I Introduction

Brigitte Buettner and William Diebold

Medieval Art, Modern Politics: A Short Introduction

"All thoughts about the Middle Ages are implicitly or explicitly engaged with the modern."[1] With this striking claim, the medieval historian Otto Gerhard Oexle argued that, since the Middle Ages is a modern invention, medievalists must take modernity into account. The semiotician, novelist, and cultural critic Umberto Eco thought no differently when he wrote of a "continuous return" to and of the Middle Ages: "Modern ages have revisited the Middle Ages from the moment when, according to historical handbooks, they came to an end."[2] Both authors recognized that the relationship between medieval and modern is dialectical rather than oppositional: one does not exist without the other. Our opening sentence can therefore be turned on its head to say that the Middle Ages has functioned as a foundational myth for modernity. But the relationship of medieval to modern is never straightforward or fixed; it evolves over the centuries, sometimes imperceptibly, sometimes abruptly. As Eco put it: "Since the Middle Ages have always been messed up in order to meet the vital requirements of different periods, it was impossible for them to be always messed about in the same way."[3]

Even before Italian humanists in the mid-fourteenth century invented the Middle Ages as a distinct period and negatively labeled them "Dark Ages," the visual culture of the preceding centuries was continually being invented and reinvented.[4] This reception process continued through the early modern period to reach a peak during the second half of the nineteenth century, a period marked by intense historicism. The active engagement with medieval art and architecture did not cease then. Quite the contrary, as the bulk of this volume's essays, focused on the period from 1850 to 2000, forcefully evinces. Together, the contributions in *Medieval Art, Modern Politics* demonstrate that, like anything from the past, medieval art was never experienced "as is": it was always mediated to suit the needs of the moment. This is the theme at the heart of this volume.

1 Otto Gerhard Oexle, "'Das Mittelalter'—Bilder gedeuteter Geschichte," in *Gebrauch und Missbrauch des Mittelalters, 19.-21. Jahrhundert/ Uses and Abuses of the Middle Ages: 19th-21st Century/ Usages et Mésusages du Moyen Age du XIXe au XXI siècle*, ed. Janos Bak et al. (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2009): 21–43, at 32.

2 Umberto Eco, "Dreaming of the Middle Ages," in Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 65.

3 Eco, "Dreaming," 68.

4 Seminal is Theodore E. Mommsen, "Petrarch's Conception of the Dark Ages," *Speculum* 17 (1942): 226–42.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111436821-001

The essays assembled here contribute to the reception history of medieval art. However, they do so with a twist: an emphasis on political goals and ideological agendas rather than on (supposedly) disinterested aesthetic pursuits. Together, they demonstrate that in their long afterlives, medieval buildings, images, and objects proved sufficiently malleable to fit the most diverse political circumstances and respond to contrasting ideological configurations, right and left, fascist and republican, czarist and communist, religious and secular. This is not the first publication to recognize the close, ideologically fraught entanglement between the Middle Ages and modern politics. The reuse of the Middle Ages in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a force shaping historical developments has been well studied, as has the place of the medieval in the resurgent neo-fascist rhetoric in Europe and the United States.[5] But the same cannot be said for art-historical perspectives. While there has been engagement with recent appropriations of the visual legacy of the Middle Ages in popular culture, the political afterlife of medieval art has not often been examined in English-language scholarship.[6] To emphasize how the visual and architectural legacy of the past has been instrumentalized to *do* things in the present, *Medieval Art, Modern Politics* moves away from histories of taste, aesthetics, and ideas that minimize, ignore, or even suppress ideological factors at play in reception history. It stresses instead how restoring, rebuilding, studying, copying, mimicking, exhibiting, and disseminating medieval structures and artifacts served local, regional, and national agendas in the post-medieval era.

Eco gave the title "Dreaming of the Middle Ages" to his essay enumerating ten ways in which the Middle Ages have been "messed up" by modernity. Despite his slightly jocular tone, Eco insisted that the various ideological constructions of the Middle Ages met "vital requirements." Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri, in his pointedly titled *The Militant Middle Ages*, was more explicit. As he saw it, since the very idea of the Middle Ages

5 Among the growing literature, see, for example, Bruce W. Holsinger, *Neomedievalism, Neoconservatism, and the War on Terror* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007); Andrew B. R. Elliott, *Medievalism, Politics and Mass Media: Appropriating the Middle Ages in the Twenty-First Century* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2017); Daniel Wollenberg, *Medieval Imagery in Today's Politics* (Leeds: ARC Humanities Press, 2018); and Karl Fugelso, ed., "Politics and Medievalism," special issue, *Studies in Medievalism* 29 (2020).

6 Exceptions include Maggie M. Williams, "'Celtic' Crosses and the Myth of Whiteness," in *Whose Middle Ages? Teachable Moments for an Ill-Used Past*, ed. Andrew Albin et al. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 220–32, and individual contributions to: Enrico Castenuovo and Giuseppe Sergi, eds., *Arti e storia nel medioevo*, vol. 4, *Il Medioevo al passato e al presente* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 2004); Janet T. Marquardt and Alyce A. Jordan, eds., *Medieval Art and Architecture after the Middle Ages* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009); Jennifer Feltman and Sarah Thompson, eds., *The Long Lives of Medieval Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge; 2019); Catherine E. Karkov, Anna Kłosowska, and Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei, eds., *Disturbing Times: Medieval Pasts, Reimagined Futures* (Goleta: Punctum Books, 2020); and "Race, Racism, and the Middle Ages" and "Gender, Sexism, and the Middle Ages," *The Public Medievalist*, https://www.publicmedievalist.com/.

was "born under the sign of opposition," politics are embedded in it.[7] Consider the case of Berthold Hinz. At the meeting of the association of German art historians in 1970, in the wake of the societal upheavals and student protests of 1968, he read a paper on the thirteenth-century statue known as the Bamberg Rider (Fig. 1.1).[8] This is a canonical work of medieval art and Hinz's approach to it, inspired by traditional German source critique, was to review relevant literature. His paper thus seemed uncontroversial: art-historical business as usual. But the reaction was negative in the extreme; there was uproar in the lecture hall and the story soon reached the national

Fig. 1.1: Bamberg Rider, Bamberg Cathedral. Photo: Reinhard Möller/Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 4.0 International).

7 Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri, *The Militant Middle Ages: Contemporary Politics between New Barbarians and Modern Crusaders*, trans. Andrew M. Hiltzik (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 4.

