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Aesthetics, Canon, Critique

Transalpine Creative Appropriation and Cultural Hybridity as a Challenge to Archeology and Art History

Abstract

By focusing on creative appropriation and cultural hybridity in premodern Northern art, this interdisciplinary chapter offers a critical reflection on the development of the canon in the history of research in art and classical archeology. Taking the praxeological model of the Collaborative Research Center (CRC) 1391 *Different Aesthetics* as a starting point, we will explore how selected works of Roman architecture and early modern painting demonstrate their cultural synthesis, firmly anchored in the social structure of their place of origin, as well as how they negotiate this synthesis by genuinely artistic means.

Keywords

Creative Appropriation, Cultural Hybridity, Canon, Art History, Classical Archaeology, Northern Art

1. Introduction

In 1998, the sociologist Alois Hahn pointed out trenchantly, "The self-referentiality of the canon is the reason for its longue durée."[1] He argued that the establishment of the canon, supported by powerful forces, as well as the continuing enforcement of its purity, were always based on censorship.[2] If one regards cultural canons as "symbols of identity,"[3] the reciprocal relationship between canon formation and national – or nationalistic – ambi-

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1 Hahn 1998, p. 460.
2 Cf. Hahn 1998, p. 460.
3 Hahn 1998, p. 59.

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tions is especially apparent in the modern era.[4] From the perspective of cultural history, historic consolidations in which the establishment of aesthetic norms and traditions played a decisive role can be understood as the vehicles of difficult identity formation because the various forms of (self-)definition did not arise without a multi-layered construction and systematic exclusion of the "foreign" as negative antithesis.[5]

In this context, the point of departure for the present interdisciplinary reflections is the observation that in both classical archeology and art history, numerous ancient and early modern artworks from north of the Alps with culturally hybrid design were in the past considered deficient, and this had far-reaching consequences. Against the backdrop of the history of these two academic disciplines and their respective processes of canon formation, such normative judgments can be described as the result of the influential idea of stylistic purity and unity, the mindset of 19th-century colonialism, and the closely related anachronistic concept of a culturally superior art that foreigners misunderstand and therefore receive and copy with a great diminution of quality. A multidisciplinary revision of such evaluative patterns – which are still current and influential in today's scholarship – will enable more up-to-date approaches to the study of cultural transfer and especially to postcolonial cultural theory, which, among other things, focuses on the transformational dynamics occurring in the course of intercultural contact.[6] We understand the concepts of hybridization and hybridity to mean, on the one hand, certain forms of cultural transfer that release creative potential, and on the other, a process of continuous negotiation of ethical, linguistic, religious, political – and ultimately, we argue – also aesthetic questions.[7] Together with the problem of canon formation, Homi K. Bhabha has emphasized the centrality of the connection between cultural praxis and authority as well as hybridization:

> The entire culture is constructed around negotiations and conflicts. In all cultural practices there is the attempt – sometimes good and sometimes bad – to establish authority. Even in the case of

4 Cf. Hahn 1998, p. 463.

5 Cf. Hahn 1998, p. 461–465.

6 Depending on the traditions of different subject areas, various humanistic disciplines approach the transfer processes occurring through cultural contact with such concepts as "translations" (Burke / Hsia 2007; Bachmann-Medick 2012; Bachmann-Medick 2014; Hofmann / Stockhammer 2017), "adaption / adaptation" (Weber 2012; Hutcheon 2013), "(cultural) appropriation" (Hahn 2011; Schreiber 2013; Samida / Eggert / Hahn 2014), "hybridization" (Bhabha 2000 [1994]; Bhabha 2016). Other related terms are, e.g., "transcription" (Jäger 2004, p. 2–5; Jäger 2010; Ullrich 2015) and "crossmapping" (Bronfen 2002; Bronfen 2018). Cf., in addition, Lachmann 2000; Boehm 2007.

7 On various forms of productive (trans-)cultural transfer processes, cf. above all Espagne / Werner 1985; Espagne / Werner 1987; Kortländer 1995; Bronfen / Marius 1997; Burke 2009 [2000]; Bhabha 2004 [1994]; Lüsebrink 2001; Middell 2001; Celestini / Mitterbauer 2011; Ette / Wirth 2014; Bhabha 2016.

> a classic work such as a painting by Brueghel or a composition by Beethoven, it is a question of establishing cultural authority.[8]

The specific acceptance or rejection of such imposed cultural authority contains the possibility of its modification. "Thereby, the symbols of authority are hybridized and something new emerges. For me, hybridization means not just mixing, but strategic and selective appropriation of meanings, making room for human agency."[9] Parts of such a scholarly conception of "cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed"[10] can be connected to the findings of research into cultural transfer such as those developed since the mid-1980s by scholars in literature and cultural studies.[11] They define cultural transfer fundamentally as a dynamic, intra- or intercultural process of creative imitation, appropriation, or translation, driven by various actors in a spatial, temporal, and social field, a process that is decisively determined and correspondingly directed by the recipients.[12]

Given a basic concept of one's own culture and society and their needs, there is necessarily a selective perception and deliberate adaptation of the 'other.'[13] In view of this understanding of historical processes of transfer and exchange, material goods and artistic practices play a central role as forms of cultural communication.[14] In recent years, the humanities – including cultural studies and especially object studies in the context of Material Culture Studies and so-called Biography of Objects – have turned their attention in this direction.[15]

The scholarship adduced above and its methodology serve as the foundation for the following discussion. As case studies, we will analyze selected monuments of transalpine ancient architecture as well as the controversial term 'Romanism' for the reception of Italian art by early modern Netherlandish painters. Our focus is on artworks that exhibit a cultural synthesis anchored in the social structure of the location of origin and negotiate significance in various ways through genuinely artistic means. It is precisely this inner creative logic, corresponding to the multilayered nature of transalpine

8 Homi K. Bhabha in a radio interview on November 9, 2007 on ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation), quoted in Babka / Posselt 2016, p. 13. As the English original is unpublished, the quotation has been retranslated.

9 Quoted from Babka / Poselt 2016, p. 13.

10 Bhabha 2004 [1994], p. 4.

11 On the development of research on cultural transfer with various approaches and differing conceptions of culture, cf. Middell 2001; Kokorz / Mitterbauer 2004; Keller 2011; Schmale 2012; Wendland 2012; Middell 2016.

12 Cf. Burke 2009 [2000]; Lüsebrink 2001; Keller 2011; Mitterbauer 2011; Middell 2016.

13 Cf. Middell 2016.

14 Cf. especially Marx 2007; Kramer / Baumgarten 2009; North 2010; Kern 2013; De Giorgi / Hoffmann / Suthor 2013; Rosen 2015.

15 Cf. i. a. Boschung / Kreuz / Kienlin 2015; Göttler / Mochizuki 2017; Gleixner / Lopes 2021.

processes of appropriation, that led widely influential older scholarship in both disciplines – based on a uni-directional narrative of cultural influence – to evaluate such buildings and pictures to be analyzed not only as failed appropriations of Italian art but also to problematize them as supposedly foreign elements in an indigenous artistic practice. For that reason, the initial focus of the present chapter will be on the dynamics and tendencies specific to archeology and art history – scholarship, primarily in German, since the end of the 18th century and especially around 1900 – that led to such normative judgments as well as the resulting consolidation of the canon. Against that backdrop, we will examine selected surviving fragments of antique buildings north of the Alps as well as an eminent work of 16th-century Antwerp painting and argue for the dissolution of the polarizing model "Italy vs. northern Europe" and for a reevaluation of various strategies of adaptation and complex negotiation of artistic practices. In this context, we will regard reworkings and reconfigurations of traditional models as conscious conceptual advancements. We will also understand programmatic debates *with* and divergence *from* the cultural authority (in Bhabhas's sense) of Italian works as proof of aesthetic independence and the reflexive potential of art created north of the Alps. The change in perspective we are proposing is based on the praxeological model of CRC 1391, *Different Aesthetics*.[16] In a special way, that model allows us to appreciate, explore systematically, and locate in specific social and historic contexts the forms and functions as well as the intrinsic epistemic value of the aesthetics inscribed in transalpine artistic monuments and artifacts.

2. Classicism and Romanization: Transalpine Roman Architecture

In the wake of the Gallic War and the military campaigns under Augustus, within two generations the region west and south of the Rhine as well as the Alpine foothills became a part of the Imperium Romanum. With the subsequent conquest of large portions of today's Baden-Wuerttemberg and Hesse (up to and even across the Danube), the northwestern provinces acquired a shape that remained intact well into the 3rd century CE.[17] The geography of the area north of the Alps under Roman rule is ruggedly divided by uplands and several rivers, and at the time of the Roman conquest was populated by groups of 'Celtic' and 'Germanic' speakers[18] already in extensive contact with the Mediterranean world.[19] In the 'Celtic' regions, there is evidence of central settlements, some of considerable size. The so-called *oppida* were usually built on elevated terrain and surrounded by rivers so that they could be more easily defend-

16 Cf. the chapter by Annette Gerok-Reiter and Jörg Robert in this volume, pp. 3–48.
17 Wolters 1990; Hüssen 2000; Kemkes 2005; Strobel 2009; Wolters 2015; Wolters 2020.
18 Archäologisches Landesmuseum 2012 (Celts); Uelsberg / Wemhoff 2020 (Teutons).
19 See most recently Gebhard / Gleirscher / Marzatico 2011; Sievers 2020.

ed.[20] As extensively described by Julius Caesar, they were often surrounded by an enclosing wall of wood and stone (*murus gallicus*)[21] and some had an orthogonal street layout.[22] Beyond that, however, only in exceptional cases[23] did they feature extensive stone structures. Instead, these settlements contained predominately wooden buildings.[24]

That changed abruptly under Roman rule. From the Augustan period onwards, new cities north of the Alps were founded and old settlements rebuilt. In contrast to many *oppida*, they were situated on level ground.[25] In antiquity, towns like Trier, Mainz, Cologne, and Augsburg reached populations of tens of thousands and possessed sophisticated infrastructure and monumental buildings. Tombs, aqueducts, and luxurious villas were built on their outskirts, along the roads that connected them, and in the countryside. An essential foundation for all these changes was provided by the use of stone and concrete (*opus caementicium*) in the realization of large, resilient structures. This building technology had been the established practice in the central Mediterranean region since the late 2nd century BCE. Its use in the northwestern provinces started in the time of Augustus. The new buildings in concrete and stone adopted visible elements of Mediterranean architectural types such as podium temples, basilicas, and thermae with Corinthian columns and richly decorated entablatures. We will argue, however, that the transalpine monuments were not mere architectural copies. Rather, one can often discern programmatic differences from Mediterranean concepts in their floorplans or decoration. These adaptations were due to differing functions and societal constraints but were also intended to display a distinctive aesthetics.

2.1. The Path to Canonical Marginalization and the Postcolonial Comeback

In many places, the ruins of buildings and infrastructure of transalpine Roman towns still dotted the landscape of the High Middle Ages and were more strongly anchored in popular consciousness than other aspects of antiquity.[26] Especially in the Middle Ages, but also in the early modern period, the ancient remains – sometimes reinterpreted – were held up as symbols of historical and present urban pride.[27] But beginning in the

20 Fichtl 2000; Pion 2010, pp. 35–46; Sievers 2015, pp. 3–6. For England: Pitts 2010; Champion 2016.

21 Caesar: Gallic War 7,23.

22 Fernández-Götz 2020.

23 E.g., Bibracte (France), see Dhennequin / Guillaumet / Szabò 2008, esp. pp. 22–66.

24 Elbert 2018; Karlsen 2020; Schuster 2020.

25 Metzler 1995; Woolf 2000; Lafon 2006, pp. 67–79; Morscheiser-Niebergall 2009, pp. 115–131; Gros / Torelli 2007, pp. 271–321 and 337–368; Thiel 2014; Pellegrino 2020. On the initial survival of the *oppida* in the early empire: Colin / Buchsenschutz / Fichtl 1995.

26 Clemens 2003.

27 I.a., Petry 1984; De la Bédoyère 2001, pp. 228f.; Wagner 2001; Clemens 2003; Clemens 2009, pp. 315–320; Schnapp 2011, pp. 104f.; Heising 2015, p. 3. For a reinterpretation of the so-called

late 15th century, the increasingly analytic examination of ancient architecture betrays an ambivalent relationship to the buildings of the former northwestern provinces. On the one hand, spurred on by the rediscovery of ancient written sources – especially Tacitus's *Germania*[28] and the medieval reception of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*[29] – the material Roman legacy north of the Alps excited great interest.[30] Since the 16th century, in addition to the establishment of antiquity collections that focused on individual artifacts,[31] this led to first excavations of transalpine Roman architecture[32] and its occasional pictorial representation in prints.[33] On the other hand, from the beginning of the early modern period there was an emphasis on a difference in quality – already noted by Vitruvius[34] – between Mediterranean architecture in glistening marble and the architecture of the northwestern provinces.[35] For example, the rules of proportion that Vitruvius elevated to canonical status were hardly to be found in the North. By the end of the 18th century at the latest, Roman architecture north of the Alps was completely overshadowed by Mediterranean buildings. There were many reasons for this. For the sake of clarity, the following considerations will mostly focus on two particularly effective factors: the classicistic currents in the development of classical archeology toward the end of the 18th century and the 19th-century ideals of the educated middle class with their strong emphasis on Greek antiquity and decidedly imperialistic and nationalistic perspectives on the objects of scholarship.

An intensive discussion of the historical and aesthetic value of ancient art and architecture had begun in the 1750s. It had its origin in the first exact measurements and descriptions of Greek architecture in the publications of Julien-David Le Roy (1724–1803) in 1758 as well as the publications on Athenian and Attic antiquities by James Stuart (1713–

Igel column as the monument of a Constantine (Christian) family: Clemens 2003; Wiegartz 2004, pp. 127–132; Clemens 2009, pp. 321–324.

28 On the current scholarship and reception history of Tacitus's *Germania*: Pohl 2000, pp. 59–65; Schnapp 2011, pp. 129–132.

29 Most recently: Rathmann 2016.

30 Especially since it enabled the identification of various ruined cities. See for Germany the works of Sigismund Meisterlin (Schnapp 2011, pp. 125–128), subsequently, for England William Camden (Schnapp 2011, pp. 154–157; Hingley 2016).

31 Ott 2002; Schnapp 2011, pp. 185–195.

32 E.g., in Basel (Hufschmid / Pfäffli 2015) or in Mandeure (Jeannin 2012, p. 20).

33 See, for example, the chapters in Boschung / Schäfer 2019.

34 Vitruvius: On Architecture, 2,1,4.

35 The interest in Roman architecture in the Renaissance was concentrated on the city of Rome: Schnapp 2011, pp. 136–146. Many architects – e.g., Antoine Desgodetz (Kruft 2013, pp. 153–155) and Heinrich Schickard (Kruft 2013, p. 192) – travelled from the former northwest provinces to Rome in order to pursue their studies. Also, when faux ancient ruins were installed in landscape gardens, for a long time they were almost exclusively modeled on well-known Italian examples: Rieche 2004, p. 233.

1788) and Nicholas Revett (1720–1804) beginning in 1762.[36] The debate was particularly fueled by a question that had already been raised in 17th-century France: Which was historically and aesthetically superior, Greek or Roman architecture?[37] Despite fierce opposition from Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778), most international scholars gave the palm to Greek art and architecture.[38] The most prominent contributions to this argument came from Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768): *Gedancken über die Nachahmung der Griech. Werke in der Mahlerey und Bildhauer-Kunst* (Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture) of 1755 and *Anmerkungen über die Baukunst der Alten* (Notes on the Architecture of the Ancients) of 1762.[39] Scholars like Winckelmann established a classicizing tradition according to which the art of the Romans was understood as a decline from the cultural peak of Greece. Only a few years earlier, Stuart and Revett had explained their intention to publish Attic antiquities as follows:

> Rome, who borrowed her Arts and frequently her Artificers from Greece, has by means of Serlio, Palladio, Santo Bartoli, and other ingenious men, preserved the memory of the most excellent Sculptures, and magnificent Edifices which once adorned her [...]. But Athens, the mother of Elegance and Politeness, whose magnificence scarce yielded to that of Rome, and who for the beauties of a correct style must be allowed to surpass her, as much as an original excels a copy, has been almost entirely neglected. So that unless exact copies of them be speedily made, all her beauteous Fabricks, her Temples, her Theatres, her Palaces will drop into oblivion.[40]

While Greek architecture was declared to be aesthetically outstanding, Roman architecture was praised primarily for what the elder Pliny already regarded as its progressive technical achievements – e.g., its focus on infrastructure and utility.[41] Even within Roman architecture, distinctions were made; for example, the buildings of Rome and central Italy were regarded as superior and more worthy of study than the monuments of the northwestern provinces. Moreover, certain social practices established and confirmed the influential canon of the buildings of central Italy and the city of Rome. Since the early modern period, the Grand Tour featured these monuments and paid hardly any attention to transalpine buildings. Through engravings – and since the 1760s also cork models[42] – these value judgments became inscribed in northern European cultural memory. It is well known that such tendencies were rooted in late 18th-century

36 Le Roy 1758 (see Kruft 2013, pp. 236f.); Stuart / Revett 1762–1816 (see Kruft 2013, pp. 237f.).
37 For a summary: Baumgartner 2006.
38 On Piranesi: Wilton-Ely 1972; Kruft 2013, pp. 224–228. Many dissenting opinions in Kruft 2013, pp. 331–396.
39 On painting and sculpture: Winckelmann 2002, pp. 562–584. On architecture: Winckelmann 1762.
40 Stuart / Revett 1751, introduction; Watkin 2006.
41 Pliny: Natural History, xxxvi, 122–124.
42 Helmberger / Kockel 1993; Kockel 1996, pp. 14f.

