, 1914), 31-33.

<sup>26</sup> “...dénuée de chaleur et de vie.” (Pierre Cabanne, *L’Art du XIXème siècle* [Paris: Somargy, 1989], p.86).

<sup>27</sup>“Die Arbeiten von \*\*\* erinnern mich an Spielkarten, bald so, bald anders gemischt, die Karten bleiben immer dieselben. So erinnere ich mich, diese Figuren schon öfters gesehen zu haben, ja selbst der Hintergrund ist mir schon aus alten Bildern und Kupferstichen bekannt. Das eine Bild schmeckt nach Raphael, das andere nach Michelangelo und ihren Vorgängern. Wäre es nicht besser, sie trügen alle das Gepräge des, der sie gemacht, an der Stirne? Oder ist er ohne Gepräge?” (*Caspar David Friedrich in Briefen und Bekenntnissen*, ed. Sigrid Hinz [Berlin:Henschel, 1968], 85. Likewise, pp. 113-14: “Sollte denn das wohl der hochgepriesene Kunstsinn unserer Zeit sein, sich in knechtischer Nachäffung einer früheren, wenngleich schönen Kunstzeit su gefallen...Ist es aber nicht, wenn wir aufrichtig sein wollen, etwas Widriges, ja oft Ekelhaftes, vertrocknete Marien mit einem verhungerten Jesuskind im Arme zu sehen, und mit papierenen Gewändern bekleidet. Oft auch wohl mit Absicht verzeichnet und geflissentlich Verstösse gegen die Linien- und Luftperspektive gemacht? Alle Fehler jener Zeit äfft man täuschend nach, aber das Gute jener Bildwerke, das tiefe, fromme, kindliche Gemüt, was diese Bilder so eigentlich beseelt, lässt sich freilich nicht mit den Fingern nachahmen...Was unsere Vorfahren in kindlicher Einfalt taten, das dürfen wir bei besserer Erkenntnis nicht mehr tun.” Likewise Friedrich Theodor Vischer: With the Romantic School, “ein neues Mittelalter trat auf, aber kein wirkliches, ein in einem fremdartigen Geiste, dem modernen, reflectirtes, künstliches Mittelalter.” [ In *Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst*, 6 August 1841, 31:123]) The modern, sentimental character of Overbeck’s “Triumph der Religion” is inescapable despite the artist’s best efforts: “Ja, sie ist schön, diese Madonna, diese reine Taube sonder Galle. Und doch -- es ist etwas darin, ich weiss nicht was, etwas Almanach, etwas Vielliebchen und Vergissmeinnicht. Es ist ein Zug der in allen neueren Madonnen unverkennbar ist: man sieht ihnen eben eine Zeit an, wo es Stammbücher, viele Spiegel, Modejournal und Titelpuffer von Taschenbüchern giebt. Wie soll es auch anders möglich sein! Wie kann ein Mensch seine Zeit verläugnen!...Nein, eure Madonnen sind nicht Madonnen der alten Kirche: sie haben in den Stunden der Andacht gelesen, sie sind in einer Pension, in einer Töchterchule aufgewachsen...ja sie trinken Thee, wenig, aber etwas.” (Ibid., 7 August 1841, 32:126) The point was repeated succinctly at the end of the century by Cornelius Gurlitt: “Man wollte nicht einsehen, wie gewaltig sich die Lebensverhältnisse geändert hatten.” (*Deutsche Kunst des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 222)

<sup>28</sup> “...sehen uns an wie mit Augen des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts. Gespenstig sind die Gewänder, als rauschten sie uns vorbei um Mitternacht, zauberkräftig sind die Leiber, traumrichtig gezeichnet, gewaltsam wahr, nur das Blut fehlt ihnen, das pulsierende Leben, die Farbe.” (*Die Nazarener* [Frankfurt, 1977], 409-10) In general, Heine associates the Nazarenes with forces he considers hostile to life and art (Judaism, spiritualism, puritanical Republicanism, as opposed to joyful Hellenism and paganism; Ludwig Börne as opposed to Goethe [*Ludwig Börne: eine Denkschrift*]). In the *Elementargeister* he again contrasts “der

trübsinnige, magere, sinnenfeindliche, übergeistige Judäismus der Nazarener” with “hellenische Heiterkeit, Schönheitsliebe und blühende Lebenslust.” (*Sämtliche Schriften in 12 Bänden*, ed. Klaus Briegleb [Frankfurt am Main, 1981], 5:685)

<sup>29</sup> From *Wanderjahre in Italien* (1870) quoted by Jens Christian Jensen, “Bemerkungen zu Friedrich Overbeck,” in *Johann Friedrich Overbeck 1789-1869* (Lübeck, 1989), 12.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Muther, *History of Modern Painting*, 4 vols. (London: J.M.Dent, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1907; orig. Ger. *Geschichte der Malerei im XIX Jahrhundert*, 1893), 1: 133.

<sup>31</sup> Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (Munich: Hugo Bruckmann, 1923; 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1915) 250; *Kunstgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Akademische Vorlesung*, ed. Norbert Schautz (Alfter: VDG Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 1993), 9. Similarly Gurlitt: the painstaking efforts at fresco of the Nazarenes contrast so sharply with the free and lively handling of this technique by the Tiepolos (Giovanni Battista and his son Giovanni Domenico) that if they were all to be rediscovered in an archaeological dig, the researcher would find it impossible to believe the Nazarenes came later: “Es ist für den Nachlebenden ganz ausserordentlich schwer, bei den Unbeholfenheiten nicht zu lächeln.” (*Deutsche Kunst im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, 219) For an illuminating and thorough account of the marginalization of the Nazarenes in nineteenth and twentieth century Germany and the identification of the Northern German German school (Runge, Friedrich) with authentic German Romanticism, see Mitchell Benjamin Frank, *German Romantici Painting Redefined: Nazarene Tradition and the Narratives of Romanticism* (Aldershot, England, and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2001). Unfortunately, this work appeared too late for me to make use of its rich documentation and many shrewd insights and observations.

<sup>32</sup> See the clever and persuasive article on the hidden Hegelianism of art history by the Columbia art historian Keith Moxey in his “Art History’s Hegelian Unconscious: Naturalism as Nationalism in the Study of Early Netherlandish Painting,” in his *The Practice of Persuasion: Paradox and Power in Art History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 8-41. Moxey illustrates his case persuasively by following the varying fortunes of Memling and Van Eyck.

<sup>33</sup> On the historical arrangement of the paintings on exhibition at the Louvre under Vivant Denon and the Belvedere under Christian Mechel, see Andrew McClellan, “Nationalism and the Origins of the Museum in France,” in *The Formation of National Collections of Art and Archaeology*, ed. Gewendolyn Wright (Washington: National Gallery of Art; Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1996), 29-39; James J. Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World from the End of the Old Regime to the Rise of Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 39-41. Hegel’s brilliant and richly informed chapter on painting is in *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, III, III, I, trans. T.M. Knox, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 2:797-887.

<sup>34</sup> Reviewing the new Musée Napoléon in Paris, the ancestor of the Louvre, in 1791, the *Décade Philosophique* recommended a “progressive” arrangement so that the visitor would observe the evolution of painting “du style froid et roide de Jean de Bruges aux sublimes conceptions de Rubens.” (Suzanne Sulzberger, *La Réhabilitation des Primitifs flamands, 1802-1867* [Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1961], 30. Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des Beaux-Arts: Mémoires, XII, 3)

<sup>35</sup> See, for instance, Richard Muther, *The History of Modern Painting*, 1:112. According to Muther there was an “archaeologist” in the neo-classical David, but also a “naturalist” whose work was enlivened by his