8 Berthold Hinz, "Der *Bamberger Reiter*," in *Das Kunstwerk zwischen Wissenschaft und Weltanschauung*, ed. Martin Warnke (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1970), 26–44; also available as "The Bamberg Horseman," trans. Jonathan Blower and Johanna Wild, *Art in Translation* 6 (2014): 157–79.

newspapers.[9] Why did this happen? Hinz examined some fifty academic and popular texts written between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries to delineate how the Gothic equestrian sculpture had been represented. Even though these writings had appeared under political systems as diverse as monarchy, dictatorship, and democracy (both the Weimar Republic and the postwar Federal Republic of Germany), Hinz showed that they used remarkably similar language to describe the Rider, often emphasizing the figure's masculine strength and nobility. This consistency was striking and worrisome, primarily because the sculpture had been heavily promoted by the Nazis and taken by many as a prefiguration of Hitler in its savior-like, muscular Aryan identity.[10] Before this careful analysis of the sources, the Nazi fetishization of the Rider could be dismissed as an embarrassing aberration, a plainly unacceptable polluting of medieval art by modern politics. But Hinz demonstrated that the co-option of the statue during the Third Reich was the rule, not the exception; his paper made clear that politics were inseparable from the history of the art of the Middle Ages. For many, this was intolerable. Willibald Sauerländer, a leading medieval art historian, soon to be elected president of the German art-historical association, accused Hinz of inserting politics where there ought to be only the work of art and its original historical context.[11] What Sauerländer refused to consider in 1970, the notion that medieval art is necessarily politicized in the modern world, this volume takes as its conceptual backbone and organizing principle.[12]

9 For the debate, see Warnke, *Kunstwerk*, 45–47; Iain Boyd White, "Introduction" to Hinz, "Bamberg Horseman," 158–59.

10 On the reception of the Bamberg Rider, especially in the twentieth century, see Carsten Busch, *Der Bamberger Reiter: Ein Lesebuch* (Bamberg: Collibri, n.d.); Wolfgang Ullrich, "Der Bamberger Reiter und Uta von Naumburg," in *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, ed. Etienne François and Hagen Schulze (Munich: Beck, 2001), 1: 322–34; and William C. McDonald, "Concerning the Use and Abuse of a Medieval Statue from 1920–1940: The Case of the Bamberger Reiter," *Perspicuitas*, 2010, https://www.uni-due.de/imperia/md/content/perspicuitas/mcdonald.pdf.

11 Willibald Sauerländer, review of *Das Kunstwerk zwischen Wissenschaft und Weltanschauung*, ed. Martin Warnke, *Kunstchronik* 23 (1970): 320–30.

12 Sauerländer himself later changed his tune. A decade after his attack on Hinz, he analyzed the different interpretations across time of the Gothic sculptures from Naumburg cathedral (discussed below) and did for them precisely what Hinz had done for the Rider. Willibald Sauerländer, "Die Naumburger Stifterfiguren," in *Die Zeit der Staufer* (Stuttgart: Württembergisches Landesmuseum, 1979), 5: 169–245. For an examination of another canonical monument of German Gothic sculpture along methodological lines similar to those employed by Hinz and Sauerländer, see William J. Diebold, "The Magdeburg Rider on Display in Modern Germany," in Feltman and Thompson, *Long Lives*, 227–41.

Objects of Power/The Power of Objects

Hinz's analysis of the politics embedded in verbal descriptions of the Bamberg Rider laid bare how interpretative frameworks are never ideologically innocent. Such discourse analysis is common to many humanistic disciplines, but the political use of medieval art and architecture has a uniquely physical dimension that fundamentally separates art-historical inquiries from the study of medievalism in other fields. Nowhere has the thingness of medieval art—the symbolic weight of its concrete, material existence—been more apparent than in the fates of the images and regalia of medieval rulers. As prime actors on the social scene, emperors, kings, and queens were at the center of an extensive, multimedia visual repertoire that was political from the start. Ruler iconography and royal material culture are coterminous with politics, a trait that made them especially attractive for later ideological reinvestments.

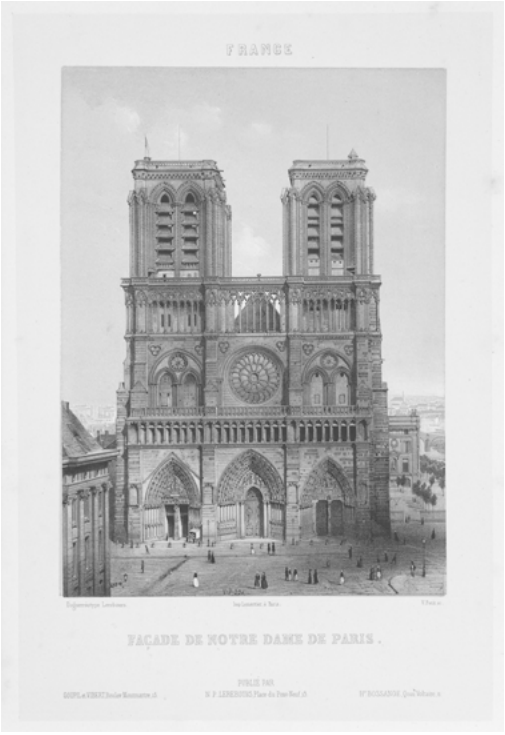

Fig. 1.2: Noël-Marie-Paymal Lerebours, Facade of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris showing empty Gallery of Kings; print after a daguerreotype by Vincent Chevalier from Lerebours, *Excursions daguerriennes*, ca. 1840. Photo: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 47.152 (CC 1.0 Universal).

The facade of the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris provides a fine example (Fig. 1.2). There, a long row of twenty-eight sculptures, each depicting a larger-than-life-size

crowned man, once spanned the entire width of the second level. These statues were intended to represent kings of the Old Testament, the ancestors of the Virgin Mary to whom the cathedral is dedicated. But when the statues were put up, an ambiguity—biblical king or king of France?—was likely encouraged, because both of the key political figures in thirteenth-century Paris, the bishop and the king, would have been eager to emphasize the close ties between church and state implied by this slippage in meaning. Modernity had no patience for such subtle hermeneutics; it insisted on disambiguating the statues. The French Revolution famously allied itself to the belief in the rights of individual citizens and so defined itself against the Ancien Régime's notion of a sacral, divinely sanctioned kingship. The conceptual and literal dismantling of a sacrosanct, absolute rulership led the revolutionaries, acting on the governmental order to eliminate "all signs of superstition and feudalism," to decapitate and then pull down the statues of the kings from their niches in a deliberate anti-royalist act of vandalism (Fig. 1.3).[13] That word itself was a neologism of the era, coined in 1794 by the Abbé Henri Grégoire in reports he addressed to the National Convention that were intended to stem revolutionary

Fig. 1.3: Heads from Gallery of Kings of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, Paris, Musée de Cluny. Photo: Wikimedia Commons/Connie Ma (CC BY-SA 2.0 Generic).

13 Carmen Gómez-Moreno, *Sculpture from Notre-Dame, Paris: A Dramatic Discovery* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 8–10, citation at 8; Michel Fleury, "Histoire d'un crime," in *Notre-Dame de Paris: Les rois retrouvés* (Paris: Joël Cuénot, 1977), 14–23. During the second half of the nineteenth century, modern replacements for each king were restored to the facade.

excesses and the resulting wholesale destruction of monuments linked to the church and monarchy. The parallelism with the Vandals of the early Middle Ages, who overran southern France and Spain before settling along the North African coast, was deliberate, for that group had come to emblematize in French historiography the lawlessly destructive "barbarian" forces of the so-called Dark Ages. The term was adopted overnight in France and beyond, with the objections of some German scholars about such an overt denigration of "Germanic" people doing nothing to stem its success.[14]

In the wake of the French Revolution, medieval kingship was often viewed positively by moderns of a more conservative stamp, who understood it, aspirationally, as offering a Christian political template in direct opposition to the "pagan" Roman republican model. Appropriating the regalia that literally objectified the power of mythologized models of medieval charismatic statesmanship could therefore be seen as a way to tap into the quasi-supernatural power of kings and emperors at a moment when absolute rights to rule came under heavy pressure. This was not a phenomenon limited to the age of kings: in 1927, the heyday of Germany's Weimar Republic, the cultural historian Ernst Kantorowicz began his biography of the twelfth-century emperor Frederick II by writing: "Enthusiasm is astir for the great German rulers of the past: precisely at a time when there are no more emperors."[15] The suite of objects associated with the Holy Roman Empire, the so-called *Reichskleinodien* (imperial treasures) created under the Ottonian and Salian rulers during the tenth and eleventh centuries, fulfilled this retroactive, self-legitimizing function most powerfully. Napoleon I, who abolished the German empire in 1806, harbored plans to lay his hands on the hallowed imperial crown, scepter, orb, and sword for his coronation at Notre-Dame in 1804, barely a decade after the iconoclasts had decapitated the kings on the cathedral's facade. Various Prussian kings of the house of Hohenzollern entertained similar ambitions. For such rulers, living in the age of the modern European nation-state but with transnational aspirations, the political relics associated with the Holy Roman Empire could be seen as both pre- and multinational and so were immensely appealing.