Enlightenment thought and developed an enormous political potential, perpetuated in the 19th century by the ideals of middle-class education.

Moreover, since the end of the 19th century, scholars with colonialist attitudes have viewed the Romans as bringers of a culture only partly understood in the North. This point of view impeded an unprejudiced examination of ancient transalpine architecture. The successors of Theodor Mommsen and Francis John Haverfield regarded the buildings of the northwestern provinces in general as provincial efforts to adopt, unfiltered, Roman forms and metropolitan ways of life.[43] They considered such buildings as deficient adaptations by a marginal population unable to construct monuments with intellectual aspirations and a distinct aesthetics.[44] In this model, the coming of Rome has positive connotations. The term 'Romanization' was introduced to describe this importation of culture.[45] By contrast, many modern nation-states found the 'Celts' or the 'Teutons' more appropriate for the establishment of legitimizing narratives than the Romans.[46] This meant that the numerous handbooks of ancient Roman architecture published around the beginning of the 20th century hardly mention transalpine structures.[47] If they were treated at all, they were not conceded any aesthetic intention. In the case of the rusticated masonry of the Porta Nigra in Trier, for instance, Alfred von Domaszewski recognized a certain "picturesque" quality but also asserted that this impression was "unintentional," the accidental result of carelessness, since the builders "nowhere took the trouble to smooth out the ashlars."[48] Not long thereafter, in a chapter entitled "Characteristics of Roman Architecture" in the second edition of his "Baukunst der Römer" (Architecture of the Romans, 1905), Josef Durm formulated the idea, typical for his time, of a unidirectional history of influence from the Romans to the provinces, with the words, "As far as the Romans bore their arms, they brought their art as well! [...] everywhere we find the same architecture."[49]

While somewhat in the 18th-century tradition of a Greek versus Roman antithesis, the transalpine Roman buildings were conceded at least technical mastery, the developments described above led to a lasting aesthetic disparagement of Roman architecture north of the Alps and its sculptural features, which were categorically denied any

43 See Mommsen 1992, pp. 304–340.

44 Haverfield 1979 [1923], pp. 14 f.; Mommsen 1992, p. 303.

45 For a summary: Rothe 2005, pp. 1–5; Langner 2020, pp. 13–17.

46 King 2001; Reddé 2006, pp. 65–79 (for France); Struck 2001, pp. 101, 106 f.; Bender / Fischer / von Kaenel 2000, pp. 312–321; Focke-Museum 2013 (for Germany).

47 See Anderson / Phené Spiers 1905, pp. 280–285; Noack 1910; Robertson 1929; Monuments north of the Alps are treated somewhat more extensively in Borrmann 1904, pp. 257–260 and Durm 1905 [1885], pp. 440, 742–745).

48 Domaszewski after Durm 1905 [1885], p. 440. Cf. for current evaluations of such embossing: Grawehr 2017.

49 Durm 1905 [1885], p. 176.

creativity whatsoever.[50] Such basically unsubstantiated views continue to inform value judgments up to the present. For example, Helmut Schoppa wrote in 1957, "in general, when judging the sculpture from the parts of the Empire north of the Alps, one must not forget the cultural gradient that characterizes the separation between Rome and the Rhine."[51] He traces these differences in quality partly back to the Celtic-Germanic population, but also believes that the Roman legionnaires shared responsibility for what he saw as a lack of cultural development: "From an economic point of view, we can assume a modest prosperity in the Limes region, but from a cultural perspective, nothing that rises above the horizon of the average soldier."[52] Even when such dogmatic statements are revisited in more recent publications, the image of a story of unidirectional influence remains unchallenged. Patrick Schollmeyer, for example, spends only one page of his 2008 introduction to Roman temples on the buildings of the northwestern provinces and detects "a strong dependence on [unspecified] Roman architectural designs."[53] Symptomatic of this view, with its implicit value judgments, is the title of the 2014 exhibition in Trier and Stuttgart, "Ein Traum von Rom: Stadtleben im römischen Deutschland" (Dreaming of Rome: Urban Life in Roman Germany).[54]

Nevertheless, beginning in the 1990s with the critical reappraisal of colonialism, there has been a tendency to reevaluate the Roman provinces and examine the various inhabitants of the Roman Empire and their different socio-cultural practices.[55] Driving this change was the application of the theories of cultural contacts cited at the beginning of our discussion[56] that allow us to abandon polarizing approaches such as "metropolitan Rome vs. the provinces," "Romans vs. indigenous peoples," "upper classes vs. subjects," and "high art vs. everyday objects," and in their place emphasize the cultural independence of various cities and regions as well as the plural identities of their inhabitants.[57]

50 In the 1930s and 1940s, there were scattered attempts to rehabilitate Roman architecture and sculpture north of the Alps, but they had different motivations and, from today's vantage point, are mostly untenable: esp. Schoppa 1930. Blümel 1955 [1940], p. 80, however, sees in the sculptures of the northwestern provinces connections to archaic Greek art: "They are not very different in their main lines from early Greek sculptures [...], but the comparison with archaic sculptures from Greece cannot be maintained as far as clarity and harmony of form are concerned."

51 Schoppa 1957, p. 34.

52 Schoppa 1957, p. 30.

53 Schollmeyer 2008, p. 148.

54 Reuter / Ewigleben 2014.

55 E.g., Millett 1990; Webster / Cooper 1996; Mattingly 1997; Woolf 1998; Mattingly 2002; Terrenato 2005; Mattingly 2014; Versluys 2014; Revell 2014.

56 E.g., syncretism, pidginization, creolization, hybridization, globalization, glocalization, networking, and many others: Schreiber 2013; Hahn 2014, pp. 99–107; Versluys 2014; Hofmann / Stockhammer 2017.

57 E.g., Revell 2009; Gardner 2013; Langner 2020.

This approach offers new possibilities for understanding transalpine Roman architecture. No longer must we evaluate it (only) against the backdrop of the buildings of the capital. Instead, it becomes clear that the buildings north of the Alps are not direct copies. They reveal programmatic differences from Mediterranean architectural concepts that can be understood as distinctive developments addressing, among other things, the particular functions they serve[58] or different semantic systems.[59] But they also represent a distinctive aesthetics barely recognized or investigated in previous scholarship.[60] In what follows, we intend to approach that aesthetics by means of two guiding questions: In what ways does transalpine Roman architecture distinguish itself from architecture in Italy? Who commissioned its construction, and what political, religious, and societal functions did it fulfill in its concrete socio-cultural context?

2.2. Funerary Architecture in the Early Empire and its Social Context: Selected Monuments in Mainz

In the following pages, we will only be able to scratch the surface of the copious archaeological material that is available to address the questions we have raised. Instead of providing comprehensive answers, we will highlight the independent aesthetic accomplishments of transalpine monuments by examining selected funerary monuments in the provincial capital *Mogontiacum* (Mainz) in the north of the province of Germania Superior. In the course of building a military base on a plateau opposite the mouth of the Main River in the penultimate decade BCE, the permanent deployment of two legions there by 17 CE at the latest, as well as the establishment of an additional military camp in Mainz-Weisenau, the town soon grew into one of the largest conurbations north of the Alps (Fig. 1).[61] As the central hub for troop movements in the North of the Empire, the once sparsely populated region[62] now contained up to 30,000 soldiers.[63] On the basis of numerous surviving funerary inscriptions, we know that many of these soldiers came from northern Italy and the south of France. But there is also evidence for units of various mother tongues from regions of modern Spain, England, the Balkans, Turkey, and the Near East. With the arrival of the military, civilian settlements arose before the legionnaires' compound in Mainz-Weisenau, as well as farther downstream. Veterans, artisans, tradespeople, and freedpeople had lodgings there, brought their families (and

58 E.g., Hesberg 2009; Hufschmid 2016; Lipps 2017.

59 Cf. the essays by Hesberg 1995; Hesberg 2003.

60 Yet there is an ancient positive evaluation of the aesthetics of Roman architecture along the Moselle; see Ausonius's *Mosella*.

61 On the legionnaires' camp, see Burger-Völlmecke 2020, esp. pp. 184–207. On the camp in Mainz-Weisenau, see most recently Boppert / Ertel 2019, pp. 5 f.

62 On the late Latène Period findings, see Hornung 2016, p. 211; Burger-Völlmecke 2020, p. 183.

63 Strobel 1991; Boppert 1992a, pp. 29–34.

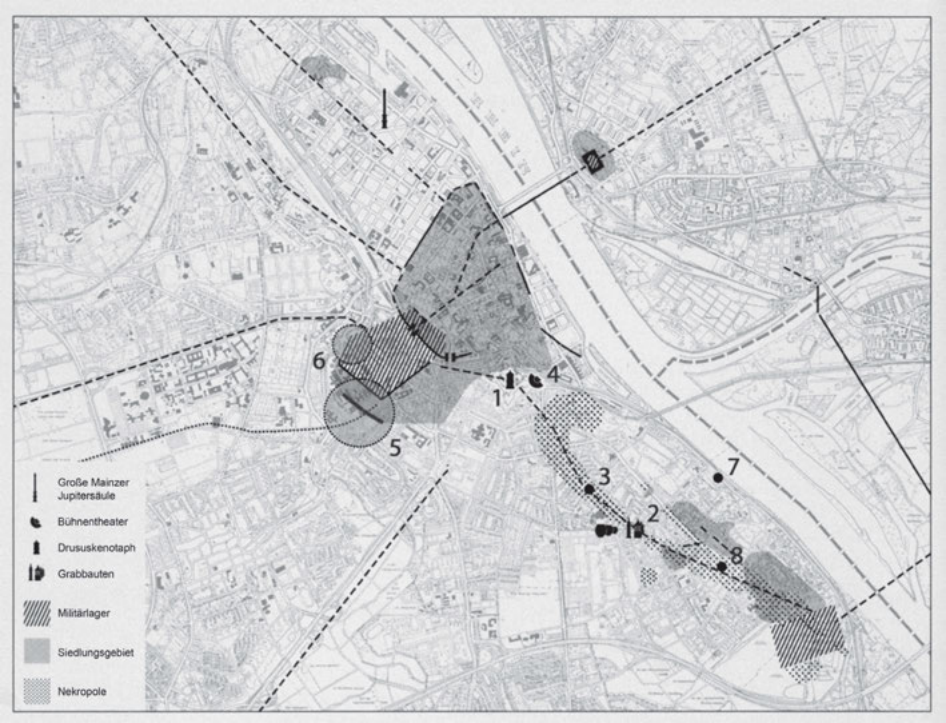

Fig. 1. Mainz in the Roman era. Numbers indicate the location of the monuments under discussion. No. 1: The so-called Drusus Monument (Fig. 2–3), No. 2: Weisenau avenue of tombs (Figs. 4. 15), No. 3: Funerary monument of the Cassii (Fig. 6), No. 4: Corbel geison (Fig. 9),No. 5: Grave stele of the soldier Cn. Musius (Fig. 11), No. 6: Grave stele of the soldier Rufus (Fig. 12), No. 7: Grave stele of Blussus (Fig. 13), No. 8: The so-called Weisenau Gardener (Fig. 14); nach Boppert / Ertel 2015b, p. 80 Fig. 1a, revised by Elisa Schuster.

sometimes slaves) with them or founded new ones, and looked to profit from the new commercial center. Moreover, countless members of the indigenous transalpine population came to Mainz, so that we can conservatively assume a population numbering in the high five figures in the early imperial era, a polyglot population from all corners of the Greco-Roman world.[64] The logistical and social challenges of dealing with such explosive growth must have been enormous. Construction was not the least of those challenges. It was dependent on architects and artisans as well as on numerous raw materials and the necessary infrastructure, which in many places had still to be set up.

64 For a thorough treatment of the social structure of Roman Mainz, see Kronemayer 1983; Strobel 1991, pp. 47 f.; Schipp 2013, pp. 75–116.

For several reasons we can characterize the tombs analyzed below, most of them comparatively monumental structures, as exemplary: (1) They document the practice – widespread in the Roman world and adopted north of the Alps since the Augustan period – of erecting large-scale stone tombs at considerable expense in order to preserve for posterity the memory of the deceased. Unlike our modern cemeteries, the ancient necropoleis were extended out along busy rivers or highways and were designed for the greatest possible visibility.[65] (2) The remains of Roman tombs in Mainz, although only preserved in fragments, are comparatively numerous and present a rich spectrum of design possibilities. Moreover, the so-called *Weisenauer Gräberstraße*, an unusually well preserved and extensively excavated avenue of tombs and published in 2019, documents the city's funeral architecture in an exemplary way. (3) Inscriptions and reliefs on the tombs allow us to draw extremely detailed conclusions about their builders and the ways in which their works helped them or their patrons to present and socially locate themselves in the context of a multicultural community still in the process of constituting and defining itself.

On a general level, the images and texts on the tombs should not be understood as direct visualizations of the lives of the deceased. Rather, they are clearly idealized and thus are caught up in a delicate polarity. On the one hand, they are subject to certain constraints imposed by social conventions, but on the other hand, they possess creative potential peculiar to their materials, capable of oscillating between documentation and fiction. Thus the tombs were erected not just for the dead but also for the collective of the living who conceived, built, and visited these monuments.

The praxeological approach of the CRC 1391, with its explicit inclusion of the heterological dimension, brings into focus the heterogeneous structure of the population in early imperial Mainz. This automatically reveals the inadequacies of the purely binary model of Italic versus Central European architecture. The first monumental tomb erected under Roman rule is a perfect example of this shift. This cenotaph (a funerary monument not containing the remains of the deceased), often mentioned in ancient sources, honors Nero Claudius Drusus, the younger of Caesar Augustus's two stepsons.[66] Drusus had led wars of conquest from Mainz into Germania on the right bank of the Rhine and supposedly had reached the Elbe. According to Livy, he fell from his horse during the return in the late summer of 9 BCE, broke his thighbone, and, as a result of the injury, died thirty days later in a provisional summer encampment.[67] Upon hearing of the accident, his brother Tiberius is said to have ridden from Italy day and night until he reached him, only to see Drusus die a few days later. Tiberius then accompanied the

65 For a general treatment of burial customs in the western Imperium Romanum: Schrumpf 2006.

66 See, i. a., Panter 2007, pp. 18–25.

67 Livy: History, 142.

body back to the headquarters in Mainz.[68] There the army immediately began to erect a tumulus in which to bury its beloved general, but on the orders of Augustus had to surrender his body to be put to rest, befitting his status, in the family mausoleum in Rome. As compensation, Augustus ordered the tumulus prepared as a cenotaph. It must have been either completed or near completion before Augustus's death in 14 CE, since Augustus had it engraved (insculpsisse) with an elogium he had written himself.[69] Thus the monument was the product of a collaborative effort between soldiers of various origins and the Roman emperor. The construction brought together existing knowhow within the army[70] that was probably supplemented by the expertise of technical personnel from the entourage of the emperor, expressly dispatched from the South.[71] Moreover, the anniversary of Drusus's death was to be commemorated from then on in Mainz with great festivities, to which the army was to contribute *decursiones*, and delegations from circa sixty tribal communities of Gauls and Teutons from the left bank of the Rhine were to add *supplicationes*.[72] Thus, members of nearly all local and transregional groups of the population were involved in the ritualized staging and reception of the monument. The logistics necessary for this task, especially the quarrying and transport of newly developed raw materials,[73] must have given an impulse to further building in the region.[74] At the latest by the next generation, in 19 CE, a second transregional 'authors' collective' appeared in Mainz at the behest of the Senate in Rome to erect an honorific arch not far from Drusus's cenotaph for his son Germanicus, who also had died young.[75]

Early on, scholars identified a monumental core of Roman concrete, today located within the Mainz citadel and dubbed the *Drususstein*, as part either of the *tumulus* erected for Drusus after 9 BCE or of its later renovation as a cenotaph (Fig. 1, no. 1).[76] Even though this identification is not completely verifiable due to the lack of an inscription,[77] the sheer size of this structure, which rises to over 21 meters, as well as its location to the southeast of the legionnaires' compound in a privileged position over-

68 For a summary of the incident: Johne 2006, pp. 102–106.

69 Suetonius: Lives, 1,5.

70 For more information on the activities of Mainz legions, see: Stribrny 1987, p. 8; Frenz 1991.

71 Cf. the partly analogous course of raising the better-preserved cenotaph for the grandson of Augustus Gaius Caesar in Limyra in Turkey: Ganzert 1984.

72 Tab. Siar. 29–32; Lebek 1989, pp. 48. 51–54 and 67–72; Herz 2001, pp. 103–112; Spickermann 2003, pp. 85–91; Spickermann 2006, p. 169; Panter 2007, pp. 15–25; Blänsdorf 2020, pp. 94–99.