involvement in the tumultuous events of his time and society: On the one hand, "Simplicity beneath his hands became dryness, nobility formal...painting a sort of abstract geometry for which there existed hard-and-fast forms. There was something mathematical in his effort after dry correctness and erudite accuracy. The infinite variety of life with its eternal changes was hidden from his sight." Much of his work (the "Horatii," the "Rape of the Sabines," "Leonidas") is characterized by "a mixture of dryness and declamatory pathos; diligence without imagination; able draughtsmanship and an absolute incapacity of drawing anything whatever without a model; careful arrangement without the slightest trace of that gift of the inner vision whereby the whole is brought complete and finished before the eye." (Ibid., 1:193) Prudhon – "the one refreshing oasis in the desert wilderness of the classical school" (Ibid., 1:192) is said to have "protested in the name of the graceful against David's formal stiffness." (Ibid., 1:206) Likewise David's pupil Gros "stands far above David and all his rivals in his power of perception. The elder painter is now out of date, while Gros remains ever fresh, because he painted under the impulse given by real events, and not under the ban of empty theories. In an epoch when Rome and Greece were the only sources of inspiration, he had the courage to paint a hospital with its sick, its dying, and its dead." (Ibid., 1:210) In David, Muther writes, "all is calculation; in Gros fire." (Ibid., 1:212) In the end, however he accepted his teacher's criticism of him "for having taken the trouble to paint the battles of the Empire, 'worthless occasional pieces,' instead of venturing upon those of Alexander the Great and thus producing genuine 'historical works'" and when he took over David's studio after the latter was banished from France, "the incubus of David's antique manner" began once more to press upon him" and destroyed his original talent. (Ibid., 1:213) On the other hand, however, when David gave "himself up entirely to the delineation of what came under his direct observation in his own life and experience,... he became not only a rhetorician, a revolutionary agitator, but a really great painter. Lepelletier on his deathbed, the assassinated Marat, and the dead Barre are "works of a mighty *naturalist*." (Ibid., 1:105-106) Similarly, in "his portraits...he is neither rhetorical nor cold, but full of fire and the freshness of youth. Face to face with his model, he forgot the Greeks and the Romans, saw life alone...and painted...the truth...The best painters have never treated flesh better...The fine pearl-grey of his colouring is as delicate as it is distinguished; in his portraits, especially, the relief-tones of blue and light rose seem almost to anticipate the delicate, toned-down tints of modern Impressionism." (Ibid., 1:106, 109) The essential thing is that technique itself was never an object of scorn in France as it became in Germany (see note below). The academic tradition was never broken. "David, the great painter of the Revolution, who cast the pictures of Boucher out of the Louvre, and whose pupils used to shoot breadcrumbs at Watteau's masterpiece, the 'Voyage à Cythère,' yet conveyed with him into the new age, as an inheritance from *rococo*, its prodigious knowledge. The good old traditions of the technique of French painting were little shaken by him and his school...This art...at no time lost its touch, technically, with the acquisitions of former epochs, but evolved in its various directions from one center...Géricault, Delacroix, Courbet, and Manet, widely as they differ from one another, are links in one chain of evolution." (Ibid., 1:113)

<sup>36</sup> Robert Rosenblum has been a consistent critic of "evolutionism" in the history of art and an effective champion of a less blinkered, less teleological approach, vividly exemplified by the bold eclecticism of the recent millennium exhibition, "1900: Art at the Crossroads," at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. "The nineteenth century was often viewed as a kind of Darwinian evolution that vindicated and explained later forms of art," Rosenblum writes. "Turner and Constable, especially in their sketches, might be admired because they prefigured Impressionism; and Impressionism might be esteemed because it destroyed those Renaissance perspective systems which shackled painting to imitation and prevented it from being itself...In the late twentieth century, such evangelical visions of nineteenth century art have almost a quaintly nostal-

gic period flavor.” (Robert Rosenblum and H.W. Jansen, *19<sup>th</sup> Century Art* [New York: Harry Abrams, 1984], Preface and Acknowledgments). The critique of art histories written from the perspective of a triumphant Modernism is probably not unrelated to the decline of Marxist progressivism and the suspicion with which all “metahistories” (Jean-François Lyotard) have come to be regarded.

<sup>37</sup> Pierre Cabanne (*L'Art du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle* [1989]) repeats the usual condescending judgments (“touchant de sincérité, mais esthétiquement assez plat”), but at least acknowledges the Nazarenes’ celebrity in their own time: “Si leur spiritualité candide fait sourire, et si leur technique lisse et impersonnelle paraît dénuée de chaleur et de vie, ils furent salués dans toute l’Europe comme les précurseurs d’un nouvel art monumental et...eurent une influence sensible sur Ingres et sur Puvis de Chavannes.” (pp. 85-86) Jean-Louis Ferrier et al. (*L’Aventure de l’art au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle* [1991]) provide a fair amount of factual information. Michel Le Bris (*Romantics and Romanticism* [1981]) demonstrates real sympathy and understanding. The essence of his judgment deserves to be quoted: “Giving up black crayon and red chalk for the hardest graphite pencils, which almost tore the drawing paper with their hard silver line; trying thereby to match not only the contours of Perugino or Raphael but also the transparency of Dürer’s silver-point drawings, they thus carried further the fondness of Flaxman and Carstens for the outline, conceived as the precise delineation of the artist’s idea, a pure *shaft of the mind*, free of all shadow, of all matter which might encumber or enfeeble; but in conceiving it first as the expression of a spiritual asceticism they carried it to a hitherto unknown degree of intensity, where the plastic power of the imagination seems transmuted into almost musical expressiveness, in any case rhythmic, sometimes almost abstract, whose near-hypnotic, if not magical power of suggestion was to remain unparalleled.” (p. 96) Catalogues of exhibitions (most of them in the last 30 years) have inevitably been sympathetic to the art being displayed, as have some of the reviews of those exhibitions. Reporting on the ground-breaking exhibition of Nazarene art at the Städelches Institut in Frankfurt in 1977, for instance, Colin Bailey offered a nuanced judgment. He was particularly impressed by the portrait painting and drawing of the Nazarenes: “There are some so exquisite that they take one’s breath away. Particularly compelling are the superb portraits by Overbeck of Pforr, Wintergerst and Sutter...Masterful in technique and composition alike, and consistently subtle, despite the keenness of their psychological penetration, they make one regret that Overbeck did not devote more of his energy to portraiture and less to the insipid and repetitive religious pictures which he produced in such quantity in later life and which mar his reputation.” (*Burlington Magazine*, May-August 1977, 523-24)

<sup>38</sup> The author of the catalogue of the 1977 exhibition – “La Peinture allemande à l’époque du Romantisme” -- at the Orangerie des Tuileries in Paris notes that “l’histoire de l’art est faite...d’incessantes résurrections et remises en cause. La première moitié du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle allemand en offre un spectaculaire exemple. Ses héros, Friedrich et Runge, ne furent-ils pas totalement oubliés jusqu’au début de notre siècle et n’assistons-nous pas aujourd’hui en revanche au juste retour des Nazaréens, longtemps encensés puis mis à l’index à leur tour?” (*La Peinture allemande à l’époque du Romantisme* [Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1976], ix)

<sup>39</sup> The National Gallery in London acquired a Schnorr von Carolsfeld (“Ruth in Boaz’s Field,” 1828) in 1998; the Getty Museum in Los Angeles and the Metropolitan Museum in New York both acquired canvases by C.D. Friedrich in the 1980s and 1990s. Though the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. obtained a large number of prints by Ferdinand Olivier through the Rosenwald Collection in 1950, active acquisition of prints and drawings (by Cornelius, Pforr, Overbeck, and Schnorr von Carolsfeld) occurred only since the 1980s and 90s. In England the Queen’s collection contains a number of Nazarene works, largely as a result

of Prince Albert's interest, as does the British Museum. In the U.S. the most substantial public holdings of nineteenth century German art appear to be the Frye Collection in Seattle (acquired by Charles Frye, the son of a German immigrant, from the estate of Josef Stransky, a conductor of the New York Philharmonic and a collector of German art, in the second or third decade of the twentieth century), the Renée von Schleinitz Collection at the Milwaukee Art Center, and, for drawings and prints, the collection bequeathed to Harvard University by John Witt Randall of the class of 1834, now in the Fogg Museum. However, there was no direct purchasing of German Romantic prints and drawings by the Fogg until 1985.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Rosenblum, *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: Friedrich to Rothko* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

<sup>41</sup> In similar vein Sarah Kent, "First Impressions" [review of the same exhibition at the National Gallery in London] in the British weekly *Time Out* (February 28-March 7, 2001): "German painters like Adolph von Menzel blasted a path for French Impressionists like Degas -- yet hardly anyone knows anything about them." The "robust images" of Wilhelm Trübner and Hans Thoma may "lack the charm that often takes French Impressionism perilously close to sentimentality," but "it's possible that this show will provoke a radical reappraisal of the merits of German over French Impressionism." (pp. 20-21)

<sup>42</sup> Schmall notes that the basic idea of the exhibition can be traced to Meier-Graefe himself. Since, as a champion of modern French art, he was looked on as an enemy in the circles of Wilhelm II, however, he agreed to remain in the background behind the museum directors Tschudi (Berlin) and Lichtwark (Hamburg). "Meier-Graefe übernahm jedoch in Wahrheit die Hauptlast der Auswahl und der Katalogbearbeitung, auf dessen Titelblatt er aber um der Sache willen nicht erscheinen durfte...Aber die Meier-Graefesche Linie einer Entwicklung auch der deutschen Malerei, die schlussendlich zum Impressionismus hinführt, war deutlich herausgearbeitet." (p. 127). The descriptions of individual paintings in the catalogue focus in fact strikingly on color and painterly qualities.