The same holds true for the *Reichskleinodien*'s most notorious would-be owner, Adolf Hitler. After annexing Austria to the so-called Third Reich in 1938, he authorized the removal of the regalia from the imperial treasury in Vienna to one of their former homes, the imperial city (*Reichsstadt*) Nuremberg. This transfer fulfilled a longstanding dream. Fifteen years earlier, in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had swooned over the "marvelous magic" exerted by the imperial insignia, while in his 1938 speech announcing

14 A.H. Merrills, "The Origins of 'Vandalism,'" *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 16 (2009): 155–75.

15 Ernst Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Berlin: G. Bondi, 1931), 7. See also Martin A. Ruehl, "'In This Time without Emperors': The Politics of Ernst Kantorowicz's *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* Reconsidered," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 63 (2000): 187–242.

their acquisition, he claimed that their removal to Nuremberg demonstrated that "over five hundred years before the discovery of the New World, there was a mighty German empire . . . . For a long while the German empire slumbered. The German people are now awake and have given themselves its thousand-year-old crown to wear."[16] The insignia, which some fantasized might ensure the triumph of another "Thousand-Year Reich," were to be exhibited on altar-like pedestals in the fifty-thousand-seat, colosseum-like Congress Hall where the Nazi party was slated to hold its massive annual gatherings (*Reichsparteitage*). Since the building was then still under construction, the imperial treasure was put on show in a carefully orchestrated display in a Nuremberg church (Fig. 1.4). But that proved an ephemeral affair. As the Allied bombings grew in intensity, city officials decided to bring the irreplaceable objects to safety. Protected in purpose-built copper containers, the *Reichskleinodien*

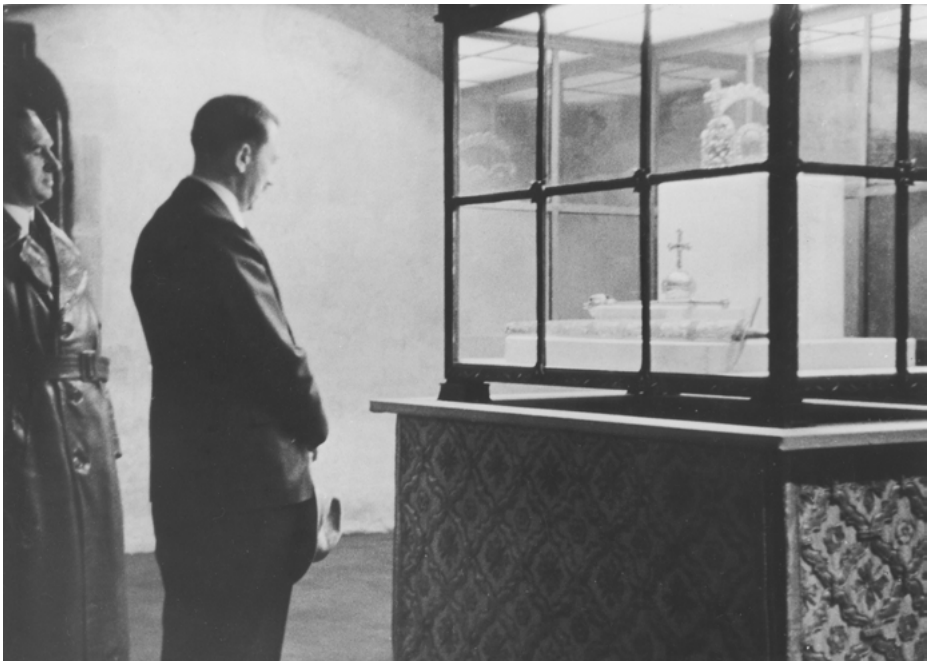

Fig. 1.4: Adolf Hitler viewing *Reichskleinodien* in St. Catherine's Church, Nuremberg, 1938. Photo: Ullstein bild/Granger.

16 These quotations are from Christian Hartmann et al., eds., *Hitler, Mein Kampf: Eine kritische Edition* (Munich: Institut für Zeitgeschichte, 2016), 1:115; Christian Kohler, *Ein ruhiges Fortbestehen? Das Germanische Nationalmuseum im "Dritten Reich"* (Berlin: LIT, 2011), 56.

spent the remaining war years immured in underground bunkers until American troops located them and brought them back to Vienna.[17]

Napoleon and Hitler were, like many moderns, generally skeptical of religion (except when it was politically expedient to attend to it). A good deal of historical amnesia was thus at play in their interest in the imperial artifacts, given that kingship in the Middle Ages was a decidedly religious affair and the *Reichskleinodien* included reliquaries as well as political insignia. Other moderns who used regalia from the Middle Ages recognized and indeed capitalized on this entwinement of church and state. In 1953, with the Cold War in full swing, the Crown of St. Stephen and other Hungarian crown jewels were sent from the American zone of occupation in Austria to the United States, which had been their de facto guardian since the end of World War II. The aptly named "Operation Klondike" brought the precious treasure to Fort Knox in Kentucky, where it was safely stowed away with the US gold reserve. For the Hungarian government, threatened more and more by Soviet hegemony, this seemed the right choice; for the Americans, the United States likewise appeared to be a more suitable location than a "godless" country behind the Iron Curtain, especially since the crown had originally been a papal gift to Stephen (ca. 975–1038), who was both a king and a saint. It was only thirty-four years later, under the Carter Administration, and thanks to the lobbying efforts of the Hungarian government of János Kádár, the sustained mediation of the Vatican, and consideration of American economic interests in Eastern Europe, that the decision was taken to return these crown jewels. This was done despite significant resistance in Congress and from Hungarian-Americans opposed to overtures to their now-Communist country of origin (post-election polling data even suggest that this opposition played a role in Carter's defeat by Ronald Reagan in the 1980 presidential election). In 1978, however, the Crown of St. Stephen and the rest of the coronation treasure returned home to great acclaim and festivities reminiscent of medieval triumphal entries. As the symbolic centerpiece of Hungarian sovereignty, the crown is to this day ceremoniously displayed in the large domed hall of the (neo-medieval) Hungarian Parliament building in Budapest.[18]

The political scientist Benedict Anderson has argued that the disappearance of the "dynastic realms" of medieval western Europe helped to prepare the way for one of the key features of the modern world: nationalism.[19] The travails of the *Reichskleinodien* and the Crown of St. Stephen bolster Anderson's claim; they indicate that those realms

17 Klaus-Peter Schroeder, "Die Nürnberger Reichskleinodien in Wien: Ein Beitrag zur 'großdeutschen' Rechts- und Zeitgeschichte," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 108 (1991): 323–46, at 323–29.