73 On the quarries of the so-called Drusus Monument: Panter 2007, pp. 83–85. On the better-researched beginnings of the ancient quarry somewhat further north on the Rhine: Schaaff 2010, pp. 265–272.

74 With some differences in evaluating details: Scholz 2012, p. 43; Hornung 2014, pp. 52–158.

75 Tacitus: Annals, 2,83,2; CIL VI 31199.

76 On its reception and the history of earlier scholarship: Frenz 1985, pp. 395–397; Pelgen 2003.

77 Cf. the resultant skepticism of Andrikopoulou-Strack 1986, pp. 26f.; Gans 1997; Haupt 2010. As arguments against identifying the block of Roman cement as the cenotaph for Drusus, the use of

Fig. 2. The so-called Drusus Monument in 2022.

looking the mouth of the Main, bespeak its outstanding importance and the power of the Roman imperium (Fig. 2).[78] In the absence of excavations in undisturbed strata or scientific analyses (e.g., of remnants of wood in the Roman concrete), at present only a typological classification of its structure can be carried out. The monument, partly buried underground today, with its cubical base supporting a cylindrical superstructure, corresponds to designs known from Rome and its environs. They were popular from the later first century BCE up to the early empire, particularly in the reign of Augustus.[79] But the monument's present-day appearance is deceiving. Originally the exterior of the

the term *tumulus* in the ancient written sources as well as the use of different kinds of stone and of previously worked ashlars are adduced. See in response Scholz 2012, pp. 42 f. notes 150 and 152.

78 I.a. Hesberg 1992, p. 107; Spickermann 2006, pp. 168–171; Panter 2007; Scholz 2012, pp. 42 f.; Hornung 2014, pp. 59–62; Witteyer 2014, pp. 76–78; Ertel 2015, p. 2; Blänsdorf 2020, pp. 94–99; Schäfer 2021, pp. 292–295.

79 Hesberg 1992, pp. 121–159; Gans 1997, p. 22; Schwarz 2002; Panter 2007, pp. 97–99; Scholz 2012, p. 43.

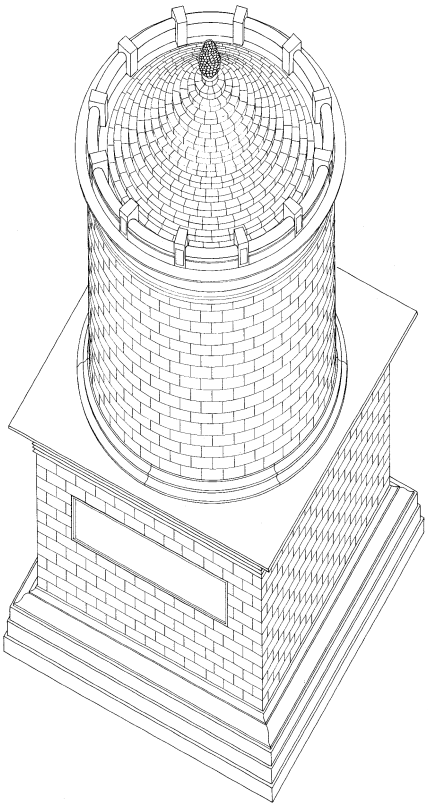

Fig. 3. The so-called Drusus Monument. Suggested reconstruction by Hans Georg Frenz.

so-called Drusus Monument was faced in large ashlars and decorated with architectural orders, but a visualization must remain hypothetical in the absence of any surviving material (Fig. 3).[80]

For the architectural concept of both the Mainz *tumulus* (known to us only through texts but probably surrounded by a wooden or stone enclosure)[81] and the so-called *Drususstein*, there are comparable structures in Rome itself and its immediate environs, but strikingly, the transalpine monuments are not their direct copies. On the contrary, especially the *Drususstein*, which can be examined archeologically, has a distinct design with imperial aspirations for whose dimensions and construction there is no comparison even far beyond Mainz.

Between 1982 and 1992, the 250-meter-long avenue of tombs – which later also reached the *Drususstein* along a ridge that connected the legionnaires' compound with an auxiliary camp in Weisenau – was excavated (Fig. 1, no. 2). It provides an impression

80 On the reconstructions: Frenz 1985; Panter 2007, esp. p. 92.

81 Cf. Berke 2013.

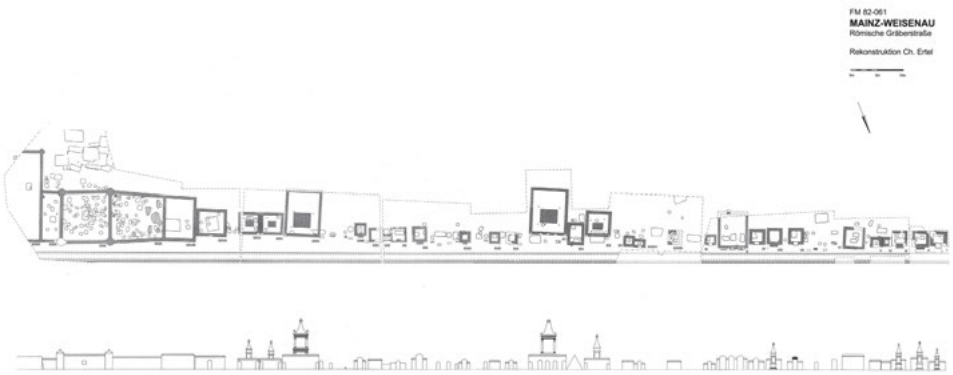

Fig. 4. Floorplan and conjectural elevation of the necropolis in Mainz-Weisenau.

of the rather conventional repertoire of early imperial tombs typical for the region and includes over thirty funerary precincts, side-by-side, and numerous burials (Fig. 4).[82] Already in late antiquity, the tombs were being used as quarries for new buildings and were dismantled down to their foundations. Nevertheless, 321 small architectural fragments, broken off and discarded during demolition, were recovered by the recent excavations.[83] Most of them were made from Jura limestone quarried in Lorraine.[84] On the basis of where they were unearthed and whether their dimensions were compatible, the fragments were divided into groups and attributed to individual tombs.[85] Circular tombs were the exception.[86] An analysis identified three tombs as mausolea or multi-story aedicules,[87] especially large monuments[88] that have been reconstructed with a closed ground floor, an open second floor ornamented with statues, and a pyramidal tile roof. With eighty fragments, the best-preserved tomb precinct, number XXIV, covers an area of 7.3 × 9.1 meters. Within its enclosure stood a two-story tomb with a footprint of 3.4 × 2.9 meters that may have been roughly ten meters high (Fig. 5). While the closed ground floor was framed by two Corinthian pilasters and probably bore inscriptions, the second story had an aedicule framed by two Corinthian columns and topped by a

82 Witteyer / Fasold 1995; Witteyer 2000, pp. 319–343.
83 Boppert / Ertel 2019, pp. 22–24.
84 Stribrny 1987; Boppert / Ertel 2015a, p. 49 with note 1. Boppert / Ertel 2019, pp. 24 f. On limestone from Lorraine most recently: Giljohann / Wenzel 2015, pp. 19–22.
85 Boppert / Ertel 2019, pp. 25 f.
86 Boppert / Ertel 2019, pp. 128–131.
87 Gabelmann 1979, pp. 7 f.; Andrikopoulou-Strack 1986, pp. 9–36; Hesberg 1992, p. 121; Scholz 2012, II, p. 91, no. 572.
88 Boppert / Ertel 2015b; Boppert / Ertel 2019, pp. 69–85, no. XV; pp. 87–104, no. XXIV; pp. 113–127, no. XXXV.

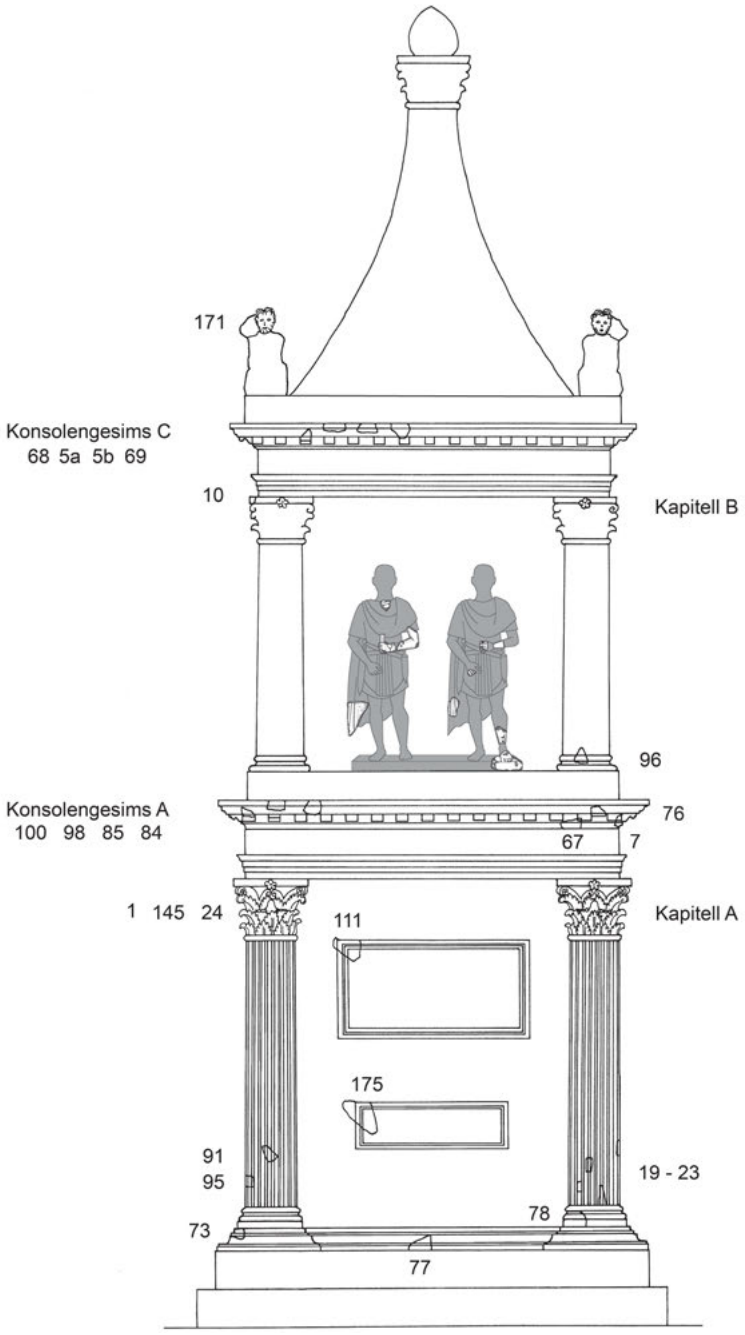

Fig. 5. Conjectural reconstruction of the tomb precinct No. XXIV in the necropolis of Mainz-Weisenau.

Fig. 6. Tombs of the Cassii.

pyramidal roof decorated with four tritons as acroteria. The aedicule probably housed statues of the tomb's occupants, who, based on the modest remains of the tomb, may have been soldiers. The finds from the tomb precinct, and especially the architectural fragments, allow us to date tomb precinct no. XXIV to the early imperial period.[89] Mausolea of similar design are reported in many Roman towns in Italy and southern France and date from the late last century BCE to the early first century CE. Especially well-preserved examples have been discovered in Pompeii and Sarsina.[90]

In the absence of an inscription, the occupants of tomb precinct no. XXIV remain unknown, but a large-format inscription, discovered in 1974 on Oberer Laubenheimer Weg in Mainz-Weisenau (Fig. 1, no. 3), can serve as an example of the type of person who would have ordered the construction of a comparable tomb (Fig. 6). Even before the excavation of the avenue of tombs in Weisenau, the four limestone blocks of this monument, also quarried in Lorraine, had been conjecturally associated with a two-story, large-format tomb and dated to the first half of the first century CE. The inscription names two brothers, Marcus and Caius Cassius, originally from Milan, who both served in the Fourteenth Legion.[91] They had contracted for a type of tomb familiar to them from Italy and being built in Mainz since the early 1st century CE, but constructed from locally available resources. Examining the surviving architectural fragments of tomb precinct no. XXIV in detail, one notices a particular preference for additional ornamental details that are not to be found in this concentration on comparable buildings in the South and, in general, should be regarded as characteristic of Roman architecture north of the Alps.[92] This becomes clear, i.a., from the fragments of Corinthian capitals from tomb precinct no. XXIV: the sculptors added an additional blossom to the volutes while

89 Boppert/Ertel 2019, pp. 87–104 suggest an even more precise dating in the years 20–40 CE.
90 Kockel 1983 as well as contributions in Hesberg/Zanker 1987.
91 Boppert 1992 a, pp. 163–165, no. 55.
92 Cf. Walter 1984, pp. 337–364.

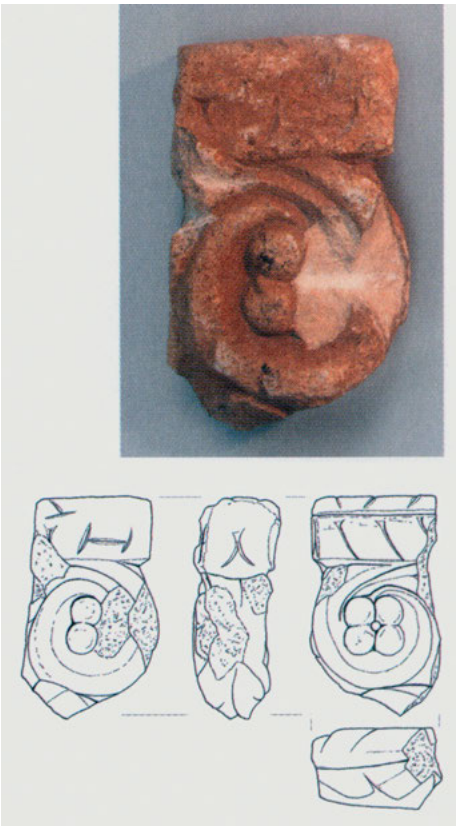

Fig. 7. Fragment of a capital from the necropolis in Mainz-Weisenau.

Fig. 8. Fragment of a capital from the necropolis in Mainz-Weisenau.

the abacus attracts particular attention with parallel-running channels.[93] One can see a similar love of detail and a predilection for rich ornamentation in the Corinthian capitals of the tomb in precinct no. XV (Fig. 7) and in the unusually extensive segmentation filling the volute of a capital (Fig. 8).[94]

A cornice with modillions, found a few hundred meters to the west of and downhill from the *Drususstein* in the subsequently erected Roman theater, provides an even deeper insight into such processes than the small architectural fragments discussed above (Fig. 1, no. 4). The stone block is of high-quality Jura limestone and was probably also quarried on the upper Moselle in Lorraine (Fig. 9). It was discovered in 2002 during excavations in the apex of the theater's orchestra, in a context of secondary use and

93 Boppert / Ertel 2019, pp. 91 f.
94 Boppert / Ertel 2019, p. 70.

Fig. 9. Corbel geison found in the Mainz theater.

upside-down, perhaps serving as the foundation for an altar. Projecting segments of the cornice that had been broken off onsite were collected. During a subsequent restauration, they were discovered to fit perfectly with the cornice and were reattached. Christine Ertel hypothesized that the cornice block, 29.5 centimeters high and part of a ressaut entablature, was part of the *scaenae frons* of a conjectural early theater, but in light of its dimensions, it could also have been only repurposed here and belonged originally to a tomb or other building.[95]

An upside-down leaf-and-dart kymation (*Scherenkymation*) leads to the modillions. The modillions are underpinned by serrated acanthus leaves, and on their fronts, finely striated cockleshells alternate with hanging acanthus leaves and blossoms. Most of the panels between the modillions are decorated with offensive and defensive weapons, which can be associated with gladiatorial combat. One panel shows a sacrificial procession with a *victimarius* and a bull; on another we see the winged goddess Victoria, dressed in a peplos and holding a wreath. On the upper side of the intermediate panels is an egg-and-dart motif that runs around and ties together the individual modillions. Each of the surviving coffers is decorated with a different blossom. On the far right, a theater mask is depicted. The upper part of the cornice above the modillions is adorned with an astragal and a row of acanthus leaves interspersed with finely stippled poppy seed capsules.[96]

When interpreting the cornice, we must also keep in mind that ancient architectural elements were often covered with a white primer and then painted. In the present case, traces of whiteish-yellow plaster where the modillions meet the intermediate panels as well as faint traces of red on Victoria's wreath provide evidence of the geison's original color.[97] Judging by similar traces on other surviving architectural elements from the region, paint was used to give reliefs clearer contours and, when needed, to

95 Ertel 2015, p. 21.

96 For an extensive description and interpretation of the cornice, see Ertel/Boppert 2014, pp. 80f.; Boppert/Ertel 2015a; Boppert/Ertel 2019, pp. 9f.