<sup>43</sup> See, for instance, Friedrich Schmidt, *Biedermeier-Malerei* (Munich: Delphin-Verlag, 1923), 83-85: "Um 1830 vollzog sich überall in Deutschland eine Wendung der Optik zum rein Malerischen, die man nicht anders denn als eine Vorwegnahme des frühen Impressionismus bezeichnen kann. Dass die Sehform der materialistischen Weltanschauung im 19. Jahrhundert kommen musste, ist klar. Die Franzosen haben sie mit ihren glänzenden Talent für genaue Formulierung und, gefördert durch den Zusammenschluss der Talente in Paris, als Impressionismus organisiert und zu Ende gedacht; die Deutschen haben aber das Prinzip dreissig Jahre früher gefunden. Walzel hat für die Literatur eine entsprechende Wahrheit so ausgedrückt: dass die deutschen Gedanken von den Franzosen übernommen und, mit Schlagworten versehen, uns dann als neueste Moden übermittelt wurden; so wären die Franzosen zu Unrecht in den Ruf geistiger Bahnbrecher im 19. Jahrhundert gekommen. In der Malerei war es nicht anders: sie fanden stets die letzten massgebende Prägung und die grossartige Aufmachung: und sind allerdings so zu Führern in der Kunstentwicklung Europas geworden, während die Deutschen mit dem gefundenen Goldkorn nicht einmal da anzufangen wussten, wo die Möglichkeit zu einer Traditionsbildung gegeben war, wie in München und Dresden. Sie sind Pioniere des materialistischen Gedankens geblieben, auch in der Malerei, in der ihnen, neben Constable, und radikaler als er, die Eroberung von Licht und Luft und die rein optische Darstellung der Oberflächen als ersten gelang." In somewhat similar vein Hans Weigert, *Geschichte der deutschen Kunst* (Berlin: Propyläer Verlag, 1942), 496: "Während der Impressionismus in Deutschland, wo Menzel durch den Idealismus der Deutschromer und das Ringen des Leibl-Kreises um die Ganzheit des Gegenstandes überholt worden war, sprunghaft und mit revolutionärem Anspruch auftrat, hat er sich in Frankreich



allmählich und folgerichtig entwickelt...Hier wird dieselbe Fähigkeit der Franzosen klar, Reihen zu bilden, Aufgaben von Geschlecht zu Geschlecht weiterzugeben wie in der gotischen Katedralskulptur.”

<sup>44</sup> A distressingly common view often presented in seemingly non-ideological, purely factual guise. Here, for example, is an art historian writing about the painter Friedrich Wasmann: “An Wasmann ist zu ersehen, wie ursprüngliche Anlage trotz entgegenstehender Schulung sich da aufs glücklichste auszuwirken vermag, wo der Deutsche sich in einem fernen Winkel isoliert. Nicht die Schulgemeinschaft macht, wie bei den Franzosen, unsere Stärke aus...” (Paul Ferdinand Schmidt, *Biedermeier-Malerei*, 44)

<sup>45</sup> Holland Cotter, “Ach, Such Industrious Romantics,” *New York Times*, June 15, 2001. In 1978, a German scholar, arguing that German painting of the first half of the nineteenth century, especially that of early Romanticism (notably C.D. Friedrich) is at last “heute auch international in ihrem Eigenwert anerkannt,” nonetheless conceded: “Umstrittener ist eine angemessene Würdigung der Nazarener... anzusehen.” (Josef Adolf Schmoll, “Deutsche Malerei des 19. Jahrhunderts in heutiger Sicht,” *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums*, 1978, 127-34, at p. 133) In 1989 another German scholar made the same observation: there was renewed interest in Runge, Friedrich, Menzel, Hans von Marées, Anselm Feuerbach, but not in Friedrich Overbeck. (Jens Christian Jensen, “Bemerkungen zu Friedrich Overbeck,” in *Johann Friedrich Overbeck 1789-1869* [Lübeck, 1989], 12). In similar vein Manfred Jauslin, in his Basel dissertation, published as *Die gescheiterte Kulturrevolution: Perspektiven religiös-romantischer Kunstbewegung vor der Folie der Avantgarde* (Munich: Scaneg, 1989), 5: “Während Maler wie Philipp Otto Runge und besonders Caspar David Friedrich zwischenzeitlich einen einigermaßen gesicherten Platz in der Hierarchie der Kunstgeschichte errungen haben und in umfassenden Werkmonographien vorliegen, ist das Bild jener Malergruppe, die etwas herablassend als ‘Nazarener’ bezeichnet werden, die sich selbst aber nach den alten Malergilden ‘Lukasbrüder’ nannten, nach wie vor ziemlich diffus, ihre kunstgeschichtliche Reputation ist, ausser in ultramontanen Kreisen, noch immer zweifelhaft. Mit anderen Worten: die Nazarener oder Lukasbrüder gelten als reaktionär, epigonenhaft, bigott, um nicht zu sagen...langweilig.” By 1999, nothing had apparently changed. “Der Bereich der romantischen Malerei ist im Bewusstsein des heutigen Betrachters vorwiegend besetzt mit Namen wie Caspar David Friedrich oder Philipp Otto Runge, die zu ihrer Zeit im Gegensatz zu Overbeck kaum einer breiteren Öffentlichkeit bekannt waren. Overbecks Ruhm verblasste zwar bereits am Ende seines langen Lebens. Aber in den ersten vier Jahrzehnten des 19. Jahrhunderts stand er im Mittelpunkt kunsttheoretischer Diskussionen.” Today, however, the non-professional viewer has little familiarity with or access to Overbeck’s work. “Ein Blick auf die Geschichte der Rezeption Overbecks im Rahmen musealer Präsentation des 20. Jahrhunderts wirft ein deutliches Licht auf die Tatsache, dass selbst die Fachleute sich schwer taten mit der Vermittlung des Werkes eines so bekannten Künstlers...Bei jeder Ausstellung der Werke Overbecks und in den begleitenden Publikationen klingt an, dass es zur ‘Ehrenrettung’ des Künstlers geschehe, dass sein Werk in seiner eigentlichen Bedeutung wieder in das Bewusstsein der Öffentlichkeit gerückt werden müsse.” (Brigitte Heise, *Johann Friedrich Overbeck: Das künstlerische Werk und seine literarischen und autobiographischen Quellen* [Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 1999], I)

<sup>46</sup> In the case of Overbeck, Brigitte Heise has summarized deftly and with understanding the obstacles that make it difficult for the ordinary modern viewer to appreciate his art:

“Die Kunst Overbecks ist entstanden aus tiefer, christlicher Überzeugung und auf der Grundlage streng gelebten katholischen Glaubens, in einer Haltung also, die heute...schwer nachzuvollziehen ist. Damit wird das Werk als überholt oder nicht tradierenswert beurteilt.

“Seit dem Realismus und Impressionismus haben sich die Sehgewohnheiten des Betrachters entschieden verändert. Eine Kunst wie die Overbecks, die vor allem den Bildinhalt in den Mittelpunkt rückt...ist dem heutigen Betrachter fremd geworden.

“Der Betrachter erwartet von einem Werk der Malerei Genuss und sinnlichen Reiz, keine Erbauung und Erweckung.

“Die bildnerischen Mittel, mit denen der Maler die christlichen Inhalte seiner Werke formt, basieren auf einem Ästhetikbegriff, der ohne kunsthistorische und philosophische Quellen in seiner eigentlichen Bedeutung nicht erfahrbar ist. Ohne diese Grundlagen erscheinen die Gemälde dem Betrachter oft steril, unsinnlich und ohne technische Bravour.

“Overbecks Gemälde und Zeichnungen sind durch Reproduktionstechniken vielfach popularisiert und trivialisiert worden. Sie wurden zum Teil zu frömmelnden Heiligenbildern...verunstaltet, die dem ursprünglichen Werk nicht mehr entsprechen...So wird das Urteil “Kitsch” eilfertig auf das originale Werk übertragen.

“Dem heutigen Betrachter, der mit romantischer Kunst in erster Linie die Landschaftsmalerei verbindet, erscheint Overbeck als Vertreter der religiösen Figurenmalerei oft als ein rückwärtsgewandter Aussen-seiter. Nicht gesehen wird, dass sich in seinem Werk wesentliche Aspekte der Geistesgeschichte seiner Zeit manifestieren.” (*Johann Friedrich Overbeck* [1999], 3)

<sup>47</sup> See the catalogue entry in *Johann Friedrich Overbeck 1789-1869* [Lübeck, 1989], 126: “Jede emotionale Beteiligung, jede Spannung und Bewegung, wie sie etwa bei Tizian und Correggio einfließen, werden hier bewusst vermieden. Der formstrenge Aufbau und die betonte Linearität, die zeichenhafte Auffassung Christi und die zurückhaltende Farbgebung lassen das Werk in seiner idealtypisch formulierten Bildsprache als ein Hauptwerk des Meisters ansehen.” Overbeck’s work shows some affinity with the Martin Schöngauer version of the theme (fig. 24), though compared to a drawing by his friend Joseph Anton Ramboux (fig. 21), which is vividly evocative of late fifteenth and early sixteenth century German art, Overbeck’s treatment is distinctly and typically more Raphaellesque.

<sup>48</sup> Lehr, 38; Fastert, 56

<sup>49</sup> Richard Muther, 1:15. Later German painters, including the “Deutschrömer” – Feuerbach, Böcklin, Marées – learned a different approach to paint from the French and, to some extent, the Belgians. Thus Feuerbach: “Nicht genug danken kann ich dem Meister [Couture], welcher mich von der deutschen Spitzpinselei zu breiter, pastoser Behandlung, von der akademischen Schablonenkomposition zu grosser Anschaffung und Auffassung führte.” (Reported in Heinrich Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Akademische Vorlesung*, [given at Berlin in 1911] ed. Norbert Schautz [Alfter: VDG Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaftlern, 1993], p. 10)

<sup>50</sup> Johannes Stükelberger, *Rembrandt und die Moderne* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1996), 170-80.