18 Katalin Kádár Lynn, "The Return of the Crown of St. Stephen and its Subsequent Impact on the Carter Administration," *East European Quarterly* 34 (2000): 181–215; Peter Sarros, *US-Vatican Relations, 1975–1980: A Diplomatic Study* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020), 136–57.

19 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 19–22.

may have disappeared, but the insignia that once represented them still exist in the modern world and, more than any other type of object, lend themselves to be co-opted for new national discourses. It was not only royal and imperial images and objects, however, that attracted political attention in postmedieval times. Lesser nobles proved at least as popular in the chivalric revivalist mood of an increasingly bourgeois world, claiming a significant share of space in the nineteenth-century historical imagination. The twelve life-size polychrome figures of church founders that line the western choir of the cathedral of Naumburg in eastern Germany provide a striking case. The best-known of these mid-thirteenth-century statues depict Uta, the marchioness of Ballenstedt, alongside her husband, Ekkehard. Since the late nineteenth century, Uta and her companions had been seen, like the slightly earlier Bamberg Rider, as a high watermark of German art and culture. As such, Uta was mobilized in the infamous 1937 Munich exhibition *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) organized by the Nazis to defame modernist art. She appeared in a large photograph as an iconic—courtly, elegant, and yet wholesome—German Frau, a counterpoint to the rest of the pictures on display, many of which featured more or less distorted female bodies. The sculpture from Naumburg, the single positive image in what was otherwise a viciously denunciatory exhibition, stood in the exhibition for Art itself.[20]

This was a ringing, if radically disturbing, assertion of the positive value of the Middle Ages against modernity. It was not to be Uta's only public appearance in Munich in 1937. *Degenerate Art* was paired with an exhibition designed to broadcast the Nazis' approved answer to avant-garde art. This official (though less visited) show opened during a three-day-long festival, the "Day of German Art," that featured a bombastic parade illustrating two thousand years of German history. Filing past the honor stand crammed with Nazi officials and their guests, the procession wound its way for more than two hours through the streets of Munich.[21] In this mass public spectacle, which mixed over three thousand participants with colored plaster facsimiles of famous works of art, a replica of Uta and her companions figured on one of the

20 For Uta in *Degenerate Art*, see Mario-Andreas von Lüttichau and Andreas Hüneke, "Rekonstruktion der Ausstellung 'Entartete Kunst,'" in *Nationsozialismus und "Entartete Kunst,"* ed. Peter-Klaus Schuster, rev. ed. (Munich: Prestel, 1998), 120–182b, at 182a; Wolfgang Ullrich, *Uta von Naumburg: Eine deutsche Ikone* (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 1998), 43–47; Stefan Schweizer, *"Unserer Weltanschauung sichtbaren Ausdruck geben": Nationalsozialistische Geschichtsbilder in historischen Festzügen zum "Tag der Deutschen Kunst"* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), 160. On the modern reception of the Naumburg figures in general, see Ullrich, "Bamberger Reiter und Uta;" Jens-Fietje Dwars and Siegfried Wagner, *Fortgesetzte Spiegelungen* (Naumburg: Stadtmuseum Naumburg, 2011); and Jacqueline E. Jung, "The Work of Gothic Sculpture in the Age of Photographic Reproduction," in *The Lives and Afterlives of Medieval Iconography*, ed. Pamela A. Patton and Henry D. Schilb (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021), 162–99.

21 Schweizer, *"Unserer Weltanschauung,"*; Joshua Hagen, "Parades, Public Space, and Propaganda: The Nazi Culture Parades in Munich," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 90 (2008): 349–67.

ten floats embodying the "Romanesque" age, the largest section of the entire procession. The focus here was distinctly political (Charlemagne, Widukind, Barbarossa, Henry the Lion, and other rulers of the "First Reich") and, as with the Naumburg sculptures, chivalric. Everything, in other words, was carefully tailored to minimize religion and enshrine "Germanness" as a supreme, unifying value in its stead.

The parade was judged to be extremely successful and was repeated in 1938 and 1939 in a somewhat revised form. Most interesting for our discussion is that the *Reichskleinodien*, absent in 1937, were given a prominent place in the subsequent versions in the wake of their transfer to Nuremberg after the German *Anschluss* of Austria. Facsimiles of the imperial crown, scepter, and orb were carried in a glass shrine, presumably to personify the absorption of the Hapsburg territory and the Holy Roman Empire into the so-called Third Reich (Fig. 1.5).[22] The parade's official program called the crown the "most fateful and sacred treasure in the procession."[23] So overdetermined was the aura of the *Reichskleinodien* that, although the Nazis placed great em-

Fig. 1.5: Facsimiles of *Reichskleinodien* in the procession for *Tag der deutschen Kunst*, Munich, 10 July 1938; photograph by Götz. Photo: Munich, Stadtarchiv DE-1992-FS-NS-00400.

22 Annelies Amberger, "Reichskleinodien und Hakenkreuz: Heilige Insignien und bildhafte Symbole im Dienste der Nationalsozialisten," *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 38 (2011): 271–334, at 282–94.
23 *Zweitausend Jahre Deutsche Kultur: Festzug am Tag der Deutschen Kunst 1939 zu München* (Munich: Knorr & Hirth, 1939), 23.

phasis on the originals, even these replicas, made in 1915 at the behest of Emperor Wilhelm II, could do the job. Given the continuity in history they symbolized (where, in reality, there was none), it is no surprise that, during the Second World War, these same facsimiles of the imperial regalia featured in the "German Greatness" exhibition that traveled across Germany and its new conquests, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, and France, between 1940 and 1942.[24] In Spain in 1942, the Franco regime enacted something similar with the so-called Victory Cross, made in the tenth century. Kept in the freshly restored Cámara Santa (cathedral treasury) of Oviedo, which had been blown up during a revolutionary uprising by Asturian miners in 1934, the splendid *crux gemmata* was paraded through the streets to celebrate the eleven-hundredth anniversary of the death of the Asturian king Alfonso II—and, through that act of public commemoration, Spanish national identity. Contrary to the German replicas, the real thing was used in this case, with Franco carrying it into the cathedral.[25]

Although the Bamberg Rider did not appear in the processions for the "Day of German Art," it was too central to Nazi thinking about both art and nation (for them, inseparable concepts) to be entirely absent. The parade's program refers to it in the introduction, bluntly styling the commanding equestrian statue as the "proud assertion of the race."[26] In 1940, the Rider and Uta of Naumburg were again commandeered to team up, this time in Fritz Hippler's horrifically anti-Semitic propaganda movie *Der ewige Jude* (The Wandering Jew). In one sequence, a grotesque piece of trick photography made it seem that the two were actually a single work of art, with Uta seated directly behind the Rider (Fig. 1.6). In the film, this confected knight and his lady represented what were held to be quintessentially German cultural expressions (the music accompanying their appearance was by Johann Sebastian Bach) and, in a painfully obvious message, were shown confronting creations like those displayed in *Degenerate Art*, which were commonly libeled as having been produced by Jewish artists, who were denounced as rootless and cosmopolitan.[27]

Nazi thought made race central to everything. Yet this is only one, if particularly strident, example of the powerful and persistent racialized distortion of medieval art in modern times, and many contributions to *Medieval Art, Modern Politics* address racial and ethnic identities. The essays by Lamprakos and Moreno Martín demonstrate how the preservation of the medieval heritage in Spain was affected by the ongoing

24 William J. Diebold, "The High Middle Ages on Display in the Exhibition *Deutsche Größe* (1940–1942)," in *Mittelalterbilder im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Maike Steinkamp and Bruno Reudenbach (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013), 103–17.