97 Boppert/Ertel 2015a, pp. 20 and 56.

add ornamental designs, objects, or figures to otherwise empty and uncarved sections.[98] Sculptural details we have trouble identifying today may thus have been more quickly and clearly identifiable in antiquity, and many architectural nuances may indeed have relied on painting to be effective. The choice of color was, as a rule (but not necessarily always), determined by how the depicted object looked in reality.[99] Like quarried stone, the ingredients necessary for making paint north of the Alps in the Augustan period had to be locally extracted or imported from the Mediterranean region.[100]

In the context of our discussion, the cornice from the theater is especially relevant for two reasons. First, as typological and stylistic comparisons show, it was created in the early imperial era. The syntax, motifs, and execution of the ornamentation find their closest parallels in the Augustan period, especially in its early years.[101] Second, we can identify significant differences between this cornice and Italian pieces sculpted at approximately the same time. The decorations of the Mainz cornice are much denser and more varied. Besides richly faceted modillions which in Italy were usually not decorated, the metopes between the modillions have elaborate and varied decorations. While these parts of similar cornices were hardly ever decorated in Italy, the Mainz cornice features numerous and varied scenes. With their depictions of weapons, sacrificial offerings, and Victoria, the goddess of victory, they recall central themes of Roman visual arts and refer programmatically and emphatically to the empire and the quality of its leaders.[102]

Let us return to the Weisenau necropolis and the smaller tomb precincts that are much more numerous than the large-format structures discussed so far. On their front side, these precincts often had a stele – i. e., a tall, oblong stone reminiscent of contemporary European gravestones – with a Latin inscription and sometimes a relief (Fig. 10). We can deduce the existence of such stelae at the Weisenau site from the remaining so-called beddings into which the stelae were set, but only a few fragments of the stones themselves survive.[103] In past centuries, however, numerous stelae were found in other Mainz necropoleis as well as in the city walls, and although their exact findspots were hardly ever documented, the objects can nonetheless give us an impression of the stelae missing from the avenue of tombs in Weisenau. Their inscriptions are more likely to provide information about the tombs' occupants than the remaining fragments of the

98 Cf. also early observations on the monuments from Neumagen in Grenier 1904; Massow 1932, pp. 274–279, plates 65–68; Delferrière / Edme 2020.

99 Lipps 2020; Lipps / Berthold 2021.

100 On the importation of paint: Höpken / Mucha 2016 with a critique in Thomas 2016, p. 400.

101 However, the historical context makes an origin before the establishment of the legionnaires' camp in the second decade BCE unlikely: Ertel 2015, pp. 30–32. Cf. also: Frenz 1992, Cat. 24–27; Hesberg 2002, pp. 31 f.

102 Boppert / Ertel 2015b.

103 Boppert / Ertel 2019, Cat. 56. 86. 179. 193.

Fig. 10. Conjectural visualization of the tomb precinct No. VII in the necropolis of Mainz-Weisenau.

larger-format structures. Moreover, the inscriptions often mentioned the military units the deceased served in, allowing us to date their presence in Mainz, and their haircuts typical of the early imperial era allow for a quite accurate date in the Julian and early Claudian period.[104] As case studies, we will compare three grave stelae: one of a legionnaire from Italy, one of a trooper from an auxiliary unit who grew up in the Alpine region, and one of a civilian – probably a local – with a Celtic name.

The legionnaire, Cn. Musius from Veleia in northern Italy, is presented in full figure with his weapons. Both the inscription and a standard in his right hand identify him as an *aquilifer* of the Fourteenth Legion, an especially prestigious post (Fig. 11). Additional honorary badges and medals, unmentioned in the inscription, appear on his breastplate. In addition to Musius's name, home town, troop affiliation, and rank, the inscription tells us that his gravestone was erected by his brother. The stone was found early in 1831 on the slope of the Zahlbach Valley, in sight of the legion's camp, whose location is today occupied by Mainz's main cemetery (Fig. 1, no. 5).[105]

At another location in the northwest, right outside the legionnaires' compound, one would have found in the early imperial period the stele of the auxiliary Rufus, from the tribe of the Helvetii (Fig. 1, no. 6). The sumptuous design presents the deceased as a (victorious) cavalryman (Fig. 12). Rufus exhibits his equestrian skills by keeping a tight rein on his rearing horse in an impressive demonstration of his value to the Roman army.[106]

104 Boppert 1992a; Boppert 1992b.

105 Boppert 1992a, pp. 87–90, no. 1; Töpfer 2011, p. 360, Cat. SD 18.

106 Boppert 1992a, no. 27; Scholz 2013; Ardeleanu 2021, pp. 219–223, no. 1. On the site, see Burger-Völlmecke 2020, p. 200.

Fig. 11. Grave stele of the soldier Cn. Musius in Mainz (Inv. No. S 182, today in Landesmuseum Mainz).

Fig. 12. Grave stele of the soldier Rufus in Mainz (today in the REM Mannheim).

The third stele was reportedly discovered in 1848, "on the hillside directly above the house at Wormserstrasse 15" in Weisenau. Both sides are inscribed with an almost identical text, but each with its own separate relief (Fig 1, no. 7).[107] On the more elaborately carved side, which had been facing the Rhine, a man the inscription identifies as Blussus sits next to his wife Menimane (Fig. 13, no. 1). Judging by the names, they are indigenous to the area, and they wear demonstrably local attire. Over his tunic, the seventy-five-year-old boatman Blussus wears a hooded coat typical for the region and holds a bulging moneybag. His wife Menimane wears an undergarment which, unlike his tunic, is long-sleeved and tightly fitted, and a belted outer garment of coarser material. She is also

107 On the localization: Esser 1972, p. 218, note 30.

Fig. 13.1 and 13.2. Grave stele of Blussus in Mainz (Inv. No. S 146, today in Landesmuseum Mainz).

lavishly adorned with jewelry. Between the two of them stands a smaller figure, identified by scholars as either their son Primus, who had commissioned the stone, or their slave Satto, whom only the side facing the Rhine describes as being buried here.[108] The reverse side depicts a ship beneath garlands and blossoms (Fig. 13, no. 2), representing Blussus's occupation and the reason for the economic success obvious from his elegant attire and his moneybag.[109]

The basic idea of erecting grave stelae may have originated in northern Italy, where many such monuments are preserved from the late last century BCE and especially from the Augustan period.[110] However, the stelae described above display striking differences from their Italian counterparts in their imagery. Musius, who came from Veleia, chose

108 On the discussion, see, i. a., Böhme-Schönberger 2003, p. 285, note 2.

109 On the Blussus Stone, i. a., Boppert 1992b, pp. 53–59, no. 2 with an extensive bibliography. Since then: Frenz 1992, p. 12, note 122; Boppert 1992/1993; Jacobi 1996, pp. 169–175; Böhme-Schönberger 2003; Hesberg 2004, pp. 254 f.; Böhme-Schönberger 2009; Rothe 2012, pp. 236–239; Mander 2013, p. 254, no. 447; Boppert / Ertel 2019, p. 12; Riemer 2019, pp. 34 f.; Lipps 2021, pp. 242–245.

110 See Pflug 1989; Pflug 2019.

a stele showing an armed full figure in an aedicula, structurally comparable to that of Minucius Lorarius, a centurion from Padua,[111] and suggesting a direct or indirect transfer of imagery between Italy and Mainz.[112] Nevertheless, upright full figures were rare in Italy, but frequent north of the Alps. Moreover, a closer look at the Musius Stone also reveals differences in detail, for example, additional framing with rounded, almost three-dimensional columns; there is nothing comparable in Italy.[113]

If the Musius Stone is probably an example of creative appropriation of already existing imagery, the case of the gravestone of the Helvetian trooper Rufus is different. Although images of mounted combat had been familiar in the Mediterranean world for centuries, there are none to be found on Italian stelae. Instead, they occur for the first time in Mainz and can thus be described as an innovative conjunction of pictorial invention and the stele as its medium of representation.[114] This pictorial design, presumably originating or substantially refined along the Rhine (and perhaps through contact with the Danube region), eventually itself became a model for comparable later monuments from Britannia.[115] This type of imagery seems to have been used especially for auxiliary mounted troops, who hailed not from Italy but from quite different regions of the Roman Empire and often did not speak Latin as their mother tongue. They obviously favored images to express their importance for society. On the other hand, indigenous inhabitants like Blussus and Menimane, who had profited from the new prosperity of the region, entered the game of self-representation on a stele in their own way, by creating an innovative image that emphasized their wealth and professional success.[116] Thus the distinctive achievement of the Roman grave stelae from Mainz lies in their creative appropriation and innovation of various motifs that lead to an impressive multiplicity of individual solutions.

In addition to monumental mausolea and simple, fenced-in grave precincts fronted by stelae, another kind of grave monument has been postulated for the avenue of tombs in Weisenau. It represents not just an enrichment through additional ornamentation or a new pictorial invention using a traditional medium, but an ingenious amalgamation of various models that can be regarded as a completely new type of structure. Walburg Boppert and Christine Ertel drew attention to grave precincts containing unearthed monuments smaller than the mausolea but larger than the usual stele beddings would

111 On the Minucius stele: Padova, Museo Civico; Franzoni 1987, pp. 46–48, no. 26; Pflug 1989, pp. 81, 231 f., no. 191.

112 On the considerable mobility of stone masons in particular during the imperial period: Ruffing 2006, pp. 137–141; Sieler 2013, pp. 81–83; Lipps 2017, p. 15, note 36.

113 But there is an example Pannonian *Savaria*: Balla et al. 1971, Cat. 103, 110, 116, 118.

114 Boppert 1992a, pp. 57–62; Boppert 2003, pp. 273 f. and 281–284.

115 Andrikopoulou-Strack 1986, pp. 97 f.; Mattern 1989, pp. 711–714; Stewart 2010, paragraphs 30 f.

116 Boppert 2003; Hesberg 2004; Hesberg 2018. On the grave stelae in *Carnuntum*, which originated a few decades later, see Kremer 2021.

accommodate.[117] The two authors propose that these were pillar grave monuments, the best-preserved example of which was dubbed the *Weisenauer Gärtner* (Weisenau Gardener) in the scholarly literature (Fig. 14).

It too is made of Lorraine limestone and was reconstructed from several ancient fragments that belonged together. They were found in 1926 and 1955 in today's Erich-Ollenhauer-Strasse in Mainz-Weisenau (Fig. 1, no. 8). Originally circa five meters high, the monument has an oblong footprint and suggests how the structure in Precinct I of the Weisenau tomb avenue might have looked. The Weisenau Gardener consisted of a lost plinth framed on its lower side by a profile and on its upper side by a molding; based on comparable monuments, it would have borne an inscription with the name of the deceased. Above that rose the principal story, framed by half scalloped and half spiral columns, with a frontal relief. On the left is a standing female figure; on the right, a male figure sits on a stool with turned legs. The man wears sandals, a tunic, and a *paenula*. He also sports a scarf and a ring on his finger. His hair is cut short, and in his left hand he holds a flower, hence his name in the scholarly literature. The woman standing next to him wears closed shoes, a *tunica*, and a *palla*. Short strands of her hair are parted in the middle, and at the back of her head there is a pigtail bow contained in a net. Costly jewelry adorns her neck, her wrist, and her fingers. The main story ends in another molding, above which is a block, reconstructed in modern times, capped by a scalloped, pyramidal roof crowned by a sphinx.[118] The figures' hairstyles suggest that the Weisenau Gardener dates to the second third of the 1st century CE.[119] Even in the absence of further information about the Weisenau Gardener due to the lack of an inscription, we can roughly reconstruct the historical context for it and the Blussus Stone (Fig. 13). The people commissioning these monuments were probably indigenous. Since the other gravestones of this group depict civilians exclusively, mostly shown in local apparel, the commissioner for the Weisenau Gardener was probably also from the region and perhaps of Celtic extraction.[120] But unlike the wife on the Blussus Stone, the woman with the Weisenau Gardner wears typically "Roman" apparel.

In fact, there are no models in either Italy or southern France for the pillar shape of this monument. Instead, its design skillfully combines various existing styles and designs, such as the mausoleum and funerary monuments, with a niche and can be interpreted as a monumental stele in the shape of a house.[121] This type of grave, first

117 Boppert / Ertel 2019, pp. 57–60, no. I; p. 67, no. XIII.

118 Boppert 1992b, pp. 50–53.

119 Boppert 1992b, p. 53.

120 Boppert 2003, p. 276 with further notes.

121 With assessments that differ in detail, see, i. a., Kähler 1934, pp. 145 f.; Gabelmann 1987, pp. 291–293; Boppert 2003, p. 281; Willer 2005, pp. 7 f.; Scholz 2012, pp. 161–163.

Fig. 14. The so-called *Weisenauer Gärtner*.

appearing in Mainz, continued to evolve, became enormously popular, and ultimately spread to large parts of northern Europe, from England to the Danube region.[122]

Even this cursory look at a few case studies demonstrates how ill-suited a purely binary concept of Italic *versus* northern European architecture is for a deeper understanding of Roman monumental architecture in light of the enormous mobility in the Imperium Romanum. The Drusus Monument was commissioned by the emperor himself, while other funerary memorials in Mainz were ordered by soldiers from all over the ancient world: probably Roman soldiers from Italy paid for the mausoleum in tomb precinct XXIV, the tomb of the Cassius brothers, and the grave stele for Musius; the Helvetian auxiliary trooper Rufus for the stele of a cavalryman; and indigenous Celts for the Blussus Stone and probably also for the Weisenau Gardener. The monuments were produced partly by soldiers of various origins as well as by imported stonecutters. In the case of the early grave stelae, the sculptors seem to have come from northern Italy, while judging from later inscriptions in Mainz and nearby Gross-Gerau, also from southern Gaul or Greece.[123] Among other materials, they used high-quality limestone from the lower Moselle, but also many other stones, woods, paint, metals, etc., which, beginning in the Augustan period, had to be locally sourced and / or imported. Here we have merely highlighted the variety and mobility of participants from different backgrounds, all cooperating in the erection of large-format funerary architecture in Roman Mainz. This summary could be almost endlessly expanded and thus, *per se*, defies the formation of a homogenizing and evaluative canon based on cultural background or artistic quality.[124]

Upon closer examination, the architectural monuments built in the multicultural settlement Mainz since the Augustan period prove not to be copies of Mediterranean originals but must be understood as original creations in their own right, some of which make virtuoso use of various influences. While the typology of the Drusus Monument is closely related to similar structures in Rome and central Italy, the mausolea in Mainz are distinguished from those in Italy and southern France by a particular multiplicity of ornamentation, as we have seen on the cornice block from the theater. Some grave stelae adopted images from northern Italy and transformed their details, while others generated completely new pictorial inventions for new social groups such as auxiliary troopers or indigenous civilians. These new images, in their turn, were adopted and

122 Scholz 2012, map 8.

123 Thus, to judge from their names, Samus and Severus – the makers of the great Mainz Column of Jupiter from the Neronian era immortalized in its inscription – came from Italy or southern France (Bauchhenß 1984, p. 32; Kakoschke 2002, p. 489), but the sculptor Xysticus came from the Greek eastern provinces (Kakoschke 2002, pp. 290 f.).

124 Cf. Noelke 2006.

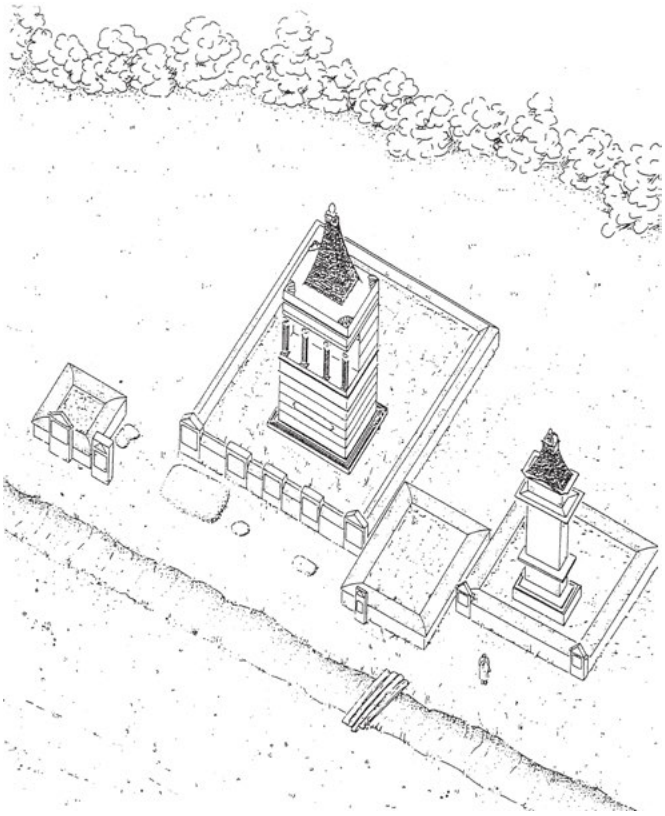

Fig. 15. Partial reconstruction of the Roman avenue of tombs from Mainz-Weisenau to the legionnaires' camp.

reinterpreted in other locations. In the case of the Weisenau Gardener, we can recognize a type of structure that amalgamates a variety of influences from other funerary monuments into a completely new creation, a creation that would go on to influence the style of tombs from Britannia to the Black Sea. The original polychromy of the monuments, of which only traces remain, must have given them a further distinctive appearance.