<sup>51</sup> At a Conference on “Women Artists at the Millennium” (Princeton University, November 9-10, 2001), Tamar Garb described how the contemporary Palestinian woman artist Mona Hatoum uses strands of human hair (her own hair) to subvert the anonymity and abstractness represented in art by the dominance of line. The struggle of modern materialism (usually associated with democracy, the popular, the feminine) against idealism (repressive and authoritarian, masculine) shows no sign of abating.

<sup>52</sup> R. Schneider, *Quatremère de Quincy et son intervention dans les arts* (Paris: Hachette, 1910), pp. 179-97. See also Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World*, p. 51.

<sup>53</sup> Cit. in *Die Nazarener* (Frankfurt, 1977), 402. The ideas expressed in this letter quickly became part of the stock-in-trade of critics, both Christian and non-Christian, of the ever expanding economy and culture of capitalism, from Pugin to William Morris.

<sup>54</sup> Howitt, 1:421; cf. Klaus Lankheit, *Das Freundschaftsbild der Romantik* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1952), 90-92; Nikolaus Pevsner, "Gemeinschaftsideale unter den bildenden Künstlern des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 1931, 9: 124-54; Thomas Wimmer, "I Nazareni: die klösterliche Utopie," *Kunstform International*, 1991, 116:78-95; Hans-Joachim Mähl, "Der poetische Staat: Utopie und Utopiereflexion bei den Frühromantikern," in Wilhelm Vosskamp, ed., *Utopieforschung: Interdisziplinäre Studien zur neuzeitlichen Utopie*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1982), 3:273-302. According to Mähl, it is unmistakable, "dass sich die Gesellschaftsutopie [Friedrich] Schlegels zunächst einmal auf die kleinen Zirkel des privaten Lebens bezieht (auf die 'Eingeweihten' also, die wie der Kreis der Jenaer Romantiker selbst, als neue 'Gemeinde' betrachtet werden konnten). Die 'unsichtbare Kirche', von der Schlegel, wie so viele andere in dieser Zeit, spricht, versteht sich als Opposition gegen die herrschenden Formen der Gesellschaft und sollte zunächst durch einen 'Bund der Künstler' verwirklicht werden, da von ihnen...das Heil der Welt zu erwarten sei." (p. 290)

<sup>55</sup> E.g. Karl Scheffler, *Deutsche Maler und Zeichner im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, p. 36. Christoph Heilmann believes the Nazarenes "expressed their artistic intentions in the most pure and characteristic way" in their drawings, with portrait and landscape as the most striking, since here "the abnegation of both artistic individuality and apprehension of the actual 'sujet' are generalised to the utmost degree. This can be seen also in the so-called 'Freundschaftsbilder'...Equally, the landscapes, drawn in thin, pointed pencil apply a highly sensitive linear technique and have nothing to do with 'Naturgefühl.'" (*The Connoisseur*, August 1977, 195:315). In similar vein Georg Poensgen emphasizes "das stark Stilisierende, dem Reiz der Linien-, Licht- und Flächenbehandlung den Vorrang gegenüber psychologischen Akzenten Einräumende" in the portraits of Carl Philipp Fohr. (*C. Ph. Fohr und das Café Greco: Die Künstlerbildnisse des Heidelberger Romantikers* [Heidelberg: F.H. Kerle Verlag, 1957], 29).

<sup>56</sup> See the handsome book of Hans Geller, *Die Bildnisse der deutschen Künstler in Rom 1800-1830* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1952); Heribert Hutter and Wanda Lhotsky, *Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld: Römisches Porträtbuch* (Vienna: Kupferstichkabinett der Akademie der bildenden Künste, 1973); and Klaus Lankheit's classic *Das Freundschaftsbild der Romantik*. On the "Zimmerkenotaph" (1801-1809) made for Friedrich of Württemberg to commemorate his close friend Count Johann Carl von Zepelin by Philipp Jakob Scheffauer, the neoclassical Württemberg sculptor, see *Schwäbischer Klassizismus: zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit, 1770-1830*, ed. Christian von Holst, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Staatsgalerie, 1993), 2:275-76. A similar Zimmerkenotaph for the brothers Carl and August Ruoff, by Scheffauer's colleague in Stuttgart, Johann Heinrich Danecker, is described and illustrated, *ibid.*, 2:180-81. In 1796 Danecker made medallions of himself and his friend, the poet Schiller; he kept the one of Schiller for himself and gave Schiller the one of him. (*Ibid.*, 2:218-19)

<sup>57</sup> Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld's hugely successful *Bilderbibel* (1855) was published in many countries and many languages. On its success, especially in Great Britain, see Andrews, 66, and *Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld 1796-1872* (Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1994), 237-39 (Catalogue of the exhibition at Museum der

bildenden Künste, Leipzig, May-July 1994). It has recently been reprinted by Dover Press in its Pictorial Archive series and is currently advertised on the website of the "Hollywood Jesus Store," which purports to offer "Pop Culture from a Spiritual Point of View." New editions also appeared in Russian and German in 1991 and an abbreviated version is available on the internet at [www.bilderbibel.de](http://www.bilderbibel.de) A typical judgment is that of Hans Weigert: "Die Hauptschuld der Nazarener ist die Banalisierung des Heiligen, das seiner Ferne und seines Geheimnisses entkleidet sich nur durch Sinnigkeit und eine fade Lieblichkeit vom Alltäglichen unterscheidet. In des Schnorr von Carolsfeld Holzsnitten zur Bibel wurde der Schöpfergott zum lieben Grossvater. Von dieser Kunst stammt geradenwegs der heutige Devotionalienkitsch ab, und unser aller Vorstellung von den Gestalten der christlichen Mythologie ist von dieser Kunst verniedlich und verdorben worden." (*Geschichte der deutschen Kunst*, 1942, p. 474). See also Sigrid Metken's richly informative essay, "Nazarener und 'nazarenisch' -- Popularisierung und Trivialisierung eines Kunstideals," in *Die Nazarener* (Frankfurt, 1977), 365-88. For an extensive bibliography of illustrated versions of the Bible for children, see Ruth B. Botigheimer, *The Bible for Children. From the Age of Gutenberg to the Present* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).

<sup>58</sup> See the rich study of Bruno Foucart, *Le Renouveau de la peinture religieuse en France (1800-1860)*.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Vaughan, *German Romanticism and English Art*, 183. In an essay on Overbeck's drawings, Gerhard Gerkens makes a similar point. "Veränderungen der Wirklichkeit, Verkürzung und selbst eine gewisse Entleerung der Zeichnung von allen Zügen, die sie mit dem Leben verbinden, sind nicht Unvermögen," he notes, "sondern willentliche Entscheidung." ("Overbeck als Zeichner," in *Johann Friedrich Overbeck 1789-1869* [Lübeck, 1989], 34-41, at p. 39). Cf. likewise Christoph Heilmann's review of the 1977 Exhibition of the Nazarenes in Frankfurt: "The Nazarenes... were devoted to a renewal of Art on a religious basis and saw their ideal in the purity of life and art, such as had been realised, in their opinion, by Dürer and Raphael. Naturally, the means of expressing their ...feelings underwent a continuous process of repressing reality in every range, which consequently also meant renouncing colour, in the sense of light and atmosphere, in favour of the contour. Colour became an additional ingredient, supplementary to the *disegno* of the subject." (*The Connoisseur*, August 1977, 195:315)

<sup>60</sup> In his fine monograph on Pforr (*Die Blütezeit Romantischer Bildkunst: Franz Pforr der Meister des Lukasbundes* [Marburg an der Lahn: Verlag des kunstgeschichtlichen Seminars, 1924]), Herbert Lehr tries hard to make the case that Pforr was a truly gifted artist whose work suffered to the degree that it was influenced by the considerably less talented Overbeck. The philosopher and the theologian far outweighed the artist in Overbeck, according to Lehr. Lehr's thesis may well reflect a modern formalist bias in the writer himself.

<sup>61</sup> Thus Karl Scheffler, *Deutsche Maler und Zeichner im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, 10: "Insofern ist der Hellenismus dieser Männer [Winckelmann and Lessing] dem Raffaelitum der Nazarener keineswegs entgegengesetzt. Der Gegensatz dieser sich dort hellenistisch und hier christlich organisierenden Gedankenkunst liegt in den gleichzeitig versiegenden ursprünglichen Schöpfungskräften des Barock und Rokoko. Diese aristokratischen Schöpfungskräfte wollten zu dem beginnenden demokratischen Zeitalter nicht passen; darum wurden sie als dekadent von den über neue bürgerliche Kultur Reflektierenden abgelehnt und gingen in der Traditionenbildung verloren." Cf. Heinrich Wölfflin's characterization (1893) of Wackenroder's *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* -- a main source of inspiration for the Nazarenes -- as "ein Protest gegen den zeitgenössischen Betrieb der Kunst, gegen das blosse Hantieren

mit erlernten Kunstrezepten, wo ein blendendes Kolorit, eine geistreiche Ausstreuung von Lichtern und Schatten, eine überraschende Komposition und kunstreiche Verschränkung der Gruppen die einzige Absicht des Malers bilde." (*Kleine Schriften [1886-1933]*, ed. Joseph Gantner [Basel: Schwabe, 1946], p. 206)

<sup>62</sup> Both subjects were treated by Overbeck, the first in the form of a painting (Lübeck, Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte), the other of a drawing enhanced by water-colors (1815; Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett); see *Die Nazarener* (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), 60, 70, 201, 236.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Rosenblum's comments on Carstens (in contrast to David): "Like French art of the time, [Carstens'] drawing finds its inspiration in antique history, yet it is an interpretation of antiquity which has no public ramifications, no lessons of virtue to teach to a new bourgeois audience. Rather, it is a private, highly personal approach to antiquity." (*The International Style 1800*, 97) In his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Mankind*, Schiller likewise focused on the transformation, harmonization and emancipation of the individual, not on institutional or political change in itself.