25 Matilde Mateo, "The Victory Cross Redux: Ritual, Memory, and Politics in the Aftermath of the Spanish Civil War," in Feltman and Thompson, *Long Lives*, 209–26.

26 *Zweitausend Jahre Deutsche Kultur*, 8.

27 Dwars and Wagner, *Fortgesetzte Spiegelungen*, 45; Assaf Pinkus, "Imaginative Responses to Gothic Sculpture: The Bamberg Rider," *Viator* 45 (2014), 331–60, at 331–32.

Fig. 1.6: Still from *Der ewige Jude* (The Wandering Jew), dir. Fritz Hippler, 1940, showing montage of Bamberg Rider and Uta of Naumburg. Photo: Smith College Imaging Center/Nora Davies (public domain).

tensions between the recognition of the seminal contribution of Islamic architectural traditions in Al-Andalus and its suppression. Ethnic and religious identity likewise play a central role in van der Meulen's examination of the restoration of Gothic churches in Poland after the Second World War, an otherwise paradoxical phenomenon given that country's socialist and secular regime. The belief that America in the first half of the twentieth century was racially and ethnically linked to Carolingian Europe, a bizarre idea that prefigures more recent co-options of the European Middle Ages by neo-fascist movements, is the subject of Danielson's paper.[28] One particularly noxious result of the distinctively modern combination of racism and nationalism was colonialism; its impact on the reception and revival of medieval architecture would be deep and lasting. Postcolonial analysis informs both Foletti's discussion of the imposition of the neo-Byzantine style on countries that fell under Soviet influence and Mavromatidis and Villano's account of how Britain and France maneu-

28 For the association of the Gothic with American attitudes towards race, see Joshua Davies, "Confederate Gothic," in Karkov, Kłosowska, and van Gerven Oei, *Disturbing Times*, 247–84.

vered archaeological discoveries of medieval funerary monuments on Cyprus to suit their own political ambitions in the wider eastern Mediterranean.[29]

Medieval Art and the Invention of Tradition

The chronological compass of our volume shows that *all* eras of the Middle Ages, from late antiquity to the fifteenth century, were likely to be interpreted through the prism of modern political imperatives. The field of medieval archaeology, with its concern for what can seem literal "facts on the ground," gave a particularly trenchant edge to the ideological recuperation of the earliest periods, what used to be called the Dark Ages or the Germanic migrations.[30] A comprehensive treatment of the entanglement of medieval archaeology with modern politics remains a desideratum. Suffice it here to recall a few signal examples. In 1653, a chance find near Tournai in northern France spurred one of the earliest excavations of a medieval site. It brought to light the richly appointed tomb of the Merovingian king Childeric I (d. 481). As Bonnie Effros has shown, the king's sumptuous funerary goods quickly caught the attention of the Spanish Hapsburgs (in whose territory Tournai was located) who hoped that the possession of such early regalia and jewelry, including a signet ring and golden bees (or cicadas), could support their claim to the French throne against the reigning Bourbons.[31] Later, these same (or similar) bees were adopted by Napoleon I for his coronation accoutrements in a pointed rejection of the fleur-de-lis, the heraldic symbol of the French monarchy of the Ancien Régime (heraldry provides another fertile if underexplored area of modern manipulations of the Middle Ages).

The recovery of Celtic antiquities by archaeologists and collectors animated by the nascent Irish nationalist movement in the mid-nineteenth century was undertaken with a similar intent—to manufacture historical continuity—albeit with a more distinctly national emphasis. A leading figure was Charles Petrie (1790–1866), president of the Royal Hibernian Academy, archaeologist, and indefatigable crusader for the Irish ethno-cultural revival movement. Archaeology was to provide firm scientific

29 Important studies of the relationship of colonialism to medievalism are Kathleen Davis and Nadia Altschul, eds., *Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World: The Idea of "The Middle Ages" outside Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009) and Michelle R. Warren, *Creole Medievalism: Colonial France and Joseph Bédier's Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

30 For a recent discussion of the historiography, see Matthias Friedrich and James M. Harland, eds., *Interrogating the "Germanic"* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), especially Harland and Friedrich, "Introduction: The 'Germanic' and its Discontents," 1–18.

31 Bonnie Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the Early Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 28–35. Ian Wood, *The Modern Origins of the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) offers a broad study of modern uses of early medieval history and culture.

proof of the existence of an Irish medieval heritage, consisting of a unique blend of Celtic and Christian elements. It is largely thanks to Petrie's efforts that such choice objects as the Armagh Chalice, the Cross of Cong, and Tara Brooch (all now displayed as quasi-sacral historic relics in Dublin's National Museum of Ireland) joined already well-known works such as the round towers, the monumental stone crosses, and the Book of Kells and its intricately illuminated siblings as material evidence of national identity. Celtic Revivalism then gave these works greater popular currency, as their motifs were perpetuated in jewelry, furniture design, and medievalizing products both high and low.[32]

In the late nineteenth century, the early Middle Ages became an even more intense ideological battleground, with the use of invented traditions and imagined communities to manufacture historical foundations and myths of origins.[33] To the Italians who eagerly promoted the (fictitious) continuity of their newly unified nation with imperial Rome, Germany responded by using "Germanic research" (*Germanenforschung*) to unearth vestiges of Visigothic, Ostrogothic, and Langobardic material culture in Italy. Fibulae, weapons, and architectural remains were interpreted as proof positive of a civilizing Aryan culture, a historic fantasy claimed as the bedrock for alleged Germanic racial, ethnic, and cultural superiority. A robust institutional framework supported fieldwork and publications. Especially active was Heinrich Himmler's SS-affiliated research organization Deutsches Ahnenerbe (German Ancestral Heritage), which entered into a formal collaboration with the German Archaeological Institute in Rome.[34] Tellingly, their research priorities and methods were then imported to Spain under Franco's regime.[35]

---

32 John Hutchinson, "Archaeology and the Irish Rediscovery of the Celtic Past," *Nations and Nationalisms* 7 (2001): 505–19; Teri J. Edelstein, ed., *Imagining the Irish Past: The Celtic Revival, 1840–1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). For the slightly earlier but otherwise parallel use of Anglo-Saxon history and artifacts in support of English nationalism, see Dustin M. Frazier Wood, *Anglo-Saxonism and the Idea of Englishness in Eighteenth-century Britain* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020), 156–96. And, more generally on this topic, Jonathan James Graham Alexander, "Medieval Art and Modern Nationalism," in *Medieval Art: Recent Perspectives*, ed. Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Timothy Graham (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 206–23.

33 These notions derive from two important books: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. For a trenchant application of both concepts to the Middle Ages, see Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

34 Thomas Fröhlich, "The Study of the Lombards and Ostrogoths at the German Archaeological Institute of Rome, 1937–1943," in *Archaeology and National Identity in Italy and Europe, 1800–1950*, ed. Nathalie de Haan, Martijn Eickhoff, and Marjan Schwegman, special issue, *Fragmenta: Journal of the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome* 2 (2008): 183–213; Sandra Geringer et al., eds., *Graben für Germanien: Archäologie unterm Hakenkreuz* (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2013).