From this perspective, the Mainz grave monuments appear to be not aesthetically deficient, but in a literal sense different from those in Italy – different and, in a sense, richer in their syntax of discretionary ornamentation. The monuments of the Weisenau necropolis testify to generic formal multiplicity in a single location, and the few surviving inscriptions suggest that a broad spectrum of social groups – including soldiers from Italy, freedpeople, and 'Celts' – were buried side-by-side (Fig. 15).[125] The result is a multi-layered picture that encompasses economic prosperity, locally available materials, transregional commercial connections, and the availability of skilled workers and

125 Boppert / Ertel 2019, pp. 18 f., 24 and 39.

craftspeople – a picture in which the needs of the town's various groups, arising from its specific social constellation, also find expression. Comparative studies of recent years have shown that at least some of the necropoleis of various cities and regions of the Imperium Romanum differ markedly in the types of monuments they included.[126] This locally specific configuration of graves reflects, constructs, and consolidates the various social, economic, and political circumstances against the backdrop of local traditions.[127] Thus a single type of funerary structure, stele, or portrait can be preferred in one city by freedmen, in another by the middle strata, and in another even by the local elite.[128] In this sense, to borrow a phrase from Helmuth Berking and Martina Löw, we may speak of a Roman town having its own inherent aesthetic logic.[129] In what follows, we will show that such systems of inherent aesthetic logic, closely bound up with a hybrid culture, can also be characteristic of other pre-modern artistic genres north of the Alps, using selected works of 16th-century Netherlandish painting.

3. 'Romanism' Revised: Cultural Hybridity and the Canon of 16th-Century Netherlandish Art[130]

When the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp was closed between 2009 and 2022 for extensive renovations, several of its paintings were exhibited in the Cathedral of Our Lady under the title "RE·U·NIE: van Quinten Metsijs tot Peter Paul Rubens."[131] The show was promoted as a reunion of the masterpieces and their return to the sacred space for which they were created in the early modern period.[132] This narrative reveals in a paradigmatic way the limits of the classic art historical canon. For upon enter-

126 Cf. the analogous findings with respect to grave goods: Witteyer 2000.

127 Cf. for Aquileia, Mainz, and Nimes Hope 2001, for northern Italy Pflug 1989, p. 97; Pflug 2019, p. 268, Fig. 3, for Spain and Italy Hesberg 2018; Kobusch 2019 as well as the typologic maps of distribution in Scholz 2012.

128 See, e.g., Nowak 2017 on Irpinia; Bauchhenß 1978, pp. 8, 22–25, no. 2 f. on the more civilian-inclined Bonn, where veterans wore togas instead of military uniforms as in Mainz, and Pflug 2019, p. 276, on northern Italy.

129 Berking / Löw 2008.

130 The discussion below originated in a workshop conducted in collaboration with Stefan Grohé entitled "Romanism Revised: Indigenous Pictorial Intelligence and the Canon of Netherlandish Painting in the Sixteenth Century," offered during the 2011 international conference of the working group Niederländische Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte e. V. (ANKK) in Frankfurt am Main. Thanks goes to Laura Di Carlo and especially Mariam Hammami for their continuous availability for discussion and practical support.

131 Cf. Fabri / Van Hout 2009.

132 Cf. Huvenne / Van Remoortere 2009 and the subtitle of the 2009 exhibition: "Masterpieces from the Royal Museum Reunited in the Cathedral."

ing the cathedral, visitors found themselves confronted with several altarpieces that are not counted among the major works of European or Netherlandish painting in the minds of the international public, and the judgment of large numbers of art historians still focused on Italian art and art theory. Some examples are Bernard van Orley's exceptional altar retable of the *Last Judgment and the Seven Acts of Mercy*, completed in 1524–1525; Frans Floris's extravagant *Fall of the Rebel Angels* of 1554 (Fig. 16); and Maerten de Vos's metapictorial panel *St. Luke Painting the Madonna* of 1602, which served as the central segment of the triptych of the Guild of St. Luke, a collaboration of Otto van Veen and Ambrosius Francken.[133] These and numerous other paintings commissioned by prestige-conscious municipal organizations and donated to the cathedral established the European reputation of the Antwerp church as the 'Temple of Art' of the Habsburg Netherlands. On many levels, they contributed to the identity of the city and were important vehicles of the fashioning of a cultural identity in the cosmopolitan port city.[134] Yet despite their enormous historical relevance, these pictures and their creators have been sidelined by art historians in their construction of the development of Netherlandish painting. According to a long research tradition, that development began with the revolutionary work of Jan van Eyck, continued with Hieronymus Bosch's subversive and the elder Pieter Bruegel's supposedly down-to-earth art, and reached its apogee in the expansive œuvres of Peter Paul Rubens and Rembrandt van Rijn. The survival of this teleological construct is reflected in numerous surveys of art history, and it is responsible for the marginalization of other genres such as architecture and sculpture.[135] The main problem is the persistent notion[136] that compared to the abovementioned 'geniuses of painting,' Netherlandish art between the 15th and 17th centuries, with few exceptions, has little of importance to offer.

We intend to trace the origins of this assessment, peculiar to the art historical discipline in the 19th century, as well as its consequences, which informed especially

133 On the retable painted by Bernard van Orley, cf. i.a. Farmer 1981, pp. 9, 20 and 148–155; Ainsworth 2006, pp. 109–112; Hendrikman 2009. On Frans Floris's *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, i.a., Van de Velde 1975, pp. 209–213; Vervaet 1976, pp. 207f.; Woollett 2004, pp. 26–49 and 57–59; Wouk 2018, pp. 1–27 as well as on Maerten de Vos's panel, i.a., Vervaet 1976, pp. 231f.; Zweite 1980, pp. 234–236 and no. 103, pp. 318f.; Kraut 1986, pp. 111–121; Freedberg 1988, pp. 211f.; Peeters 2005; Andratschke 2006, pp. 185–196; Grieten 2009; Rosenblatt 2015, pp. 16–72.

134 Cf. Huvenne / Van Remoortere, p. 9. On the religious as well as social functions of the charitable work of various Antwerp guilds and fraternities, cf. Van den Nieuwenhuizen 2009; De Munck 2009 and the further literature listed therein.

135 On the current status of the still relatively sparse scholarship on Netherlandish sculpture and architecture, cf., i.a., Schmidt 1994; Ottenheym 2007; De Jonge 2008, pp. 266–268; Lipińska 2015, pp. 9–13; Kavaler 2017.

136 For attempts at a scholarly revision of this notion, see esp. Michalsky 2000, and the exhibit "ExtravagAnt! A Forgotten Chapter of Antwerp Painting 1500–1530" with its accompanying catalogue (Lohse Belkin / Van Hout 2005) as well as Weissert 2011; Harnack 2018.

Fig. 16. Frans Floris: Fall of the Rebel Angels, 1554, oil on wood, 308 × 220 cm, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Inv. No. 112.

the reception of 16th-century Antwerp painting. We will argue that the term 'Romanism,' which to different degrees subsumed diverse pictorial concepts in the generation between Bosch, Bruegel, and Rubens, was the result of an urgent and at times even desperate need for a clear, systematic historical and stylistic classification of works characterized by programmatic stylistic plurality and a nationalistically motivated need for a definition of heterogeneous compositions influenced by cultural diversity resulting from historical dynamics. In view of 16th-century Netherlandish art's experimental search for adequate pictorial concepts,[137] the first section below will address the history of the influential but unsuccessful attempt at a methodical disciplining of aesthetic phenomena and its consequences for the history of scholarship. The second section will analyze the conceptual hybridity and socio-cultural function of Frans Floris's *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, commissioned by the Fencers' Guild and painted in 1554, a work that was continually at the center of the 'Romanism' debate.

3.1. Art in Quarantine, or How Netherlandish Painting Was Put on Sick Leave

In the introduction to his 1912 doctoral dissertation on 16th-century Netherlandish painting in Italy, Godefridus Joannes Hoogewerff described 'Romanism' as an epidemic.[138] The source of infection was the Renaissance, and the course of the disease, a clash of cultures. The transalpine artists who traveled by preference to Rome for their studies had grasped the external form but not the essential character of Italian art.[139] The aesthetically dubious result of this inadequate transfer, according to Hoogewerff, created an art difficult to access that was so far from canonical that just finding a methodological approach was an all but impossible challenge.[140] In this context, Romanism functions less as a scholarly term than as a diagnosis. Moreover, its impact at the time derived from its identification and systematic association with innovative forms of artistic expression described by the no less problematic term 'Mannerism.'[141]

137 Cf., i.a., Müller 1999; Lohse Belkin / Van Hout 2005; Silver 2006; Pawlak 2011; 2016; 2020; Jonckheere 2012; Bass 2016; Wouk 2018.

138 Hoogewerff 1912, pp. 6 f.

139 Hoogewerff 1912, pp. 6 f.

140 Hoogewerff 1912, pp. 4–7.

141 Cf. Hoogewerff 1912, p. 9; Friedländer 1916, pp. 83–88; Friedländer 1921; Friedländer 1922; Antal 1966 [1928]; Cavalli-Björkman 1985. On the problematic concept of Mannerism and its history, see esp. Ackerman 1961; Białostocki 1966; Bredekamp 2000; Schmalzriedt et al. 2001; Greber / Menke 2003; Pfisterer 2011; Huss / Wehr 2014; Aurenhammer 2016 with in each case their list of further literature.

Given the research history of the time, Hoogewerff's diagnosis (made in Rome itself, of all places) is hardly surprising.[142] Already in 1842, Jacob Burckhardt in "Die Kunstwerke der belgischen Städte" (The Works of Art of the Belgian Cities) had clearly expressed his obviously deeply felt rejection of the Antwerp painters in general and Frans Floris in particular:

> Now they borrowed from the Roman-Florentine school of the time its pathos without its content, and Antwerp became from then on the seat of a school that founded one of the most off-putting epochs of art, although it was praised to the heavens by contemporaries. The real founder of this school is Franz de Vriendt, called Floris, 1511–1570 [...] a pupil of Lambert Lombard and later of the Roman school. From him, to be sure, he acquired only the externals – and even that inadequately – while the inner content is completely absent, no matter how pretentiously he places his figures.[143]

"Off-putting," "inadequate," "pretentious" – to this list of negative attributes Jacob Burckhardt applied to individual Netherlandish painters; forty years later, a further component was added from the national consciousness, undeniably based on Burckhardt's notion of an art free of "foreign influences" and therefore reflecting the "folk character" of its country of origin.[144] Soon thereafter, an increasing critique of the Romanists' hybrid art can be found in the writings of Alfred Michiels (1845–1848) and Joost Jozef Diricksens (1855).[145] With that critique in mind and based on the *Collegium Romanorum apud Antuerpienses* founded in Antwerp in 1572,[146] Frans Jozef van den Branden consistently employs the term 'Romanists' – probably coined by Michiels in 1868[147] – and associates it from the very beginning of its scholarly use with the reproach of an "unpatriotic" attitude:[148]

> It even reached the point that the Antwerpers who had visited the Eternal City strove to distinguish themselves from others by forming a sort of caste. They were partially successful. In 1572 they founded the 'Brotherhood of Romanists' [...]. This unpatriotic [*onvaderlandsche*] association placed itself under the protection of Saints Peter and Paul [...].[149]

142 Cf. Hoogewerff 1912, p. VIII. and also Hoogewerff 1935. For the history of scholarly evaluation of 16th-century Netherlandish art, cf. the overview in Weissert 2011, pp. 19–26.

143 Burckhardt 1842, p. 74.

144 Cf. Burckhardt 1842, p. 40.

145 Cf. Michiels 1845–1848, here, e.g., the remarks on Frans Floris's *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (vol. 3, 1846, p. 315); Diricksens 1855, p. 107, here, e.g., the demand, based on the assessment of Floris and other artists who had traveled to Italy, "Kunstenaer, blyf dus oorspronkelyk, [...] blyf vlaemsch!"

146 The appellation was taken from a document of circa 1600 that lists the name of the guild members; cf. Dilis 1922, p. 426.

147 Michiels 1868, pp. 358 f.

148 Van den Branden 1883, p. 227.

149 Van den Branden 1883, p. 227. Translation cited according to Weissert 2011, p. 23.

Although the term 'Romanist' had from its inception a pejorative connotation and was not entirely accurate in reference to the history of Netherlandish painting (Otto van Veen, the first Flemish artist in the so-called Guild of Romanists, was not accepted until 1597),[150] it had great currency in the scholarly literature for three decades, despite scattered critical objections.[151] Based on and legitimized by the sources, it had the apparent advantage of bringing under a common heading the 16th-century Netherlandish artists who went to Italy to study.[152] It is a stylistic concept which, unlike almost all the others in the discipline, was and remains etymologically tainted with the notion of one-sided influence.[153] Despite the increasing scholarly interest in Netherlandish art, the result of this classification was the grouping of several generations of painters and their differing works under a single concept that for almost a century would prove resistant to criticism. Supported by nationalistic tendencies in art history around the turn of the 20th century, 'Romanism' was not simply a negative stylistic label, but since the mid-19th century served as a discursive vehicle for advancing the construction of two great artistic poles: the Italian and the Nordic schools.[154] With a vocabulary centered on rubrics such as 'the folk,' 'essence,' and 'character,' a canon of Netherlandish painting was consolidated in which, increasingly, there was no foreseeable room for the so-called travelers to Rome and their search for new forms of visual expression.[155] As a result, their art, informed as it was by cultural synthesis, was constantly accused of lacking in patriotism because, according to the critics, it displayed no 'national' characteristics such as fidelity to nature, realism, and naturalness combined with technical perfection.[156] With these criteria, not only aesthetic quality but also cultural-historical signifi-

150 Cf. Dilis 1922, pp. 420 und 455.

151 Cf. i. a. Preibisz 1911; Dvořák 1924; Lindeman 1928. As one of only a few, Emile Dilis in his 1922 essay "La Confrérie des Romanistes" polemicized against the use of the term for a group of artists with the formal argument that artists constituted only a tiny fraction of the *confratres*, as proven by the membership lists of the Romanists' Guild. Cf. Dilis 1922, esp. pp. 419–421 and 450–475.

152 Cf. Weissert 2011, p. 23.

153 This is decidedly manifest in the titles of numerous essays. Cf., i. a., Aschenheim 1909; Krönig 1936.

154 The scholarly construction of such a dichotomy can already be seen in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's "Über Kunst und Althertum in den Rhein und Mayn Gegenden" (Goethe 1816; On Art and Antiquity in the Rhine and Main Regions) and subsequently, i. a., in Franz Kugler's "Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei in Deutschland, den Niederlanden, Spanien, Frankreich und England" (Kugler 1837; English translation Kugler 1854, "Handbook of Painting. The German, Flemish, Dutch, Spanish and French Schools"), Gustav Friedrich Waagen's "Handbuch der deutschen und niederländischen Malerschulen" (Waagen 1862; Manual of the German and Netherlandish Schools of Painting), and Max Rooses's "Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche schilderschool" (Rooses 1879; History of the Antwerp School of Painting) as well as in the volumes on the "Grands Peintres" by Téodor de Wyzewa and Xavier Perreau (esp. Wyzewa 1890a; Wyzewa 1890b).

155 Cf. Weissert 2011, p. 21; Carpreau 2013, pp. 17 f.

156 Cf. Burckhardt 1842, p. 40; Waagen 1862, 1st section, pp. 68 f.; Rooses 1879, pp. 5 f.

cance were to be measured from now on. The art of the 'Romanists' thus seemed to represent a substantial contradiction to the exemplary contrast – the "struggle"[157] between Northern European and Italian art – that Burckhardt regarded as a basic law of historical epochs.[158] Moreover, it was especially the significant stylistic plurality of many Romanists and their unconventional appropriation of traditional motifs that ran counter to the notion of an autonomous aesthetics of the artistic genius, whose unique *maniera* and matchless creative power informed the linear developmental model.[159] The more the lone individual artist became the focus of scholarship and his uniqueness was celebrated in art historical monographs, the stronger became the criticism of the supposed collective of 'Romanists,' although their paintings could not have been more diverse.[160]

These scholarly tendencies appear paradigmatically not only in the work of Max Rooses, who in 1879 characterized 'Romanism' as an "immeasurable disaster" and the "suicide"[161] of Netherlandish art. They also inform the writings of probably the most influential critic, Max Jacob Friedländer. In several studies, Friedländer grappled with the history of Netherlandish painting.[162] As early as 1916, he characterized the reception of ancient and contemporary Italian art in the Netherlands as a symptom of instability and exhaustion and described the 16th century as a "critical transition."[163] Friedländer too programmatically employed the metaphors of illness that had been developed in the 19th century, as when he defined the "manner" of the Antwerp painters in 1921 as follows:

> I understand manner to be a self-conscious arranging in contrast to healthy, organic, and original creating. The manner that spreads like an epidemic attacks especially weakened bodies. Lack of resistance and inner emptiness are the prerequisites for haphazard and formulaic expression.[164]

He detected such weakened bodies in negative examples such as Jan Gossaert, Bernard van Orley, Maarten van Heemskerck, and especially Frans Floris, who were for Friedländer as earlier for Rooses hardly more than "slavish followers of foreign masters."[165] In 1922, Friedländer published his "Die niederländische Romanisten" (The Netherlandish Romanists), which supplemented his earlier theses with a periodization of 'Romanism' that he introduces with reference to the phenomenon of cultural hybridity:

157 Burckhardt 1842, p. 56.
158 Burckhardt 1842, p. 56. Cf. Weissert 2011, p. 21.
159 On the pluralism of styles in 16th-century Netherlandish painting, cf. Mensger 2008.
160 Cf., i.a., Antal 1966 [1928], pp. 82f.; Locher 2001, p. 196.
161 Rooses 1879, p. 136. Translation cited according to Rooses 1881, p. 90.
162 Cf., i.a., Friedländer 1916; Friedländer 1921; Friedländer 1922; Friedländer 1924–1937.
163 Friedländer 1916, p. 88.
164 Friedländer 1921, p. 3.
165 Rooses 1879, p. 136. Translation cited according to Rooses 1881, p. 90.