<sup>64</sup> "Die Zeit der Herrlichkeit des Tempels und seiner Diener ist dahin und aus dem zertrümmerten Ganzen eine andere Zeit und anderes Verlangen nach Klarheit und Wahrheit hervorgegangen." (*Caspar David Friedrich in Briefen und Bekenntnissen*, ed. Sigrid Hinz [Berlin:Henschel, 1968], 85, 9) Cf. 106: "Dieses Bild von \*\* erinnert mich wieder an das oft schon Gesagte: dass, wenn auch in unserer Zeit wiederum ein Raffael oder sonst ein ausgezeichnete Künstler wie die der Vorzeit aufstünde mit ebenso grossen Naturanlagen und Fähigkeiten wie seine Vorgänger, er würde dennoch nicht wie jene malen. Seine Werke würden und müssten immer das Gepräge seiner Zeit an sich tragen..."

<sup>65</sup> "...ein vollkommener Künstler nicht ohne Philosophie gedacht werden kann, so wenig wie ohne Poesie." (Letter to Sutter, 10 October 1810, quoted in Howitt, 1:162)

<sup>66</sup> Maria Teresa Benedetti, "Nazareni e Preraffaeliti: Un Nodo della Cultura del XIX Siglo," *Bollettino d'Arte*, 1982, ser. 6, 67:121-42, at p. 122. See also Uwe Fleckner on the radical "modernity" of Ingres' deliberate flouting of pictorial tradition and alleged "Gothicism" (*Abbild und Abstraktion: Die Kunst des Porträts im Werke von Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1995), especially ch. 2: "Porträt und Autonomie -- Die Frühen Gemälde"; and Alfred Neumeyer, "Zum Problem des Manierismus in der bildenden Kunst der Romantik," *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, 1928-29, 62. The locus classicus of all reflection on the crisis of modernity in art is Hegel, *Aesthetics*, Introduction (T.M. Knox translation, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). 1:10-11: "The beautiful days of Greek art, like the golden age of the later Middle Ages, are gone. The development of reflection in our life today has made it a need of ours, in relation both to our will and judgment, to cling to general considerations and to regulate the particular by them, with the result that universal forms, laws, duties, rights, maxims, prevail as determining reasons and are the chief regulator...Consequently the conditions of our present time are not favourable to art. It is not...merely that the practicing artist himself is infected by the loud voice of reflection all around him and by the opinions and judgments on art that have become customary everywhere, so that he is misled into introducing more thoughts into his work: the point is that our whole spiritual culture is of such a kind that he himself stands within the world of reflection and its relations, and could not by any act of will and decision abstract himself from it."

<sup>67</sup> On Schick's work and its relation to Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Mankind*, see Gudrun Körner in *Schwäbischer Klassizismus*, 1:311-19; also 2:58-60, 358-59. The theme of Apollo among the shepherds also inspired Schick's friend Joseph Anton Koch in a work currently in the Thorvaldsen

Museum, Copenhagen.

<sup>68</sup> There is a considerable literature about these friendships, much of it emphasizing their alleged homoerotic character. See, for instance, Robert Tobin, *Warm Brothers: Queer Theory and the Age of Goethe* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) and Joachim Pfeiffer, "Männerfreundschaften in der Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts," (available on Internet at [www.vib-bw.de/tp8/home\\_pfeiffer/maenner.htm](http://www.vib-bw.de/tp8/home_pfeiffer/maenner.htm)). The language in which affection was expressed in correspondences and occasional poems is sometimes – especially in the circle of the poet Gleim – playfully based on the conventional language of love; in some important cases, however, such as Wackenroder and Tieck, there seems to be no ironical or artistic distance. The language of friendship borrows the language of love, one senses, because the sentiments are no less fervent and deeply felt. Nevertheless, while homoeroticism may always be a factor in such intense relationships (how much is usually unverifiable), one is struck by the deep spiritual and sometimes overtly religious tone of the correspondences of the Nazarene artists with their closest friends. It seems to me that a strong Pietistic strain runs through the writing (and feeling) of loyal Protestants and Catholic converts alike. This aspect is emphasized by Hans Dietrich, *Die Freundschaftslicbe in der deutschen Literatur* (Berlin: Verlag Rosa Winkel, 1996; orig. Leipzig, 1931), 34-35.

<sup>69</sup> As the sign of a consciously founded community, rather than a traditional one, whose origins, as Rousseau put it, are lost in the mists of antiquity, the oath topos enjoyed considerable popularity in the revolutionary climate of the last third of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth (e.g. David's "Serment des Horaces" [1785] and unfinished "Serment du Jeu de Paume" [1791-] and Joseph Anton Koch's "Oath of the 1500 Republicans at Montenesimo" [1797]).

<sup>70</sup> By Heinrich Wölfflin, for instance, commenting on a work by Overbeck in his 1911 Berlin University lectures on the history of painting in the nineteenth century: "Er trat jener Sezession bei, die sich nach Rom aufmachte." (H. Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Akademische Vorlesung*, 38)

<sup>71</sup> Howitt, 1: 109-14; Ludwig Grote, *Joseph Sutter und der Nazarenische Gedanke* (Munich: Prestel, 1972), 98-113.

<sup>72</sup> The student "muss erst seine Hand üben und den Mechanismus mehrerer Zeichnungsarten sich eigen machen, ehe er zur Malerei und den höheren Theilen derselben übergehen kann. Diese Vorübungen können wohl einige Jahre dauern." (Quoted in Howitt, 1:44, letter from Füger to a friend of the Overbeck family who had encouraged Senator Overbeck to send his son to Vienna to study)

<sup>73</sup> "...meine Hand auf diese Weise in Fesseln legen, aus denen es ihr leider sehr schwer werden wird sich nachher wieder zu befreien." (Quoted in Howitt, 1:29)

<sup>74</sup> See on the topic of ideas of artistic freedom and the autonomy of the work of art in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Uwe Fleckner, *Abbild und Abstraktion*, 47-55.

<sup>75</sup> This letter was published in 1806, as Overbeck arrived in Vienna, in the biography of Carstens by his friend Carl Ludwig Fernow, reprinted in *Romantische Kunstlehre*, ed. Friedrich Apel (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992), 395-99.

<sup>76</sup> Howitt, 1:28-29; cf. C.D. Friedrich in *Briefen und Bekenntnissen*, 113. On the relation of the critique of academies and the formation of *Freundschaftsbünde*, see Lankheit, *Das Freundschaftsbild*, 90-92.

<sup>77</sup> Howitt, 1:115.

<sup>78</sup> Howitt, 1:67-68

<sup>79</sup> Howitt, 1:71.

<sup>80</sup> Howitt, 1:421; cf. Lankheit, *Das Freundschaftsbild*, 90-92; Pevsner, "Gemeinschaftsideale unter den bildenden Künstlern."

<sup>81</sup> Sabine Fastert, *Die Entdeckung des Mittelalters. Geschichtsrezeption in der nazarenischen Malerei des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich and Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2000), 55.

<sup>82</sup> Howitt, 1:83.

<sup>83</sup> This text, drafts of which go back to 1813-14 (see Goethe, *Werke* [Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag], 20 [1974]: 35-37), appeared in the first volume of *Über Kunst und Altertum* in 1817. Reproduced in J.W. Goethe, *Gedenkausgabe* (Zurich: Artemis Verlag), 13 (1954): 708-27.

<sup>84</sup> Jens Christian Jensen ("I Nazareni – das Wort, der Stil," in *Klassizismus und Romantik in Deutschland. Gemälde und Zeichnungen aus der Sammlung Georg Schäfer, Schweinfurt* [Nürnberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 1966], pp. 46-52) offers an excellent summary of Nazarene artistic practice: "das Primat der Linie über die Farbe, die Entthronung der pastosen Pinselschrift und die Einsetzung lasurartig glatter Farbschichten; strenge Lokalfarbe statt aus der Farbe entwickelte Komposition; Abwendung vom Raum und Wiederentdeckung der Fläche; die abstrahierende Idealität der Bildgestalt, die das Unverrückbare sucht, das einzig wahre Lineament der Gegenstände, die im Gegensatz steht zu den realistischen Tendenzen der Zeit." (p.51)

<sup>85</sup> On the transformation of the artist's status, see *Romantische Kunstlehre. Poesie und Poetik des Blicks in der deutschen Romantik*, ed. Friedmar Apel (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992), "Kommentar: Die Romantische Schule des Sehens," 747-48.