35 Carlos Tejerizo García, "Nazis, visigodos y Franco: La arqueología visigoda durante el primer franquismo," in *El franquismo y la apropiación del pasado: El uso de la historia, de la arqueología y de la*

One of the Ahnenerbe's choice targets was the so-called Bayeux Tapestry. Among the most compelling visual creations of the Middle Ages, the almost seventy-meter-long embroidery also is one of the best studied in a tradition of scholarship that has gone on virtually unabated ever since nineteenth-century antiquarians pored over it.[36] Crucially for our purpose, the Tapestry offers not only a paradigmatic case of the continuing history of the reception of medieval art, but was the object of repeated, forceful modern acts of appropriation. Made in the late eleventh century, it records the Norman conquest of England in 1066 under William the Conqueror. While neither France nor England was at that time a nation in anything like the modern sense of the word, this did not keep the historic artifact from being used to foster national agendas from the Napoleonic era onward. On the eve of a planned French invasion of England in 1803, the fragile piece of cloth was rolled up and shipped to Paris, where it was exhibited in the brand-new Musée Central des Arts (Louvre) as a monument to the glory of ancestral "French" forces. Equally telling was the decision to print two hundred copies of the brochure that accompanied the exhibition, complete with verbal summaries of every episode preceding a foldout with an engraved reproduction of the entire embroidery. These were distributed to officers stationed in Belgium, who were looking across the Channel toward England just as William and his troops had done some eight hundred years earlier. This little publication ended on the observation that, according to the opinion of "some scholars," the Tapestry originally continued for a few more scenes, culminating with the crowning of the Norman (read French) William the Conqueror.[37]

For the Bayeux Tapestry, as with the imperial regalia of the Holy Roman Empire, where Napoleon first tread, the Nazis followed. They also identified themselves with the Normans, now understood as Aryan "Norsemen." And, like Napoleon, they saw the Tapestry's images resonating with their own planned invasion of England as well as providing a glorious example of military feats that bore the imprint of the "Germanic race."[38] On the orders of Himmler, the embroidery was extensively studied and documented in the summer of 1941 by a team of experts sent by the Ahnenerbe and led by the Viking specialist and major in the SS, Herbert Jankuhn. Attempts to remove the fragile work to Berlin failed and it eventually was brought to the Louvre for safety

historia del arte para la legitimacíon de la dictatura, ed. Francisco J. Moreno Martín (Madrid: Editorial Pablo Iglesias, 2017), 107–36.

36 Rosemary Hill, *Time's Witness: History in the Age of Romanticism* (London: Allen Lane, 2021), 121–26.

37 Ennio Quirino Visconti, *Notice historique sur la tapisserie brodée par la reine Mathilde, épouse de Guillaume le Conquérant* (Paris: Imprimerie des Sciences et des Arts, 1803), 20. On Napoleon and the Tapestry, see Carola Hicks, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (London: Vintage, 2006), 95–114.

38 A particularly explicit example was Rolf Roeningh, *Ein Schwert hieb über den Kanal: Die siegreiche Englandfahrt Wilhelms des Eroberers nach Bildberichten des Teppichs von Bayeux* (Berlin: Deutscher Archiv-Verlag, 1941).

in the summer of 1944.[39] The politicization of the Bayeux Tapestry by the Nazis did not go unnoticed by their adversaries. After the liberation of Paris on 25 August 1944, it was decided that the textile should once again be exhibited at the Louvre before returning to its permanent home in Bayeux. But the concrete historical reality of works of medieval art means that they do not always fit neatly with modern objectives. After the display opened in mid-November, with the Second World War continuing to rumble in the background, the precious eleventh-century artifact needed a bit of tweaking to accord with current political intentions. The last panel, which features the inscription *Et fuga verterunt Angli* ("And the English turned in flight"), was covered over in the Louvre's display in 1944 because that message was deemed offensive to the English who had done so much to assist the French throughout the war.[40]

The blatant political use of the Tapestry has continued to the present. In 2018, France's president, Emmanuel Macron, agreed to lend the Tapestry for display in England. In contrast to some of the other cases we discuss, there was no pretense on either side of the Channel that this was anything *but* the use of a work of medieval art in the service of modern politics. A leading British newspaper frankly opined that United Kingdom Prime Minister Theresa May "will use the [loan] decision . . . to highlight the strength in UK-French relations after Brexit." But political rationales are rarely monolithic (and, as we have just noted, works of medieval art never speak perfectly to modern conditions). Thus, a writer on the other side of the Brexit debate gave a quite different interpretation of the loan's significance, asserting that, since "the Bayeux tapestry shows Britain's birth as a European nation," it supported the position that the United Kingdom should remain in the European Union.[41]

39 Shirley Ann Brown, "'Sonderauftrag Bayeux': Herbert Jeschke and the 'Lost' Drawings of the 'Bayeux Tapestry,'" *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 83 (2020): 236–54, with further relevant bibliography at 252n16.

40 Iñigo Salto Santamaría, "'Et le combat prend fin': The Exhibition of the Bayeux Tapestry at the Louvre in 1944," in *Arts et politiques: Le marché de l'art entre France et Allemagne de l'Entre-deux-guerres à la Libération*, ed. Julia Drost, Hélène Ivanoff and Denise Vernerey-Laplace (Heidelberg: arthistoricum.net, 2022; https://doi.org/10.11588/arthistoricum.878). Even in places where the Nazi use of the Bayeux Tapestry was likely not known, the parallel between the history told in the embroidery and the Allied invasion of France in 1944 proved irresistible. Already in the days and weeks after D-Day, the Tapestry was adapted by artists, notably on the cover of *The New Yorker* for 15 July 1944. For discussions of these, see Hicks, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 270–71 and R. Howard Bloch, *A Needle in the Right Hand of God* (New York, 2006), 19–20 and fig. 1.

41 Nicola Slawson and Mark Brown, "Emmanuel Macron Agrees to Lend Bayeux Tapestry to Britain" and John Lichfield, "The Bayeux Tapestry Shows Britain's Birth as a European Nation," *The Guardian*, 17 January 2018. Another visual parody, the *Bye-EU Tapestry*, indicates that the eleventh-century embroidery became an unavoidable target (including for bad puns) in the age of Brexit; see Oliver Harvey, "The Sun's Brexit-Inspired Tapestry Shows EU Membership was One Long Stitch-Up," *The Sun*, 18 January 2018, https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/5366747/brexit-inspired-bayeux-tapestry/.

Always the Same Politics?