> Between 1500 and 1550, Netherlandish painting usurped the achievements of the South. Compared to the traditional indigenous mode, the foreign mode was felt to be superior, greater, and more beautiful. Artists learned the universal cultural language and forgot their mother tongue. Whether this process appears to be an amalgamation or a malady, one can observe its several phases.[166]

This periodization, which he repeated and slightly modified several years later in his magnum opus "Die Altniederländische Malerei" (Old Netherlandish Painting, 1924–1937),[167] is relevant to the extent that Friedländer analyzes the engagement with Italian art in the categories "incorporation," "rejection," and "processing."[168] His method, applied with the nitpicking discrimination of a connoisseur, would prove to be enormously influential. In chronological and genealogical order, Friedländer systematically diagnoses when and to what extent Netherlandish artists such as Joos van Cleve, Bernard van Orley, and Maarten van Heemskerck adopted motifs and stylistic modi explicitly borrowed from Leonardo, Raphael, or Michelangelo and then pronounces his aesthetic verdicts. The result of this scholarly method is the reduction of complex strategies of reception and assimilation to unidirectional influences. Already in 1922, this process was producing dogmatic results whose echoes can still be found in the literature. In Gossaert, the main representative of the first phase, "the Netherlandish element remained resistant"[169] to the epidemic until his reception of Italian art exposed the "contradiction [...] between talent and tendency."[170] In the second phase, with Bernard van Orley, Friedländer blamed a strong orientation to Raphael for the decline of traditional painting techniques. In the next phase, artists like Pieter Coecke van Aelst and Lambert Lombard had made panel painting into such a "degenerate genre" that "one hesitates to ascribe such poor paintings to such celebrated masters."[171] Maarten van Heemskerck, the most influential artist of the fourth phase, had the "ambition to become the Michelangelo of the North," but "his work is stuck in gesture, noise, and unjustified pretension."[172] For the last phase, Friedländer's verdict on his favorite target, Frans Floris, is as cynical as it is devastating: The painter, representative of the third generation of "Travelers to Rome," was "the typical eclectic artist" and therefore "neither offensive nor tasteless, but completely insipid."[173]

166 Friedländer 1922, p. 3. Cf. the chapter by Sarah Dessì Schmid and Jörg Robert in this volume, pp. 51–86.
167 Friedländer 1924–1937.
168 Friedländer 1924–1937, vol. 13, 1936, p. 9.
169 Friedländer 1922, pp. 3 f.
170 Friedländer 1922, p. 4.
171 Friedländer 1922, p. 7.
172 Friedländer 1922, p. 8.
173 Friedländer 1922, p. 9.

In the course of his systematic critique and despite his profound knowledge of the sources, Friedländer felt that the 'Romanists' did not deserve the high regard in which their contemporaries held them, and he inveighed against it.[174] In the tradition of Jacob Burckhardt, not only the painters of the 16th century but also their public were blamed for their bad taste.[175] How else could one explain the historical fact that it was precisely the 'Romanists' who had a monopoly on prestigious ecclesiastical and communal commissions and also painted for numerous private customers?[176] The esteem in which their art, so vehemently rejected by Burckhardt and Friedländer, was held well into the 18th century can be reconstructed both from its continuing to be displayed in prominent locations throughout the city and from the prices it fetched when sold.[177] Thus, it was not merely strongly rooted in Netherlandish society of the early modern period; it was its central cultural product and, as such, less *deviating from* than *establishing* the norm. At this point, the historical complexity of the Antwerp art market comes into view, with its various political, confessional, and societal interests and parties.[178] As emerges from contemporary sources,[179] the market's internal socioeconomic dynamic – together with competition among artists – consisted of the fact that besides the 'Romanists,' there were other successful artists whose visual concepts did not focus at all on a display of

174 See a similar polemic in, i.a., Burger 1925, p. 137.

175 Cf., e.g., Friedländer 1922, pp. 6 and 8, as well as Burger 1925, p. 137.

176 Cf. as an example the various patrons who ordered works from Frans Floris. See Wouk 2018. For example, most of the paintings in the important art collection of the Antwerp merchant and financial official Niclaes Jonghelinck were Floris's, followed significantly by those of Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Cf. Kaschek 2012, pp. 49–54. Additional evidence is provided by the many commissions for painters such as Ambrosius Francken, Michiel Coxcie, Maerten de Vos, and Otto van Veen for the redecoration of churches in Antwerp and surroundings following the conquest of the city by Alessandro Farnese in 1585, cf. the relevant catalogue texts in Fabri / Van Hout 2009; Peeters 2008, pp. 99–107, with an overview of patrons and prices. Cf. also Vervaet 1976; Woollett 2004.

177 The prices can be extrapolated from the catalogues that note the selling prices for the works of individual artists. See, for example, for the 18th century Hoet: Catalogus; Terwesten 1770. At the same time, this data proves that, compared to other 16th-century painters, above-average prices were paid for van Orley's and especially Coxcie's paintings up to about 1850. Cf. Carpreau 2013, pp. 14 f.

178 On the Antwerp art market in the socio-cultural context of the metropole, cf., i.a., Vermeylen 2003; Silver 2006, pp. 16–25; Vermeylen 2012.

179 Thus the painter and poet Lucas d'Heere composed a poetic smear with the title *Invectieve, an eenen Quidam Schilder* [...] which appeared in print in 1565 and defended the works of his teacher Frans Floris against what were apparently earlier attacks by an anonymous artist (possibly Pieter Bruegel the Elder). In the context, the author emphasizes the differing aesthetic norms of "Floris and his kind" on the one hand and his critical artistic opponent on the other, whose journey to Rome has left no traces in his works. The complete text of the *Invectieve* as well as an English translation are reprinted in Wouk 2018, pp. 543–545. On the text and its connections to contemporary aesthetic theory, cf. i.a. Freedberg 1989, pp. 62 f.; Kaschek 2012, pp. 55–69; Wouk 2018, pp. 369–371.

cultural hybridity based on the appropriation of Italian art. Following the traditional forms and motifs of the Old Netherlandish school, the latter artists created works that several more recent scholars, using Pieter Bruegel the Elder as an example, have described as dealing both critically and subversively with the canonical authority of Italy and its specific reception by the 'Romanists.'[180]

Tellingly, for Friedländer the elder Bruegel represents the first of three ways leading out of the supposed "dead end"[181] of Netherlandish art. It consists of a "blindness for the ideals of the Renaissance and a devotion to the indigenous essence,"[182] materialized in the person and work of a Bruegel whom the 19th century idealized as the embodiment of the national character, the only artist whom Friedländer sees as immune to "disease."[183] The second way out was the "filling in of the all too large and empty form" of the 'Romanists' by the "observation of what is individual,"[184] by which he means portrait painting as the traditional genre of painters north of the Alps.[185] And the third way out – "accessible only to a genius"[186] – was based on a longer sojourn in the South that would allow first absolute mastery and then the surmounting of Italian art, a feat the author saw accomplished in the work of Peter Paul Rubens.[187] Especially the dichotomy foreign / Italian versus indigenous / Netherlandish – whether coupled with or separate from the concept of 'Romanism' – proved to be so influential that it was continuously invoked in one form or another. When Carl Gustaf Stridbeck in 1956 sees Bruegel's superiority to the 'Romanists' in the fact that the master combined form and content in convincing visual concepts,[188] if nothing else, it is a modified version of a sentence of Friedländer's, who held that Rubens, after supposedly renouncing the "dubious Antwerp tradition"[189] of collaborative authorship, had restored the "unity of invention and execution"[190] after an era of artistic decline.

From Jacob Burckhardt's writings to the publications of van den Branden, Rooses, and Hoogewerff, to Friedländer's widely influential surveys, the older scholarship so stubbornly discounted most 16th-century Netherlandish artists as the producers of a 'different' aesthetics, pejoratively evaluated as the opposite of indigenous practice, that

180 Cf. Müller 1999, pp. 87–89; Kaschek 2012, pp. 94–97; Buskirk / Kaschek 2013.
181 Friedländer 1922, p. 9.
182 Friedländer 1922, p. 9.
183 Friedländer 1921, p. 3.
184 Friedländer 1922, p. 9.
185 Cf. Friedländer 1922, p. 9.
186 Friedländer 1922, p. 9.
187 Friedländer 1922, pp. 9f.
188 Stridbeck 1956, pp. 266–289.
189 Friedländer 1922, p. 10.
190 Friedländer 1922, p. 10.

with a few exceptions,[191] art historians for decades could find no adequate approach to their conceptually idiosyncratic art. But in the 1960s, a series of monographs began to focus again on Netherlandish painting, and especially its relationship to humanism.[192] A few subsequent exhibitions and monographs undertook a revaluation of 'Romanism.' The work of Jan Gossaert, active in the first half of the 15th century, had already been intensely analyzed, and he was the first to attract renewed interest. Only more recently have prominent representatives of the next generation, such as Heemskerck and Floris, experienced more scholarly attention after almost fifty years of neglect.[193] With respect to style as a vehicle of meaning, the scholarship concentrated above all on the contemporaneous use of diverse modes of depiction and, as a result, partially revised the idea of a supposed superiority and unchallenged authority of Italian art.[194] Nevertheless, even some more recent praiseworthy efforts to rediscover and rehabilitate the 'Romanists' such as "Joos van Cleve: Leonardo des Nordens" (2011) or "Michiel Coxcie: De Vlaamse Rafaël" (2013)[195] consciously or unconsciously reveal in their titles echoes of the 19th century's hierarchy of artistic landscapes.[196] This hierarchy remains today structurally linked to the continuation of the old scholarly narrative of the backwardness of Netherlandish compared to Italian art, the normative confusion of the 'Romanists' and their consequent deficient imitative practice, as well as their violation of the canon.[197]

191 Cf. i.a. Preibisz 1911; Dvořák 1924; Lindeman 1928; Zuntz 1929.

192 Cf. i.a. Dacos 1964; Pauwels / Hoetink / Herzog 1965; Van de Velde 1975; Veldman 1977; Zweite 1980. Cf. also the attempt at a systematic revision of the scholarly assessment of the 'Romanists' by Dacos 1980.

193 Cf. i.a. Denhaene 1990; DeLiedekerke 1995; Dacos 1999; Mensger 2002; Jones 2011; Peeters 2013; Bass 2016; Wouk 2018; Bartsch 2019; DiFuria 2019; Bücken / De Meûter 2019.

194 Cf. i.a. Mensger 2002; Hoppe / Müller / Nußbaum 2008, therein esp. Mensger 2008; Bass 2016.

195 Van den Brink 2011; Jonckheere 2013a.

196 Diricksens 1855, p. 42, already stresses the derisive undertone in the epithet "Flemish Raphael" for Coxcie, which the poet deserved because of his deviation from indigenous art.

197 Thus, we find in a 2016 essay by Eckhard Leuschner under the title "Romanism" the following remarks on the "processing of influences from Italian art by painters and graphic artists north of the Alps, and especially in the Netherlands": "Unlike their feel for the ancient art they had studied in the original, in plaster casts, or in drawings, artists from the first third of the 16th century such as Jan Gossart and Pieter Coecke van Aelst had little sense for the stylistic idiosyncrasies of what we today call the Italian High Renaissance; above all, however, they did not acknowledge the normative role of that art. [...] Possibly in the short term, not even the arrival of Raphael's cartoons – previously considered the initial impulse for the 'high, ideal style' in Netherlandish art – altered very much about their not very precisely imitative practice, which also evinced no clear preferences for certain canonical predecessors." And even if later he argues convincingly in the case of various examples "that in Netherlandish painting, especially in Antwerp, both contemporaneous with and following Coxcie, a feeling developed for the originality of artistic adaptation in dealing with 'foreign' models," the consequences of a decades-long assumption of a monocausal process of reception are clear in this essay; Leuschner 2016, pp. 57 f.

Although that canon refers back to the early modern valence of visual authorities, its scholarly authority and dogmatic application were a product of scholarship around 1900. The persistence of this narrative is clearly seen at the methodological level, not only in the striking separation of the aspects of formal analysis, cultural history, and social history when analyzing paintings. It can also be felt at a granular level in the continuing attempt to identify as precisely as possible Italian models for the Netherlandish works, although newer scholarship – such as Edward H. Wouk's remarkable monograph on Floris – documents that the majority of 'Romanists' in fact neither worked with direct visual quotations nor confined themselves to Italy in their reception of other art.[198] On the contrary, their form of creative appropriation displays a strong conceptual effort – both specifically and programmatically (e.g., with regard to theme or the context in which it would be displayed – to make use of selected traditions from north or south of the Alps as well as contemporary modes of presentation and combine them in a constant, emulative gesture with one's own pictorial invention into an organic whole.[199]

In view of the preceding discussion, 'Romanism' is a prime example for Ernst Gombrich's trenchant thesis that "you can never get more out of your classification than you put into it."[200] Beginning in the second half of the 19th century, art historians had so overloaded the concept semantically and distorted its history that its increasing deconstruction by later scholarship seems a logical consequence. But systematic critical reflection on the concept and its history has not occurred – a reflection of the kind initiated particularly by Tanja Michalsky and Caecilie Weissert, who point out that its consequence is "an inappropriate constriction of historical processes" that reinforces the notion of two contrasting currents in 16th-century painting and prevents a differentiated view.[201] Even though at some point art historians tacitly almost – but not completely – stopped using the concept of 'Romanism,' the intellectual habits, methodological approaches, and terminology it engendered did not disappear.[202] Ilja Veldman, one of the most prominent scholars of Netherlandish art, wrote the entry on "Romanism" for the "Grove

198 Cf. i.a. Mensger 2008; Ramakers 2011; Jonckheere 2013b (although he still uses the concept of Romanism, cf. p. 67); Bass 2016; Wouk 2018; DiFuria 2019; Weissert 2020.

199 Van Orley's *Last Judgment* is a good example of this phenomenon. In a supplement to the long-held assumption that it was influenced by Raphael's *Disputa*, recent scholarship has discovered a deliberate exploitation of the traditional transalpine depiction of the Parousia. Cf. Hendrikman 2009.

200 Gombrich 1966, p. 88: "The normative connotations of our stylistic terms cannot simply be converted into morphological ones – for you can never get more out of your classification than you put into it." Cf., proceeding from the problematic of the concept of Mannerism, Ackerman 1961, vol. 1, p. XXII.

201 Michalsky 2000, p. 30.

202 Thus, for example, Dacos 1980 (although she prefers the term "peintres italianisants") and even Ainsworth 2006.

Dictionary of Art" (1996, online in 2003),[203] which illustrates two central aspects of the problem. First, the concept 'Romanism,' so lastingly damaged by its own proponents, is evidently still resistant to oblivion. Second, a glance at Veldman's bibliographic information immediately reveals why: Of the seven listed items, only two were published after 1935, since the works of Hoogewerff and Friedländer are still justly regarded as standard works despite the necessary criticism. The rejection of the 'Romanists,' peculiar to art history and in need of revision, was the result of far-reaching reductionism. Intent on establishing an evolutionary artistic model and an associated national canon, art historians forced the pictorial inventions of transalpine artists, developed at a time of historic upheaval, into the normative straightjacket of a linear history of style and a predetermined epochal narrative, despite their striking aesthetic heterogeneity.

But if we take seriously the same aesthetic heterogeneity as a historical phenomenon and investigate it in detail, the cultural-historical potential of 16th-century Netherlandish art in general and the so-called Romanists in particular emerges more clearly. Recent scholarship has shown that against a backdrop of increasing political, religious, and economic tension, Netherlandish art of all genres became the epistemically flexible mediator and catalyst of various, often competing ideas and discourses.[204] At the same time, the search for innovative visual concepts – manifest, among other things, in the creative appropriation of Italian art – made that art into a complex and, through the dynamic of its socio-cultural surroundings, constantly changing experimental field for artistic practice in the early modern era, resistant to any teleological, normative interpretation. As surprising as it may sound, this assertion is supported by a careful reading of Friedländer: "even the most gifted only succeeds by continuously experimenting, if the thread of development has once been broken."[205] This quote from Nietzsche is the epigraph to Friedländer's 1921 work, thereby making clear not only what constitutes the essence of early modern Netherlandish art, namely, experimentation,[206] but also the basic reason for his scholarly condemnation of the Antwerp painters, among whom he regarded the "thread of artistic development" as severed. In the end, Friedländer himself was more than conscious that "almost all the characteristics that are considered evidence of disintegration and unraveling [...] can just as easily be interpreted as the stirrings of a new creative will."[207]

It is exactly this substantial experimentation, this production – under contextual constraints – of unconventional artistic solutions in their various formal and concep-

203 Veldman 1996.

204 Cf. i.a. Müller 1999; Pawlak 2011; Jonckheere 2012; Kaschek 2012; Wouk 2018; DiFuria 2019.

205 Quoted from Friedländer 1921, p. 3. The translated quote is from Nietzsche's *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (Human, All Too Human; Nietzsche 1924, p. 200).