<sup>86</sup> Such a community of artists had been suggested by the youthful Friedrich Schlegel: "Ob dann das Heil der Welt von den Gelehrten zu erwarten sei? Ich weiss es nicht. Aber Zeit ist es, dass alle Künstler zusammentreten als Eidgenossen zu ewigem Bündniss." "Wie die Kaufleute im Mittelalter so sollten die Künstler jetzt zusammentreten zu einer Hanse, um sich einigermassen gegenseitig zu schützen." ("Ideen" for the journal *Athenäum*, # 32, 143, in Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler, J.J. Anstett, Hans Eichner, 35 vols. [Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh; Zurich: Thomas, 1958 --], 2 [1967]:259, 271)

<sup>87</sup> "Süssigkeit der Einsamkeit und Abgeschlossenheit von der Welt; nur so kann heut zu Tage die wahre Kunst gedeihn." (Journal entry for 21 October 1811, quoted in Howitt, 1:186)

<sup>88</sup> Howitt, 1:157; see also 1:143.

<sup>89</sup> Overbeck's Journal for 31 October 1811, quoted in Howitt, 1:188.

<sup>90</sup> See Jens Christian Jensen, "I Nazareni – das Wort, der Stil," 47-48.

<sup>91</sup> *Poetry and Prose*, ed. G. Keynes (London: Nonesuch Press, 1927), 816. It is interesting to note that a large exhibition of Blake at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2001 elicited from the *New York Times* reviewer an ambivalent and uncertain reaction comparable to that produced a few months later by the German Romantics in the Nineteenth Century German Art exhibition at the National Gallery in Washington. The reviewer noted skeptically that Blake inspires a peculiar admiration in the English. As an outsider, he

was willing to concede that he was an artist with a powerful and original imagination, but not that he ranked among the great. "He is an acquired taste, notwithstanding his indisputable significance as a designer of illustrated books." (Michael Kimmelman, "A Visionary whose odd images still burn bright," *New York Times*, 30.3.2001) The heading of the *Times* review of the Washington show ("Ach, Such Industrious Romantics") carried a similar implication: these "unpainterly" painters are somehow a peculiarly German taste. 'Gedankenkunst' is clearly not the average American critic's cup of tea.

<sup>92</sup> "Der Maler soll nicht bloss malen, was er vor sich sieht, sondern auch was er in sich sieht. Sieht er aber nichts in sich, so unterlasse er auch zu malen, was er vor sich sieht." (*Caspar David Friedrich in Briefen und Bekenntnissen*, 128)

<sup>93</sup> Sarah Symmons, *Flaxman and Europe. The Outline Illustrations and their Influence* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1984), 205. Cf. Overbeck's typically neoclassical and anti-realist definition of beauty in his Journal (7 October 1811): "Schönheit! d.h. Reinheit von allen zufälligen oder ausserwesentlichen Mängeln, die die Formen kleinlich unterbrechen und den Eindruck stören oder schwächen." (Quoted in Howitt, 1: 182)

<sup>94</sup> "Der edelste Kontour vereinigt oder umschreibt alle Teile der schönsten Natur und der idealischen Schönheiten in den Figuren der Griechen." (*Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, ed. Hermann Uhde-Bernays [Leipzig, 1913], 22-23) Kant too had maintained that the essential element in all the visual arts is design – "die Zeichnung..., in welcher nicht, was in der Empfindung vergnügt, sondern bloss durch seine Form gefällt, den Grund aller Anlage für den Geschmack ausmacht. Die Farben, welche den Abriss illuminieren, gehören zum Reiz, den Gegenstand an sich können sie zwar für die Empfindung beliebt aber nicht anschauungswürdig und schön machen." (Quoted in Rosenblum, *The International Style*, 97) On the close connection of Nazarene and late eighteenth and early nineteenth century classicizing art, see note 107 below.

<sup>95</sup> Charles Blainville, *Histoire générale critique et philologique de la musique* (1767) (Geneva: Minkoff reprints, 1972), 100; Denis Diderot, *Leçons de clavecin et principes d'harmonie par M. Bemetzrieder* (1771), in his *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Hermann), 19 (1983): 196, 354. The relation of musical harmony to color in painting is discussed in Andrew Clark, "Diderot's Poetics of Dissonance" (Princeton Ph.D. dissertation, expected 2002).

<sup>96</sup> Anatole France was later to make the same criticism of Barante that some artists made of Overbeck and the Nazarenes: that the reader, in the end, would rather read the medieval Chroniclers themselves than the synthetic text that Barante constructed by taking them as his model. ("La jeunesse de M. de Barante," *Oeuvres complètes*, 25 vols. [Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1925-1935], 7:418)

<sup>97</sup> Rosenblum, *The International Style*, 1-3. On Flaxman and his influence, see David Irwin, *John Flaxman (1755-1826. Sculptor, Illustrator, Designer)* (London: Studio Vista/ Christie's, 1979) and Sarah Symmons's outstanding Courtauld Institute Ph.D. thesis, *Flaxman and Europe. The Outline Illustrations and their Influence*. Flaxman's drawing is closely related to his work as a sculptor. The drawing and painting of Antonio Canova shows a similar proximity to bas-relief.

<sup>98</sup> A collection of engravings arranged by Artaud de Montor bore the title *Considérations sur l'état de la peinture en Italie dans les quatre siècles qui ont précédé celui de Raphael* when it was first published in Paris in 1808 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1811). For a new edition with a different publisher in 1843, however, the title was changed to *Peintres primitifs: Collection de tableaux rapportée d'Italie*.



<sup>99</sup> On the revival of interest in early Italian painting, see, in addition to the work of Artaud de Montor, Jean-Nicolas Paillot de Montabert, *Traité de peinture* (Paris, 1829) and above all *Histoire de l'art par les monuments, depuis sa décadence au IV<sup>ème</sup> siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1811-23; 6 vols.) by Jean-Baptiste Seroux d'Agincourt, a wealthy French amateur, who happens to have been the companion of Angelica Kauffmann in Rome. Seroux's stated aim was to be "the Winckelmann of the Middle Ages." He also had high regard for Dürer (see vol 2, pt. 2, 138) then still outside the accepted academic canon, though by no means neglected. Dürer's influence is visible, for instance, in the work of the mid-eighteenth century Scottish artist, John Runciman (1744-68) (see David and Francina Irwin, *Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad, 1700-1900* [London: Faber and Faber, 1975], 111-112) and Carstens expressed admiration for him before the appearance of Wackenroder's *Herzensergiessungen*. (Hans Eichner and Norma Lelless, "Nachwort" to their edition of Friedrich Schlegel's *Gemälde alter Meister* [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984], 213) Secondary sources on the revival of interest in early Italian painting include: André Chastel, "Le Goût des 'Préraphaélites' en France," (1956), reprinted in his *Fables, formes, figures*, 2 vols. (Paris Flammarion, 1978), 2:227-39; M. Lamy, "La Découverte des primitifs italiens au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle: Seroux d'Agincourt, 1730-1814," *Revue de l'art ancien et moderne*, 1921, 39: 169-81; 40: 182-90; H. Loyrette, "Seroux d'Agincourt et les origines de l'art médiéval," *Revue d'art*, 1980, 48:40-56; Lionello Venturi, *Il Gusto dei Primitivi* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1926), especially 166 *et seq.*; also Rosenblum, *The International Style*, 59-62.

<sup>100</sup> See his "Über Kunst und Altertum in den Rhein- und Main-Gegenden" (1816) in *Werke* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag), 20 (1874): 44-55, and notes, 531 ff.

<sup>101</sup> Rosenblum, *The International Style*, 59, 61; see also 116, on Flaxman. In similar vein Quentin Bell emphasizes that the turn to the early Italian painters was part of the same quest as the turn to ancient models: "While the great majority of pupils of David were content to follow their master in the pursuit of classical antiquity, there was one pupil – and the most gifted – who for a time strayed into another path and sought excellence in the earlier manifestations of Italian art. Ingres could look back beyond Raphael and in his 'Paolo and Francesca' produces something that seems much closer to the Quattrocento than to the classical prototypes of his master." ("The Life Room as a Battlefield," in his *Bad Art* [London: Chatto and Windus, 1989], 115-63, at 131)

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Rosenblum, *The International Style*, 162.

<sup>103</sup> On the "Primitifs" or "Barbus," see E.J. Delécluze, *David, son école et son temps*, ed. J.P. Mouilleteaux (Paris: Macula, 1983; orig. 1855), ch.3 and the articles by Delécluze (1832) and Charles Nodier (1832) reproduced in this volume, pp. 419-447. There is also a modern study by George Levitine, *The Dawn of Bohemianism: The Barbu Rebellion and Primitivism in Neo-Classical France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978)

<sup>104</sup> See Ulrich Hiesinger, "Canova and the Frescoes of the Galleria Chiaramonte," *Burlington Magazine*, Oct. 1978, 907:655-65.