Attempts to bend the prenational Middle Ages to fit modern beliefs about nationhood have been convincingly exposed by medieval historians. But there is still no insurance against popular (or even scholarly) misconceptions, and medieval culture has again of late become attractive fodder for historical projections. Such programmatic uses of the Middle Ages, both current and past, have predominantly come from the conservative, right-wing, imperial, and (neo)fascist end of the political spectrum.[42] As the name implies, progressive ideas generally do not find the past a useful political reference. Nor did it help the utility of the Middle Ages to the left that it featured an all-powerful church often closely allied with dynastic states. It is thus of little surprise that most available scholarship and virtually all contributions to *Medieval Art, Modern Politics* attend to conservative appropriations of the Middle Ages. But this should not obscure the existence of an important left-leaning, sometimes radical strand that also revisited the medieval artistic legacy. For most reactionary right-wing appropriations of medieval sites and objects—depending on the period, in nationalist, Catholic, fascist, free-market, or Confederate and proslavery variants—there was an equivalent on the left.[43]

Progressive and even overtly subversive currents can be detected in approaches to the medieval artistic past from at least the eighteenth century. When Gothic sham ruins were erected in the picturesque gardens of English estates to add historic depth, it was not an exercise in nostalgic admiration for a mutilated past, but a Whiggish declaration *against* the Catholic, feudal age, which was telescoped with the recent—and corrupt—Jacobite era. A past, in sum, that deserved to be crumbling.[44] Even Horace Walpole (1717–97), in many ways the figurehead of the Gothic Revival movement, drew a clear distinction between the reactivation of medieval art and the unacceptable religious and political implications that era had for someone of progressive convictions. His creative understanding of the Middle Ages yielded the innovative Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* and the equally seminal mansion, Strawberry Hill, outside London. There, Walpole put together a seductive collage of actual medieval furniture and decor with medievalizing elements to construct partly invented genealogies that he projected both backward and forward toward a queer utopian future.[45] Even more than Walpole, the influential art critic John Ruskin (1819–1900) would a few decades

42 Di Carpegna Falconieri, *Militant Middle Ages*, 173–93, with full bibliography.

43 For a case study on this kind of ideological fungibility, see Brigitte Buettner, "The Columns 'From the Tomb of Charlemagne' between Aachen and the Louvre: A Modern Spoliation Saga," *Gesta* 63, no. 2 (2024): 169–203.

44 David Stewart, "Political Ruins: Gothic Sham Ruins and the '45," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 55 (1996): 400–411.

45 On Walpole's medievalism and his (sexual) politics, see Matthew Reeve, *Gothic Architecture and Sexuality in the Circle of Horace Walpole* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020).

later idealize the artistic legacy of the Middle Ages, specifically the medieval guild system founded on what he saw as a fundamentally nonauthoritarian and collaborative model of labor. It was his intention to revitalize standards of excellence in the industrial age by contrasting the medieval collectivist model to the capitalist system in which alienated workers tethered to assembly lines churn out soulless commodities. William Morris (1834–96), who became an outspoken socialist in his late years, subscribed to the same view, pushing it to explicitly Marxist and mutualist political ends. In his many writings, his tireless activism and public speeches, and (to some extent) the way he operated his textile workshop, Morris championed collaborative modes of production that encouraged individuals to consider themselves part of a team that had a stake in the quality of, and a degree of control over, the final products.[46]

In France in the same period, one thinks of staunch anticlerical voices such as Victor Hugo (1802–85) and especially Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–79), indefatigable restorer of medieval monuments, designer of neo-Gothic decorative arts, architectural theorist, and influential early advocate for historic preservation (as his mention in multiple contributions in this volume attests).[47] He mythologized the Gothic as an urban, communal, and progressive "revolution" that put an end to the monastic, regressive, and even repressive Romanesque era: a foreshadowing of the revolutions of his own time.[48] More radical was Maximilien Luce (1858–1941), one of several artists whose political sympathies drew him to the ideas of the dominant anarchist intellectual of the time, Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921). Similar to Ruskin, this painter understood the cathedral to be the product of the medieval guild and therefore an unsurpassed expression of mutualism and cooperative labor practices. Accordingly, Luce's *Notre-Dame of Paris* series (Fig. 1.7) embeds the majestic Gothic building much more tightly into the urban fabric and people's everyday activities than one of his most immediate models, Monet's quasi-abstract paintings of Rouen cathedral.[49]

46 For the views of Ruskin and Morris on the Middle Ages, see Frances S. Connelly, "John Ruskin and the Savage Gothic," *Journal of Art Historiography* 12 (June 2015), https://doaj.org/article/0ee6b5b6f301417697baed36ec8e093a; Elisabeth Brewer, "John Ruskin's Medievalism," in *From Arabye to Engelond: Medieval Studies in Honour of Mahmoud Manzalaoui,* ed. A. E. Christa Canitz and Gernot R. Wieland (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1999), 265–82, at 275–80; Joanna Banham and Jennifer Harris, eds., *William Morris and the Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); Jan Marsh, "William Morris and Medievalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Medievalism*, ed. Joanne Parker and Corinna Wagner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 507–22.

47 The literature on Viollet-le-Duc is extensive. For studies germane to our topic, see Kevin Murphy, *Memory and Modernity: Viollet-le-Duc at Vézelay* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000) and Martin Bressani, *Architecture and the Historical Imagination: Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le Duc* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

48 On the reception of the Romanesque, see Tina Waldeier Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism: A Prehistory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

49 Maylis Curie, "The Anarchist Cathedral," in *The Idea of the Gothic Cathedral: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Meanings of the Medieval Edifice in Modern Times*, ed. Stephanie E. Glaser (Turnhout:

Fig. 1.7: Maximilien Luce, *The Quai Saint-Michel and Notre-Dame*, 1901, Paris, Musée d'Orsay. Photo: Alamy Stock Photo.

Brepols, 2018), 149–70; Robyn Roslak, *Neo-Impressionism and Anarchism in Fin-de-Siècle France: Painting, Politics, and Landscape* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

The view of the Gothic era as a utopia of social harmony and individual freedom continued to inspire artists into the twentieth century. This was especially true of those associated with the Bauhaus, the innovative art school established in post–World War I Germany dedicated to integrating all the arts and breaking the barriers between high art and the crafts, between artisanal and industrial production. Lyonel Feininger's image of a Gothic cathedral on the cover of the first Bauhaus manifesto of 1919 may seem to our eyes a strange choice to herald an avant-garde artistic movement, but it was the product of a well-established modernist and progressive identification with medieval creativity and artistic excellence (Fig. 1.8).[50]

Such leftist reevaluations of the most prestigious of all forms of medieval architecture did not go unchallenged. With the modern emergence of nation-states and the concomitant flourishing of nationalist ideologies, the Gothic cathedral also came to be cast as an expression of an inherent national character, specifically French and German.

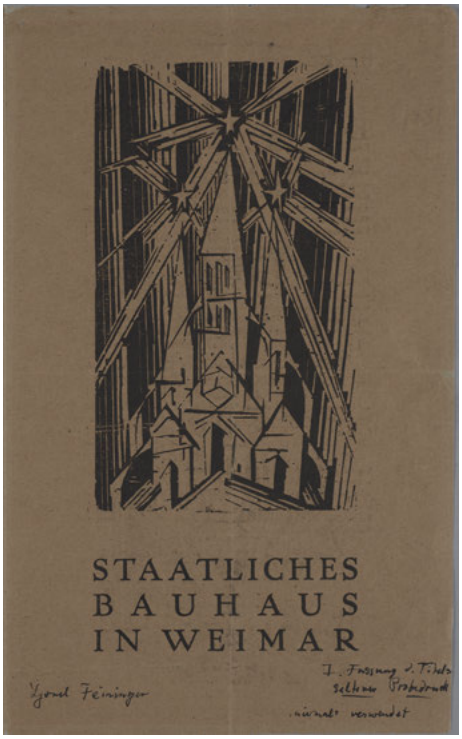

Fig. 1.8: Lyonel Feininger, Preliminary design of the cover for the Program of the State Bauhaus in Weimar, 1919, Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of Julia Feininger, © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photo: © President and Fellows of Harvard College, BR49.198.

50 Alexander Nagel, *Medieval/Modern: Art out of Time* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012), 241–62; Ross Anderson, "The Medieval Masons' Lodge as Paradigm in Peter Behrens's *Dombauhütte* in Munich, 1922," *Art Bulletin* 90 (2008): 441–65.