206 Cf. i.a. Jonckheere 2012; Jonckheere 2020.

207 Friedländer 1916, p. 87.

tual manifestations that we can discern as a systematic constant in the Netherlandish art of the 16th century. The precondition for this assertion is not only to free ourselves from ossified conceptual methodology in favor of methodological pluralism that does justice to the inherent logic of the work of art itself, but also – especially in the case of the so-called 'Romanists' – to develop a new perspective on the forms of transalpine artistic exchange that will enable an approach to the complexity of the works and their socio-cultural relevance.

3.2. Aesthetic Extravagance and Conceptual Hybridity in the Service of Collective Distinction: Franz Floris's *Fall of the Rebel Angels*

Franz Floris's *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (Fig. 16) was originally the central panel of the altar retable donated to the Antwerp cathedral by the Fencers' Guild (*Schermersgilde*). It is without a doubt one of European painting's most spectacular artistic variations[208] on the cosmic battle described in Revelations 12:1–12.[209] Painted in 1554 and including in its background allusions to the motifs of the Woman of the Apocalypse (Fig. 17) and the Elevation of the Child (Fig. 18), the panel presents the central, sacred event as a violent plunge that has emerged from the depths of space and is taking place directly before the

208 Cf. Vandamme 1988, p. 138, no. 112. Scholars conjecture that the commission was motivated by the great admiration Floris enjoyed because of his participation in the design of the *Blijde Inkomst* for Emperor Charles V and his son Philipp II of Spain into Antwerp in 1549. Cf. Van de Velde 2009, p. 99; Woollett 2016, p. 92; Wouk 2018, p. 158.

209 "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." King James Version.

Fig. 17. Frans Floris: Fall of the Rebel Angels (Detail), 1554, oil on wood, 308 × 220 cm, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Inv. No. 112.

eyes of viewers, threatening to burst from its aesthetic boundaries into their reality. As the reptilian, seven-headed beast and its monstrous retinue fall, mercilessly pursued by the Archangel Michael and his heavenly comrades-in-arms, they morph into a chaotically writhing, abject mass of grotesque bodies whose individuality is programmatically coded as animalistic. In an unprecedented way, Floris's picture solidifies the theologically motivated impression of the repulsiveness of the fallen angels, with the help of the fascinated revulsion unleashed by the almost haptically tangible, hybrid, close-up corporality of their life-sized, falling bodies. The purposeful combination of animalistic and anthropomorphic forms, the bizarre transitions from man to beast and beast to man, urgently convey the moral message of the work: The evil of those fallen away from God is embodied in boundless abnormality, whose effect is amplified not only by the violent confrontation but especially by the subversive melding of the abnormal with the well-proportioned orderliness of creation reflected in the essence of identity of the angels.[210]

This creative quality of what was at the time the largest painted panel in the cathedral, located in the religious center of town, and against the background of escalating

210 Cf. Schaible 1970, p. 61.

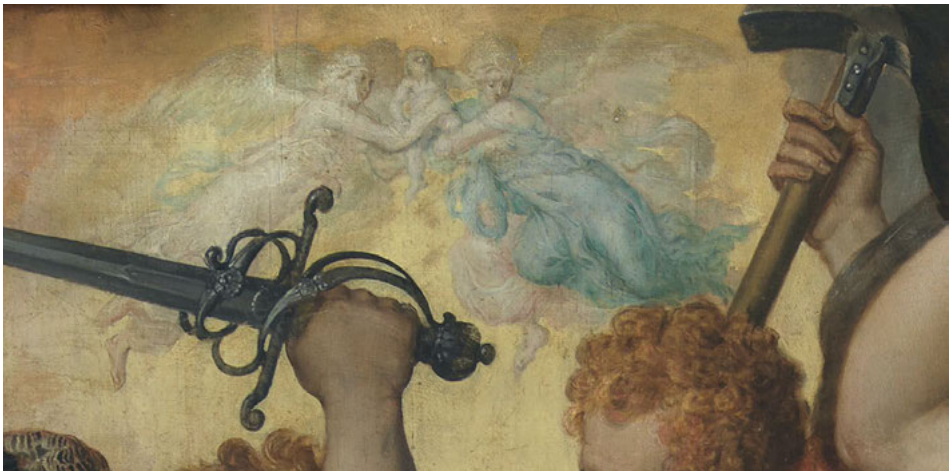

Fig. 18. Frans Floris: Fall of the Rebel Angels (Detail), 1554, oil on wood, 308 × 220 cm, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Inv. No. 112.

confessional, political, and economic conflicts, constituted its epistemological function as a visual vehicle of discourse and identity.[211] Installed at the southwest crossing pier to the right of the main altar, the triptych occupied one of the cathedral's most prominent locations and was not just a visual testimony to the high social status of the Fencers' Guild within the municipal collective,[212] but with its theme of eschatological combat served the *Schermers* to self-locate within the history of salvation.[213] The members of the Fencers' Guild had defensive as well as ceremonial obligations to fulfill and found both in St. Michael, their patron saint, and in the angels he leads, all of whom wield 16th-century weapons against the protean forces of evil, powerful figures with whom to identify.[214] In the context of its time, the religious scope of this symbolic equation of the angels fighting as *milites Christiani* and *defensores fidei* and the militia-guild whose captain (and possibly other members as well) was depicted on one of the side-wings,[215]

211 Cf. Woollett 2004, pp. 23–49.

212 Cf. Woollett 2004, pp. 28–31.

213 Cf. Woollett 2004, pp. 47–49.

214 The tasks of the Fencers' Guild comprised taking part in the municipal *Ommegangen* as well as the protection of important municipal buildings in times of crisis. Cf. Woollett 2004, pp. 1–22; Van de Velde 2009, p. 102; Woollett 2016, p. 90.

215 Already in 1604, van Mander mentions one of the images destroyed during the iconoclasm of 1566: "In one of the shutters he had painted the chairman of the swordsmen's guild, with a broad sword in hand, and a dark cloud which brought about a subtle shadow in the composition." Van Mander: Schilder-Boeck, p. 222. Cf. Van de Velde 1975, pp. 211 f.; Van de Velde 2009, p. 102. This passage was repeatedly associated with the study of a head now in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Kassel

was spectacularly underlined by Floris's visual idea: the altar mensa below the panel represented the place where the panopticon of bizarre physicality and the apocalyptic battle temporarily come to an end, before the vanquished dragon unleashes his fury first at the Woman of the Apocalypse and then at the witnesses to the true faith (Apocalypse 12:13–17).[216]

Especially during the performance of liturgical ritual, the *Fall of the Rebel Angels* exercised its capacity as a multilayered, artifactual hinge between the world and the hereafter, between promise and fulfillment, and made not just the cathedral itself but also Antwerp into the scene of – and the Fencers' Guild into actors in – an eschatological event. In the course of numerous performative acts that circulated in this sacred space, the painting was constantly embedded in a complex cultural network and reaffirmed the importance of its commissioners among some forty other brotherhoods, craft guilds, and five other marksmen's organizations with their own altars, as well as to the municipal authorities.[217] An example is the famous *Ommegangen*, the annual processions on Trinity Sunday and the Feast of the Assumption that began and ended at the cathedral, in which the Fencers' Guild, uniformed and armed, traditionally participated.[218] In these processions, the *Fall of the Rebel Angels* constituted a semantic unity not only with the other artworks in the church,[219] but also with the festival wagons of the *Ommegangen* rolling through town and displaying religious themes: the Annunciation, the Visitation of Mary, the Birth of Christ, the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Magi, the Circumcision, and the Seven Sorrows of Mary.[220] There was an especially close

(Inv. no. GK 1038), cf. Van de Velde 1975, pp. 208 f., no. 61; Van de Velde 2009, p. 102; Wouk 2018, p. 15.

216 "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." King James Version.

217 Cf. De Rynck 2005, p. 25; Woollett 2016, p. 95.

218 On the course of the procession, cf. De Burbure 1878; Joukes 1990; Cartwright 1996; Peters 2005, pp. 92–100; Thøfner 2007, pp. 46–51 and 59–71.

219 There were thematic connections, especially to van Orley's *Last Judgment and the Seven Acts of Mercy* as well as Frans Floris's *Assumption of Mary*, painted for the high altar in 1564 and destroyed during the iconoclasm of 1566.

220 The traditional wagons are listed in the 1564 description of the festivities: De Laet 1564, quoted from Peters 2005, pp. 399–403. All the surviving props and costumes are listed in an inventory of 1571. Cf. Thijs 2001, p. 43; Peters 2005, pp. 92 f.; Thøfner 2007, pp. 59–71.

connection between Floris's panel and the wagon displaying the Last Judgment with the help of elaborate fireworks, the culminating event of the celebrations. Appealing to several senses, the conception of this wagon and its accompanying costumed personnel was to give the populace of the multicultural commercial metropolis not just an artificial preview of the Apocalypse, but to cast them, here and now, in the role of a humanity subject to the Last Judgment.[221] Both within and outside of this ceremonial dispositive – which in addition to the many interior spaces, pictures, musical works, and speeches also encompassed various participating confraternities – the Fencers' Guild, oscillating between Antwerp's present and the eschatological future, established itself by means of Floris's painting as a municipal corporation relevant to the town's salvation.

While the artistic extravagance of the *Fall of the Rebel Angels* was always the main reason for its rejection by an older scholarship focused on stylistic criticism,[222] in view of the sociocultural background described above, this extravagance can be evaluated as the figure of aesthetic reflection of the unique social position the guild aimed to achieve. The triptych was designed to attain for the guild a permanent place in the city's collective memory. The turbulent history of the painting as well as its prominent place in Karel van Mander's *Schilder-Boeck* of 1604, the first written record of a theory of art in the Netherlands,[223] attest in different ways to the success of this strategy of persistence.

There is almost a scholarly consensus that the side panels of the altar retable were destroyed in the Calvinist iconoclastic riot of August 20, 1566, leaving the central panel essentially intact.[224] There was repeated speculation in the literature about why the iconoclasts spared the picture. Besides practical considerations (as, for example, that it was removed beforehand to protect it), its iconographic distinctiveness was adduced; perhaps it was spared in view of the fact that the assumption of the Child in the upper left background made it possible to forgo depicting God the Father (Fig. 18).[225] On the other hand, hardly any thought has been given to the social status and military duties of the Fencers' Guild within the municipal community, as outlined above. Even in a purely material consideration of the altarpiece as property, its destruction could possibly have been a risk with incalculable consequences. In 1567, barely a year after the riot, the

221 Cf. Thøfner 2007, pp. 68 and 233; Pawlak / Rüth 2020, pp. 459–463.

222 Cf., e.g., Michiels 1845–1848, vol. 3, 1846, p. 315; Van den Branden 1883, p. 183; Friedländer 1924–1937, vol. 13, 1936, pp. 62 f.

223 Cf. Van Mander: Schilder-Boeck, p. 222. Cf. Melion 1991.

224 Van de Velde 1975, p. 210; Freedberg 1992, p. 55; Van de Velde 2009, p. 99. The recent restauration of the painting suggests that the middle panel was hardly damaged by the iconoclasts. Cf. URL: kmska.be/nl/elke-restauratie-zijn-inzichten-en-geheimen (last accessed: October 31, 2024).

225 This iconographic blank space was either a conscious artistic decision in view of the increasing Protestant criticism and the Calvinist rejection of portrayals of God the Father, or it is the result of a possible later reworking of the panel. The latter could be confirmed only by an extensive technical examination of the painting. Cf. Pawlak 2011, pp. 212 f.

altar of the Fencers' Guild was ceremoniously reconsecrated in the cathedral,[226] but it is unclear whether Floris's *Fall* returned to the cathedral for a short time or if it was already replaced, following a controversy, by a triptych by Maerten de Vos.[227] In any case, in 1581, the year in which the Calvinist Antwerp city council initiated a second iconoclasm (the so-called *Stille Beeldenstrom*) and the cathedral was temporarily closed, an inventory locates both works of art in the treasury of the Fencers.[228] After the Habsburg governor Alessandro Farnese, Duke of Parma, captured Antwerp on August 15, 1585 (Feast of the Assumption) and reinstated Catholicism, it was tellingly not the 'more modern' painting by de Vos that was returned to the cathedral,[229] but Floris's *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, whose iconography could now be read in harmony with the Catholic reformation and its visual propaganda in the center of Antwerp as a victory over the Protestant heresy.[230] The Fencers' success at positioning their panel within a confessional discourse was evident during the festive entry (*Blijde Inkomst*) of Ernest of Austria, the new Habsburg governor of the Netherlands, on June 14, 1594, into the city on the Scheldt.[231] One can read in a festival book about that performative occasion, published in 1595, that in the course of the *Ignes Triumphales* (Fig. 19) – the pyrotechnic display on the town hall square – a small stage was set up in front of the Fencers' guild house (Fig. 20),[232] on which stood two members of the *Schermers*, armed with halberds, holding the imperial coat of arms of the Habsburgs, and flanking a picture of the Archangel Michael fighting the dragon in a creative borrowing from their own altar retable in its original condition before the side panels were destroyed in the iconoclasm.[233] Complementing this scene, with which the Fencers' Guild once again asserted their social standing with a multimedia staging of theological content, were both the statue of the Woman of the Apocalypse on the crescent moon in the central niche of the town hall's façade and a sculpture of the seven-headed dragon at the foot of the masts holding the exploding pyrotechnics.[234]

The reinstallation in the cathedral in 1585, where the painting remained in its privileged position until 1794,[235] and its repeated incorporation into a communal site of

226 Cf. Woollett 2004, p. 57; Van de Velde 2009, p. 101.

227 Cf. Van de Velde 1975, p. 210; Woollett 2004, pp. 57–59; Van de Velde 2009, p. 99; Freedberg 1988, pp. 199 f.

228 Cf. Woollett 2004, p. 59; Van de Velde 2009, p. 101.

229 Cf. Van de Velde 1975, p. 211; Van de Velde 2009, p. 101.

230 Cf. Woollett 2016, p. 91.

231 Cf. on the entry into the city: Raband 2018.

232 Cf. Thøfner 2007, p. 189.

233 Van Mander mentions one of these presentations in 1604, see note 214 above.

234 Cf. Thøfner 2007, p. 189.

235 During the renovation of the guild's altar that took place after 1650, the panel was moved to a portico altar and flanked by life-size marble statues of Gideon and Joshua, the Old Testament liberators of the Israelites and religious warriors, by Artus Quellinus the Younger and Hubertus van den Eynde and his son Norbertus. There the picture remained until 1794, when it was carried off

Fig. 19. Pieter van der Borcht: Ignes Triumphales, in: Joannes Bochius: Descriptio publicae gratulationis, spectaculorum et ludorum, in adventu Sereniss. Principis Ernesti Archiducis Austriae, Ex Officina Plantiniana, Antwerpen: Officina Plantiniana, 1595, etching, 328 × 445 mm, Amsterdam, Rijkmsuseum, Inv. No. BI-1953-0546B-34.

negotiation after the violent clashes at the beginning of the Eighty Years' War document the enormous collective esteem for religious history not only as an aesthetic fixed point of urban identity and the recent history of the city but also as an extraordinary artistic accomplishment.

to the Musée Central des Arts in Paris in the wake of the French Revolution. In 1815 it was returned to Antwerp along with 26 other works, including Rubens's *Elevation of the Cross* and his *Lamentation of Christ*, painted as an epitaph for Jan Michielsen and Maria Maes. On the history of the altar, cf. Van de Velde 1975, p. 210; Freedberg 1988, pp. 200 f.; Woollett 2004, pp. 57–59; Van de Velde 2009, pp. 99–101; Wouk 2018, p. 15 with note 55. Since then, the panel (Inv. no. 112) and eight other works by Frans Floris – among them the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, painted in 1568 on commission for the altar of the Gardeners' Guild (*hoveniersambacht*) and hung above the cathedral's high altar from 1585 until 1625 – are preserved in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten.

Fig. 20. Pieter van der Borcht: Ignes Triumphales (Detail), in: Joannes Bochius: Descriptio publicae gratulationis, spectaculorum et ludorum, in adventu Sereniss. Principis Ernesti Archiducis Austriae, Ex Officina Plantiniana, Antwerpen: Officina Plantiniana, 1595, etching, 328 × 445 mm, Amsterdam, Rijkmsuseum, Inv. No. BI-1953-0546B-34.