<sup>105</sup> Wächter, a fervent disciple of the neo-classical Asmus Carstens, had already taken an interest in the young Lukasbrüder in Vienna; see Lehr, 171-2.

<sup>106</sup> Otto R. von Lutterotti, *Joseph Anton Koch 1768-1839. Leben und Werke, mit einem vollständigen Werkverzeichnis* (Vienna and Munich: Herold-Verlag, 1985). Illustration, p. 152.

<sup>107</sup> In his three-volume *Histoire de l'art moderne en Allemagne*, which appeared simultaneously in French (Paris: Jules Renouard) and in a German translation (*Geschichte der neueren deutschen Kunst* [Berlin: Auf Kosten des Verfassers]) between 1836 and 1841, Count Athanasius Raczyński professed belief in “das positive Schöne und...die ewigen Wahrheiten.” There is, he claimed “etwas Höheres als die Mode und ihre Lehren: es sind die unveränderlichen Gesetze und die Erscheinungen der Natur, welche uns in die Absichten des Schöpfers einweihen...” (1:3) According to Raczyński, the two main strains in modern German art, the classical and the Christian, both aspire toward “truth” and are essentially idealist rather than realist in inspiration and character. Later art historians have upheld Raczyński’s implicit association of neo-classical and Nazarene art, despite Goethe’s emphasis on what separates them. Thus Hans Hildebrandt (*Die Kunst des 19. Und 20. Jahrhunderts*, 1924, pp. 77-78): “Ohne es zu ahnen, übertrug der Nazarener [i.e. Overbeck] viel von den Grundsätzen des heidnischen Klassizismus in seine Auffassung des Christentums, das ihm nur mildes Dulden und sanfte Verklärung in Schönheit war. Dieser Kompromiss prägt sich augenfällig in der formalen Durchbildung seiner Werke aus. Eine andere Lösung als die rein harmonische des Bildaufbaues um eine Symmetrieachse fiel Overbeck niemals ein.” See also Scheffler, pp. 9-10; Weigert, p. 467; Rosenblum, *The International Style*, pp. 59-62. Most recently Klaus Lankheit has argued that the old ideal of Classical and Romantic as polar opposites (as in the art history of Georg Dehio and Gustav Pauli) is no longer acceptable. Classicism and Romanticism are now seen as “verschiedene Lösungsversuchen für dieselbe geschichtliche Situation am Beginn der Moderne. Unbeschadet der Tatsache, dass sie in historischen Ablauf nacheinander wirksam geworden sind, entsprangen sie beide derselben Wurzel und waren eher Parallelercheinungen als Gegensätze.” (“Klassizismus und Romantik,” in *Klassizismus und Romantik in Deutschland. Gemälde und Zeichnungen aus der Sammlung Georg Schäfer, Schweinfurt* [Nürnberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum. 1966], 17-20, at p. 17)

<sup>108</sup> “Die besten Meister sind offenherzig, man kommt täglich in ihre Zirkel und wird von ihnen auf das liebste belehrt, die Akademien, besonders die der Deutschen, sind vortrefflich eingerichtet. Jeder Teilnehmer bezahlt einen Antheil zur Bestreitung der Kosten, und jeder ist eigentlich Direktor und Lehrling zugleich.” (Quoted in George Poensgen, *C. Ph. Fohr und das Café Greco*, 15)

<sup>109</sup> Howitt, 1:382-87.

<sup>110</sup> Howitt, 1:436.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in Fastert, 89, 293.

<sup>112</sup> Quoted in Michael Dirrigl, *Ludwig I König von Bayern 1825-1848* (Munich: Hugendubel, 1980), 182 (vol 1 of a 4 volume study, *Das Kulturkönigtum der Wittelsbacher*).

<sup>113</sup> For instance, Friedrich Wilhelm Schadow was named Director of the Düsseldorf Academy (1826), Philipp Veit took over the leadership of the Städelsches Institut in Frankfurt am Main (1830) and became Director of the Art Gallery in Mainz (1854), Ferdinand Olivier was appointed Secretary General of the Academy and professor of art history in Munich (1833), Johann Anton Ramboux became Curator of the Wallraff collection in Cologne (1843), Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld became Director of the Art Gallery and professor at the Dresden Academy (1846). See Friedrich Apel, ed., *Romantische Kunstlehre* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992), 757 (“Kommentar: Die Romantische Schule des Sehens”).

<sup>114</sup> “Es sind furchtbare Leute, wenn man sie in ihrem Café Greco sitzen sieht. Ich gehe auch fast nie hin, weil mich so sehr vor ihnen und ihrem Lieblingort graut. Das ist ein kleines, finsternes Zimmer, etwa

acht Schritt breit, und auf der einen Seite der Stube darf man Tabak rauchen, auf der anderen aber nicht. Da sitzen sie denn auf den Bänken umher, mit den breiten Hüten auf, grosse Schlächterhunde neben sich, Hals, Backen, das ganze Gesicht mit Haaren zugedeckt, machen einen entsetzlichen Qualm..., sagen einander Grobheiten; die Hunde sorgen für Verbreitung von Ungeziefer; eine Halsbinde, ein Frack wären Neuerungen; -- was der Bart vom Gesicht frei lässt, das versteckt die Brille, und so trinken sie Kaffee und sprechen von Tizian und Pordenone, als sässen sie neben ihnen und trügen auch Bärte und Sturmhüte...” (Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Reisebriefe an die Familie*, from Rome, 11 December 1830, quoted in *Die Nazarener* [Frankfurt am Main, 1977], 410) The painter Alfred Rethel gave a similar unflattering account of the German artists in Rome in a letter to his mother, written some time in fall 1844, and reproduced in Wolfgang Müller von Königswinter, *Alfred Rethel: Blätter der Erinnerung* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1861), 127-28. Over 500 artists are active in Rome, Rethel recounts, “ohne Dilettanten” – without an art-loving public to support them. The vast majority “huldigt der modernen Kunst und speculirt demnach auf den Fremden und mit Glück, ist aber bei diesem Manöver so verachtungswürdig, so aller Würde bar, und leider stehen da die Deutschen obenan, dass es ein Jammer ist. Wie ihr Sinn, so ihr Machwerk; raisonnirt, schlecht gemacht, gelobhudelt, kritisirt wird untereinander, wie vielleicht beim Thurmbau zu Babel. Im Gegensatz zu diesen, ganz extrem sind diejenigen, so der rechten Kunst, der religiösen oder historischen, anzuhängen vorgeben, sind aber nicht viel besser, stellen sich auf einen ungeheuern moralischen Kothurn, sind bis obenan mit Gehässigkeit...vollgestopft, leidenschaftlich in ihrem Benehmen und benehmen sich wirklich lächerlich...”

<sup>115</sup> On the interest among the “second generation” of Nazarene painters in psychological realism, at the expense of narrative meaning, and the resulting stylistic modifications, see Cordula Grewe, “The Invention of the Secular Devotional Picture,” *Word and Image*, 2000, 16:45-57. On Oppenheim, see *Moritz Daniel Oppenheim* (Catalog of an exhibition at Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Frankfurt am Main. December 1999-April 2000, and at Jewish Historical Society, New York, May, 2000), ed. Georg Heuberger and Anton Merk (Frankfurt am Main: Wienand Verlag, 1999).

<sup>116</sup> *Recollections of Rubens*, trans. Mary Hottinger (London: Phaidon, 1950), 116. On the prevalence of complex programmatic descriptions of history paintings in the salon *livrets* of early nineteenth century France and opposition to this practice, see Beth Wright, *Painting and History during the French Restoration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 118-19 *et passim*.

<sup>117</sup> See Howitt, 1:196.

<sup>118</sup> Pforr included Passavant in the bond of friendship with Overbeck. The initials of the three friends -- POP -- are inscribed in a circle in the lower left section of the sketch.

<sup>119</sup> See the excellent discussion in Brigitte Heise, *Johann Friedrich Overbeck* (1999), 87-88.

<sup>120</sup> At the time of Pforr’s illness, as he lay close to death, Overbeck noted in his Journal (26 April 1812): “Ach, meine Natur ist allzu fest an ihn gewachsen! Mit ihm und durch ihn habe ich den wahren Mai meines Lebens genossen! Pforr! Mein Bruder! Deine Liebe war mir sonderlicher denn Frauenliebe! Und nun! Muss ich mit dem Gedanken vertraut zu werden versuchen, durch das Grab von dir getrennt zu werden!” (Quoted in Howitt, 1:231) In Overbeck’s “Einzug Christi in Jerusalem” (completed in 1824) Pforr is represented with other *Lukasbrüder* and Overbeck himself walking behind the Apostles. In 1834-1835, Overbeck persuaded the Frankfurt Kunstverein to publish a series of engravings and lithographs after drawings by Pforr (Howitt, 1:539); and in 1865, not long before his own death he ordered a marble plaque for Pforr’s tomb and represented Pforr as the bridegroom with the ideal “Maria” of their youthful fantasies in a series of illustrations on

the theme of "Christian Family Life." (Howitt, 2:388) His last thoughts, on his deathbed, were of Pforr.

<sup>121</sup> See, for instance, the portrait of a fair-haired boy, by Ambrosius Holbein (brother of Hans Holbein the Younger), in the collections of the Kunstmuseum Basel.

<sup>122</sup> "...ein Mädchen jung und schön, blond, zart und äusserst liebenswürdig, in einfacher doch geschmackvoller Kleidung;...kurz ein Mädchen, wie es Deutschland im Mittelalter hätte hervorbringen können." "...ob ich es Weib oder Mann nennen sollte. Ein Wesen, war alles was ich sagen konnte, ernst doch sanft...mit dunkeln Haaren, nur Kopf und Hände sichtbar...; in der Mitte etwas Heiliges, Ueberirdisches; in Stellung und Geberde etwas Geheimnisvolles -- kurz ein Wesen, das man nicht bloss lieben, sondern das man anbeten könnte; dessen Anblick einen hinreissen könnte zu den heiligsten Gefühlen." (Quoted in Howitt, 1:65)

<sup>123</sup> "Ich möchte den, der sich der Kunst weihen will, fragen, wie man einen, der Mönch werden will, fragt: kannst Du das Gelübde der Armut, der Keuschheit und des Gehorsams ablegen und halten, so tritt ein." (Letter of 15.12.1810, cit. in Fastert, 38)<sup>124</sup> See also Lehr, 275-77.

<sup>125</sup> Quoted in Lehr, 275, Fastert, 56.

<sup>126</sup> See Elisabeth Foucart-Walter and Pierre Rosenberg, *Le Chat et la Palette. Le chat dans la peinture occidentale du XVe au XXe siècle* (Paris: Adam Biro, 1987), 172.

<sup>127</sup> Other possible references that have been suggested include the "kämpferischer Künstlerwille" of the painter of battle scenes (Pforr's earliest ambition) and self-sacrificing love, as in some medieval texts. The falcon would thus be the symbol of Pforr's love of art. (Brigitte Hiese, *Johann Friedrich Overbeck* [1999], 81-82)

<sup>128</sup> On Pforr's "Entry of Rudolf of Habsburg" as a "deliberate provocation aimed at the painting of the period," see Michel Le Bris, *Romantics and Romanticism* (Geneva: Skira; New York: Rizzoli, 1981), 96.

<sup>129</sup> Rosenblum, *International Style*, 96.

<sup>130</sup> "Es ging aber wegen der Bauarth nicht gut an, es gebrauchen zu können." (Quoted in Lehr, 108, Fastert 74)

<sup>131</sup> See Fastert, 73-74.

<sup>132</sup> See Wilhelm Schlink, "Heilsgeschichte in der Malerei der Nazarener," *Aurora*, forthcoming

<sup>133</sup> *Die Nazarener* (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), 152-53, 201; *Johann Friedrich Overbeck 1789-1869* (Lübeck, 1989), 205, 208.

<sup>134</sup> Urging Edward von Steinle, one of the younger generation of Romantic artists, not to lose courage in a climate increasingly unfavorable to the kind of art they wanted to produce, Overbeck writes, shortly before his death: "Dies, Vielgeliebter, habe ich Dir als Bruder in Christo schreiben wollen." (Letter of 28 June, 1869, quoted in Howitt, 2:379-81)

<sup>135</sup> In the *Freundschaftsbild*, a form specially favored by the Nazarenes and executed by them with great delicacy and charm, the head only is represented; multiple figures are most often arranged in parallel, indicating independence, almost never with arms around each other. See on this Lankheit, *Das Freundschafts-*

*bild*; also *Die Nazarener* (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), 169, 174. Sentimental as it may appear in relation to Pforr's "Sulamith und Maria," Overbeck's "Italia und Germania" is strikingly sober and intense compared to the elegant allegorical female figures representing France and America, joined decorously by a garland of flowers and clasped hands, in the portrait of the departing French minister Conrad Alexandre Gerard, which Congress commissioned in his honor in 1779 from Charles Willson Peale.

<sup>136</sup> Overbeck himself was probably inspired by it when he chose the diptych form for a particularly fine drawing (1814) combining the Annunciation and the Visitation (Basel, Kunstmuseum, Kupferstichkabinett), the first panel of which bears the title "Ave Maria" and the second "Benedicta in Mulieribus." Conceivably this drawing was made in preparation for a painting which either was not executed or has disappeared.

<sup>137</sup> See the description of Pforr's self-portrait by Thea Vignau-Wilberg in *Deutsche Romantiker: Bildthemen der Zeit von 1800 bis 1850* (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 1985 [Catalogue of an exhibition at the Kunstthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, Munich], p. 30). Cf. Robert Rosenblum's commentary on Ingres' "Madame Aymon," also known as "La Belle Zélie" of 1806 (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen): "In order to emphasize the flat picture surface, Ingres, much like Picasso, seems to see the same object from multiple viewpoints, although his ostensible adherence to the data of the objective world creates a perhaps even more disturbing image than that of the twentieth century artist. Thus the chin and the left side of the face are seen frontally, whereas the mouth, the right side of the face, and the part in the hair are seen obliquely...The nose appears to be seen both frontally and from the side, thus helping to bridge the gap between the two diverse points of view." Similarly, "the eyes appear to have been observed separately," so that the sitter has a slightly wall-eyed look. (Rosenblum, *International Style 1800*, 175-76)

<sup>138</sup> Muther, 1:133.

<sup>139</sup> See the comment on Overbeck's "Familienbildnis" (1820-22; Lübeck, Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte [fig. 71]) in *Johann Friedrich Overbeck 1789-1869* (Lübeck, 1989), 132: "Vater, Mutter und Kind sind eng verbunden und als Einheit verstanden. Dennoch ist jede Person durch eine dominante Farbe des Gewandes deutlich unterschieden und jeder ist ein eigener Bereich zugewiesen...Ihre Blicke streben zwar in verschiedene Richtung aber durch die Körperhaltungen sind sie wieder aufeinander bezogen." A similar, more detailed comment on this work in Jens Christian Jensen, *Malerei der Romantik in Deutschland* (Cologne: DuMont, 1985), 100, and on the drawing entitled "Jakob wirbt um Rahel" (1808; also Lübeck, Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte) in *Die Nazarener* (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), 200.

<sup>140</sup> In one of the most sympathetic modern readings of the Nazarenes that I have come across Michel Le Bris makes this same point with reference to Pforr's "Entry of Rudolf of Habsburg." In "the sharpness of the contours; the vivacity of the colours, laid on in flat tints almost without nuances within clearly divided surfaces as in those highly popular stained glass windows of around 1700 called *Scheibenrisse*; the composition of the scene itself, splintered into a multitude of animated groups, each independent of the others and drawn with extreme preciseness of detail, yet without detracting from the overall unity," Le Bris sees the striking originality of Pforr's work and "a deliberate provocation aimed at the painting of the period." (*Romantics and Romanticism* [Geneva: Skira; New York: Rizzoli, 1981], p. 96) What characterized French Romantic painting, notably Delacroix, according to Heinrich Wölfflin In his lectures on nineteenth century painting at the University of Berlin in 1911, was precisely the opposite: Delacroix admired Rembrandt as the greatest of all painters, Wölfflin claims in a commentary on a self-portrait by Delacroix, "weil eine grandiose Einheit der Teile bei ihm herrscht,...alles optisch zusammengesehen und zusammengefühlt, kein

Teil isoliert wird. Malerische Massen – das ist der Boden, um gegen die klassizistische Einheit des Vielen Opposition zu machen.” The same point is restated in Wölfflin’s comments on “The Massacre at Chios”: “Bisher hatte der klare Umriss geholfen zur malerischen Klarheit, jetzt kann man die Figur nicht so leicht aus der Masse herauslösen. Hier herrscht ein deutliches Prinzip: der Künstler ist ja gar nicht verpflichtet, den Körper klar abzuwickeln. Die Wahrheit liegt in der Erscheinung des Gesamten als solchem, nicht im Ausbreiten von Einzelheiten. Alles im Ganzen zu sehen, nicht Gruppen als Einzeldinge, nicht ein Mosaik von Einzeldingen.” (Heinrich Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Akademische Vorlesung*, ed. Norbert Schmitz [Alfter: VDG Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 1993], pp. 66-67) Wölfflin admires here what had given his teacher Burckhardt pause, both in Rembrandt and in Delacroix. In both, Burckhardt appears to have discerned an expression of the new mass, democratic culture by which, as a Basel “Altliberal,” he was repelled and frightened.

<sup>141</sup> Karl Scheffler, 17.

<sup>142</sup> “Report on the Paintings in Paris and the Netherlands in the Years 1802-1804” in *The Aesthetic and Miscellaneous Works of Friedrich von Schlegel*, trans, E.J. Millington (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1849), 6.

<sup>143</sup> See also Ulrich Finke, *German Painting from Romanticism to Expressionism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 7: “Up to most recent times, the conventional view of 19<sup>th</sup> Century European painting has been oriented toward the history of French art, and this has inevitably meant that specific trends and peculiarities of the schools outside France have received short shrift.” In fact, “19<sup>th</sup> Century German paintings are to be found almost exclusively in public or private collections within the German-speaking countries.”

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