Fifty years after Floris painted his altarpiece, the writer, poet, graphic artist, and painter Karel van Mander celebrated its artistry in his *Schilder-Boeck*:

> He [Frans Floris] always had large, important works to make or in hand for altarpieces and other large commissions. Among other things well worth putting forward as the most important is the altarpiece for the swordsmen or St Michael, in Antwerp in the Onze Lieve Vrouwe Church, with the *Fall of Lucifer.* This is a remarkably designed, art-full and well-painted piece, to make all artists and comprehenders of art dumbfounded and be filled with admiration. Here you see an unusual tumbling and falling about of various naked evil spirits, in which an excellent study of musculature, tendons and muscles is employed with great attentiveness and insight. The dragon with seven heads appears in it as well, whose heads are very poisonous and terrifying to look upon.[236]

It is not difficult to recognize in this emphatic praise of the panel's artistry what a sensation it caused among Floris's contemporaries. Van Mander's description is remarkable in several regards. For one thing, it stands in direct contradiction to the art historical evaluation of Floris's work in the 19th and early 20th centuries, when it was regarded as the prime example of failed imitation of Italian art – and here especially of Michelange-

236 Quoted from: Van Mander: Schilder-Boeck, p. 222.

lo's *Last Judgment* – in the paintings of the 'Romanists.'[237] It is telling that van Mander's passage on the *Fall of the Rebel Angels* makes no mention of Floris's reception of famous predecessors, although at the beginning of his biographical note on the painter, there is a lengthy section devoted to Floris's journey to Rome and his intensive study of ancient and Italian art while there.[238] Instead, the Haarlem humanist van Mander focuses on compositional coherence, pictorial innovation, accomplished technique, the anatomical correctness of the figures as well as their powerful emotive effect, and not least on the persuasive power of the painting, resulting from the sum of these elements, in the act of aesthetic reception. For another, at the beginning of the passage quoted above, van Mander emphasizes not only Floris's extensive activity as a painter of many large-format paintings and altarpieces in order to underline his contemporary prestige, but also explicitly names the altarpiece's commissioners and its location in the Antwerp cathedral, clearly illustrating the reciprocal relationship between the art work's inherent aesthetic logic (its autological dimension) and its rootedness in sociocultural practice (its heterological dimension). This is relevant to the extent that, with their concepts of an autonomous aesthetics, art historians at the turn of the 20th century mostly regarded *Fall of the Rebel Angels* purely as a museum artifact and paid insufficient attention to its historic function and to the history of the altar retable that was inextricably intertwined with that function.

And finally, from a theological perspective, van Mander's identification of the work as a "St. Michael's Panel" depicting the fall of Lucifer draws attention to the first of three levels of conceptual hybridity inherent in the picture. The art theoretician's identification of the theme indicates that inherent in Floris's altarpiece is a tendency in Netherlandish painting since the 15th century at the latest to subsume Lucifer's primeval fall

237 Thus, Burckhardt wrote in his text of 1842 often mentioned above (p. 74): "We can easily believe that the artist needed entire portfolios full of studies for this disgusting painting, but it is all the worse for his reputation that he chose to imitate precisely the ugliest things from Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, which are there only for contrast." This accusation of aesthetic lèse majesté was directly related to the concept of stylistic purity, whose violation Floris was also repeatedly accused of, and so emphatically that van den Branden 1883, p. 183, saw precisely in *Fall of the Rebel Angels* that "rampzalige Italiaansche invloed" that "in Frans Floris het grootste gedeelte van zijn aangeboren talent gedood heeft." Cf. Friedländer 1924–1937, vol. 13, 1936, pp. 62 f.

238 In that regard, he also emphasizes Giorgio Vasari's positive assessment of Floris as an "excellent" painter and the envy of many Italian colleagues who, like the influential Florentine art theoretician himself, unfortunately were familiar with the works of the Netherlander only from copper engravings. For had they "seen Frans' subtle, competent brushstrokes and the effective handling of color" they would have "preserved his praise in more noteworthy remembrance," but their critique is influenced by "envy towards foreigners." In this passage, one sees both condemnation of nationalistic artistic resentment and regret that those sentiments cannot be dispelled by seeing the original works in the socio-cultural context for which they were created. Van Mander: Schilder-Boeck, p. 214.

with the Apocalypse's fall of the beast in a single iconographic formula through which the coming of evil into the world at the beginning of Creation would be typologically and conceptually conflated with its final Apocalyptic punishment.[239] And indeed, in the left background of the raging, chaotic struggle with the Apocalyptic Dragon in the foreground, there is another, spatially separated scene of a fall (Fig. 17) whose protagonist is highlighted by his immense size and remarkable corporeality.[240] The horns on his head are a sign of his ongoing metamorphosis from an anthropomorphic body to a hybrid monster and lead to the conclusion that he is to be interpreted as Lucifer and the entire scene as the primeval Fall of the Rebel Angels.[241] The positioning of the fallen Archangel above the seven-headed dragon that embodies mortal sin and threatens the Woman of the Apocalypse in the background emphasizes not only the identity of essence of the two figures. It refers at the same time to the polymorphism of evil in the history of salvation and the constant need to combat it. Revelation 12:9 explicitly thematizes this polymorphism in the context of St. Michael's battle against the Beast[242] and Floris's altarpiece visualizes it in an unprecedented way.

The fallen angels whom van Mander calls "evil spirits" and whose equally repulsive and menacing bodies resemble conglomerations of humans, animals, and monsters are a manifestation of another level of the picture's conceptual hybridity. Each of these strangely artificial beings, whose very description strains the limits of ecphrasis, is so unique in its physical properties that it seems a perversion of both the God-given order of Creation in general and the anthropological difference between man and beast in particular – a difference that has been at the center of natural philosophic discourse since ancient times.[243] At the same time, their ontological status gives us insight into Frans Floris's distinct interest in the natural science of his time as manifest in encyclopedic works that combine illustrations and text, e.g., Conrad Gessner's *Historiae Animalium* of 1551. In Antwerp's humanistic circles – well versed in natural science – works combining zoologic facts and the early modern fascination with the abnormal and monstrous functioned as a crystallization point for the arts and served to advance knowledge, in large part thanks to the contemporary significance of Antwerp as a European center of printed books.[244] Against this background, the painter's invention of individual creatures from parts of the human body as well as parts of actual animals of various species

239 Cf. Pawlak 2011, pp. 29–46.

240 Cf. Pawlak 2011, pp. 45 f.

241 On the pictorial tradition, cf. i.a. Wirth 1967; Holl 1968; Schaible 1970; Juntunen / Pawlak 2007; Pawlak 2011, pp. 29–46.

242 "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." King James Version.

243 Wild 2006, p. 1.

244 Cf. i.a. Fischel 2009; Enenkel / Smith 2014; Opitz / Leu 2019.

and classes – among them reptiles, fish, and insects, as well as goats, predatory cats, wild boars, elephants, and raptors – with their individual characteristics is a second-order act of creation based on an intensive study of nature. It is a celebration of the power of artistic imagination, a complex process of fragmentation and reconfiguration of the divine creation. It not only documents Floris's erudition as a scientifically informed *pictor doctus* but also evokes the trope of the artist as a second *deus artifex*, which is crucial in early modern art theory.[245] The determined imitation of nature in the composite bodies amplifies the calculated emotional effect of the religious image to the extent that they not only represent monstrous aberrations of cosmological constants through which the orderly structure of creation is all the more manifest, but also – by virtue of their degree of realism – convincingly convey the brilliantly staged invasion of the bitterly struggling damned into the viewer's sphere. Far beyond their discursive significance for 16th-century theology and natural science, however, the hybrid creatures are also and above all else, as Edward H. Wouk expressed it in 2018, "a visible metaphor for the hybridity of his work,"[246] with which "Frans Floris challenged what it meant to be a Netherlandish artist."[247]

In the case of the *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, the aesthetic imagination's construction of reality in the service of the collective prestige of the Fencers' Guild is based, on the one hand, on competition with nature as God's work, a rivalry regarded since ancient times as the motivating force of artistic creation.[248] On the other hand, one can also trace it back to the programmatic engagement with both selected ancient works of art and with contemporary mimetic modes south and north of the Alps, with the goal of an *aemulatio* that would not only appropriate them creatively but amalgamate them into a new, "polyglot" art form in its specific materiality and mediality.[249] With an eye to the painter's reception of Italian art, older art-historical scholarship almost always one-sidedly criticized this third level of the altar piece's conceptual hybridity, which is intimately related to the art-theoretical implications of the panel. As a result, even well past the middle of the 20th century, the altarpiece was considered to be a deficient imitation. One barely noticed exception is Dora Zuntz's 1929 dissertation, which largely shares the older methodological approach but not its scholarly dismissal of the picture.[250] In one of the very first analyses of the *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, Zuntz painstakingly teases out possible models for the work and recognizes in most of the angelic figures as well as the falling monster gripping a torch in the middle of the panel references to the

245 Cf. Klein 2017, pp. 263–266; Wouk 2018, p. 496.
246 Wouk 2018, p. 5.
247 Wouk 2018, p. 3.
248 Cf. i.a. Flasch 1965; Laufhütte 2000; Moritz 2010.
249 Wouk 2018, p. 5.
250 Zuntz 1929, pp. 15 f.

works of Michelangelo and Tintoretto. On the other hand, she identifies Dürer's prints as the source of the Apocalyptic Beast and declares that "the phantastic design of the demons themselves" is a "Netherlandish property, the evidence of a talent such as we find in Bosch and his followers up to Floris's contemporary Mandyn."[251] In a remarkable conclusion to her study, she summarizes the uniqueness of Floris's reception of earlier, diverse genres and media:

> As is so often the case, one cannot attribute any direct copying to Floris. He builds his compositions out of the most diverse elements, so that only pictures that share a similar goal [...] can be adduced as comparisons.[252]

Floris's deliberate "reconfiguration of Michelangelo's bodily forms,"[253] combined with a genuinely transalpine interest in the visual appearance of the demonic, was not just the visual expression of the cultural hybridity rejected by late 19th- and early 20th-century art historians. It was at the same time the vehicle of an artistic theory implicit in the work, aimed at competing with the associated but not directly quoted predecessors and surpassing them with its own *inventio*. This conceptual and creative quality was the basis for the painter's contemporary fame and lofty reputation, repeatedly emphasized by critics from Giorgio Vasari, Dominicus Lampsonius, Lucas d'Heere, and Lodovico Guicciardini to the aforementioned van Mander and Filippo Baldinucci.[254]

With an internally homogeneous pictorial invention that used the challenging motif of the Fall as an archetype of divine punishment in order to present the *difficoltà*, *varietà*, *grazia*, and especially *terribilità* repeatedly demanded by contemporary writers on painting, Floris – at the time undoubtedly the most successful painter in Antwerp – made an artistic statement that fulfilled the aesthetic expectations of his public in the multicultural metropolis:

> Yet as *Fall of the Rebel Angels* makes abundantly clear, 'Italy' only accounts for part of what made Floris's art so new and attractive to his public. Far from a copy of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, Floris's altarpiece is a statement of individuality, an articulation of his singular mode of creation grounded in a deep knowledge of both Italian and northern art and artistic practice.[255]

The resulting novelty of pictorial invention – which itself became a productive challenge for other artists, as the paintings of the *Fall of the Rebel Angels* by Pieter Bruegel

251 Zuntz 1929, p. 15.
252 Zuntz 1929, p. 16. Cf. Van de Velde 1975, p. 211.
253 Zuntz 1929, p. 15.
254 Wouk offers an overview of written mentions of Floris and his works in the 16th and 17th centuries: Wouk 2018, pp. 537–551.
255 Wouk 2018, p. 4 f.

Fig. 21. Frans Floris: Fall of the Rebel Angels (Detail), 1554, oil on wood, 308 × 220 cm, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Inv. No. 112.

the Elder (1562) and Peter Paul Rubens (1621–1622) testify[256] – is a telling early modern example for the relevance of modern art theory's revocation of the polarity of indigenous vs. foreign as well as the revision of the assumption of hermetically sealed cultures with an eternally dualistic relationship of the self to the other.[257]

In this context, the painter's signature – "FF IV ET F 1554" (Fig. 21) – engraved on a rock in the right foreground toward which the arm of the monster, lying on its back in the lower center of the painting and staring at the viewer, gestures – seems paradigmatic. Above the bow and arrow the monster clutches hovers an insect (a bee? a bumblebee?). In view of the picture's conception as a transcultural amalgam, this bee also invokes an art-theoretical dimension: corresponding to the learned discussion, carried on since antiquity, of the principle of creative *imitatio*, the creature can be interpreted as a visual metaphor, equating the creative appropriation of predecessors with

256 Cf. Juntunen / Pawlak 2007; Pawlak 2011, pp. 25–85. Cf. Willibald Sauerländer's 2014, p. 46, negative critique of Floris's picture compared to Rubens's.

257 Cf. Bhabha 2004 [1994]; Wouk 2018, p. 5.

the natural processes of nutrition, digestion, and incorporation.[258] In its conspicuous size and placement, the motif points to a causal nexus of imitation and production and, in the context of the whole picture, functions as a symbol of Floris's artistic practice and its reflection.[259] Together with the signature just below it, it testifies in the cathedral to the self-confidence of the artist, who with the unusual formulation *Frans Floris invenit et fecit*[260] celebrates his accomplishment as both creative originator and sole executor of the picture. Moreover, with this signature, he strove to inscribe himself decisively into the collective memory of the city, just as the Fencers' Guild claimed their own place in Antwerp's sociotope with the help of his extravagant altarpiece and its constant performative activation.

The radical unconventionality – or unconventional radicality – of this intertwining search for aesthetic self-positioning is perhaps the clearest reflection of the independence of 16th-century Netherlandish painting and its societal relevance – an artistic independence that for decades, art historians basically trivialized in the eyes of the profession with the concept of Romanism, its normative assumptions, and the resulting influence on the canon, while ignoring the concrete historical context in which that independence was created and functioned. And they did it so successfully that it is apparently still necessary to explain, not just to the general public, why it is a good idea to display the paintings of van Orley, Floris, and de Vos in their original location in the Antwerp Cathedral alongside the works of Rubens.

4. Conclusion: Aesthetic Canon under the Microscope of Pre-Modern Cultural Practice

Focusing on the phenomena of creative appropriation and cultural hybridity in premodern transalpine art, our investigation of the history of archeological and art historical scholarship makes clear – despite differences in detail – in an exemplary way the continuing cultural-historical function of the canon as a "mint of identity."[261] As Jürgen Straub was able to demonstrate in 2004, these constructions of identity are never based on establishing empirical facts. Instead, "when they discover differences between what is indigenous and what is other or foreign," they operate "with perception and attribu-

258 Cf. i.a. Gombrich 1963, p. 32; Irle 1997.

259 Cf. Wouk 2018, pp. 26f.

260 Following the last "F," a red "A" was added at an unknown date, so that the verb would be read as *faciebat*. Cf. URL: kmska.be/nl/elke-restauratie-zijn-inzichten-en-geheimen (last accessed: October 31, 2024).

261 Assmann 1998, p. 59.

tion, projection and manipulation."[262] As documented by our analysis of selected scholarly literature and methodologies from the end of the 18th to the early 20th century, an aesthetic canon oriented toward exclusion and the establishment of norms, and which repeatedly tried programmatically to identify the 'foreign' element in what was 'indigenous,' always was and still is simultaneously a process and a result. Thus the examples of antique monuments north of the Alps and of so-called Romanism in early modern Netherlandish painting clearly demonstrate how the consolidation of the canon among German archeologists and art historians around 1900 resulted in their targeted assertion that conceptually hybrid works of art either ignored or violated its standards. In both disciplines, the influential ideas of stylistic purity and national character as well as the hierarchical evaluation of artistic landscapes and the attendant assumption of a unidirectional history of influence determined not only the persistent pejorative estimation of artworks distinguished by their achievement of a cultural synthesis. They also marginalized (and continue to marginalize) a normative diversity, which, in the case of the artworks examined above, constituted in their concrete topographic, political, religious, and societal context the actual norm of their day.

Critical reflection on these structural similarities in the history of scholarship in both classical archeology and art history was in each case the point of departure for an examination of monuments and paintings whose inherent aesthetic logic combines diverse forms of creative appropriation in the course of transalpine cultural transfer with an experimental search for innovation. The adaptations or new configurations of traditional models in materials and media, but also in motifs and design, are evidence of remarkable reflexive potential and were in both cases decidedly oriented to the objects' function within the social practice of their time and the specifics of how they were displayed. In the way these artworks memorialize distinctions between individual and collective in their respective fields of public display, they function both as the material expression of the dynamics of artistic negotiation and as the central vehicle of societal discourse. And precisely this paradigmatic inscription *in* and undisputed significance *for* the cultural memory of their places of origin, the important role these artworks – rejected by previous scholarship – played in identity formation, definitely calls into question the identity-forming authority of an archeological or art historical canon based on ideas of aesthetic autonomy. However, as Quentin Bell wrote to Ernst H. Gombrich in 1975, not without irony, "canon is a fact of intellectual life. As you say, one cannot start from scratch. One is bound to inherit some kind of body of opinion, and this must provide one's starting point even when one is going to dispute its validity."[263]

262 Straub 2004, p. 280.
263 Gombrich / Bell 1976, p. 407.

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