The vexed question of the invention of the Gothic architectural language has been one of the most politicized fields of scholarly inquiry since 1772 when Goethe published an ecstatic account of the cathedral of Strasbourg and its architect, Erwin von Steinbach, pulling both firmly into the German cultural orbit.[51] Academic wrangling continued throughout the nineteenth century, reaching a feverish pitch during and after the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71). Strasbourg's shifting location, sometimes in France, sometimes in Germany, made it a natural focus of ideological struggle. Nationalistically driven debates continued with undiminished acrimony into the twentieth century, hardened by the First and Second World Wars. The distinguished art historian Pierre Francastel (also noted in Salto Santamaría's essay) denounced the partisan annexation of the origins of the Gothic by German scholars as the prelude to military conquest.[52] For Francastel, this was not just a question of ideology; he joined the faculty of Strasbourg's university in 1936 after having taught in Warsaw and, a few years later, was extremely active in the French Resistance to the Nazi occupation.[53] His criticism of Germany and German art history revisited an attack written during the previous World War by another French art historian, Émile Mâle. The title of Mâle's 1917 book *L'art allemand et l'art français du Moyen Âge* (German and French art of the Middle Ages) could hardly be more innocuous, but the first sentence set a consistent tone for the hundreds of pages that follow: "Even to speak of German art requires a huge effort."[54]

Gothic cathedrals were the site of academic fighting; with hugely more murderous consequences, they turned into actual battlefields. The cathedral of Reims, for example, suffered heavily from bombardments during the First World War. Yet even assessing the extent of the damage, let alone the causes, became a bone of contention, as French and German reports vehemently disagreed during a sustained propaganda

51 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "On German Architecture," trans. John Gage in *German Essays on Art History*, ed. Gert Schiff (New York: Continuum, 1988), 33–40. Paul Frankl, *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960) remains an invaluable survey of changing views of the Gothic.

52 Pierre Francastel, *L'histoire de l'art, instrument de la propagande allemande* (Paris: Librairie de Médicis, 1945), 32.

53 For other attempts to correlate scholars' politics (ranging from Marxist to Nazi) with their interpretations of medieval art, see Michael Camille, "'How New York Stole the Idea of Romanesque Art': Medieval, Modern and Postmodern in Meyer Schapiro," *Oxford Art Journal* 17 (1994), 65–75; Eliza Garrison, "Ottonian Art and Its Afterlife: Revisiting Percy Ernst Schramm's Portraiture Idea," *Oxford Art Journal* 32 (2009): 207–22; Anja Schürmann, "'Rechte' und 'linke' Ideologisierungen: Wilhelm Pinder und Richard Hamann beschreiben staufische Kunst," in *Kunstgeschichte im "Dritten Reich,"* ed. Ruth Heftrig, Olaf Peters, and Barbara Schellwald (Berlin, 2008), 245–59; and Otto Karl Werckmeister, review of Meyer Schapiro, *Romanesque Art*, *Art Quarterly* ns 2 (1979), 211–18.

54 Émile Mâle, *L'art allemand et l'art français du Moyen Âge*, 4th ed. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1923), 5. On the German reaction to Mâle's publication, see Evonne Levy, "The German Art Historians of World War I: Grautoff, Wichert, Weisbach and Brinckmann and the Activities of the Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 74 (2011), 373–400.

war waged by the two sides.[55] As soon as the shelling subsided and German vandalism had been internationally decried, the "martyred cathedral" became in the United States an emblem of the injured French nation and, more unexpectedly, a site of American cultural identification: the restoration of the French Gothic cathedral was adopted as an American cause.[56] This was an important shift; heritage sites could be unmoored from national identifications to become international cultural patrimony.[57] A comparable logic operated after the 2019 fire at Notre-Dame in Paris since (as Murphy's essay shows) the cathedral now combines its nineteenth-century function as a national site of unity with its global status as a monument of world heritage. This is not to imply that national narratives disappeared. Notably in Britain, cathedrals continue to commemorate the Great War through chivalry-themed tombs and modern stained-glass windows with crusading iconographies that were installed in the 1920s and '30s.[58]

Politics of Rebuilding, Politics of Dissemination

The twelve essays in *Medieval Art, Modern Politics* were produced in response to an open call for papers. Although that call was broad and specified no organizational agenda, the accepted essays fell into two groups, one centered on architectural restoration and rebuilding, the other on the display and propagation of works in other media. Most take the form of case studies, an ideal format for showing at a granular level how medieval art and architecture were interpreted, disseminated, and, in the case of buildings, altered across time and space. The chronological breadth of *Medieval Art, Modern Politics* is deliberately large, running from the Counter-Reformation to the twenty-first century. We believe that an approach based on such a *longue durée* is essential to fully understand the hows and the whys of contemporary right-wing extremism's love affair with a European Middle Ages viewed as white, patriarchal, ethnically pure, and culturally homogeneous.[59] This volume mirrors the postmedieval

55 Thomas W. Gaehtgens, *Reims on Fire: War and Reconciliation between France and Germany*, trans. David Dollenmayer (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2008).

56 Nicola Lambourn, "Production versus Destruction: Art, World War I, and Art History," *Art History* 22 (1999): 347–63; Elizabeth Emery, "The Martyred Cathedral: American Attitudes toward Notre-Dame de Reims during the First World War," in Marquardt and Jordan, *Medieval Art*, 312–39.

57 This transformation has been analyzed for Cologne Cathedral by Astrid Swenson: "Cologne Cathedral as an International Monument," in *Rewriting German History: New Perspectives on Modern Germany*, ed. Jan Rüger and Nikolaus Wachsmann (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 29–51.

58 Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

59 The emphasis on historical context separates this volume from two recent art-historical studies of the relationship between medieval art and the modern world: Nagel's *Medieval/Modern* and Amy Knight

reception of medieval art and hence is transnational as well as trans-chronological. Scholars based in eight countries are represented in this volume and their subjects range to include Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States. What we aim to surface is how this long and broad history cannot, and should not, be divorced from an awareness of how it has been exploited to serve modern political agendas.

The public prominence of the built environment makes it an especially attractive locus for acts of political communication with a high symbolic impact. Because the reshaping and reprogramming of architecture is not merely an act of interpretation, but one that physically alters the material remnants of the past, it is particularly striking and drastic. Half of the essays in *Medieval Art, Modern Politics* address this topic, showing how the restoration and rebuilding of architectural sites supported, more or less explicitly, goals of the present. Given the central role of nation building in the modern era, it is unsurprising that nationalism figures large in every essay in this section. From Spain (Lamprakos, Moreno Martín), Germany (Carqué), and France (Murphy) to Poland (van der Meulen) and Russia (Foletti), the medieval built heritage is examined in its intersection with modern interventions often weighted by nationalistic objectives. Whether the essays are focused chronologically on one period (Francoist Spain, post–Second World War Poland) or look at a set of related buildings over time (Germany from the Kingdom of Prussia to the Nazi era; from czarist to Putin's Russia), all reveal how medieval buildings—intact, ruined, or vanished—were manipulated both physically and discursively to provide historic depth and legitimize modern politics. As the examples of the mosque-cathedral in Córdoba, churches and cathedrals in Poland and Russia, and castles in Germany and Spain make clear, these reconfigurations concerned both religious and secular structures. Common to all discussions is the explicit ideological dimension inherent in such cultural-stylistic choices, specifically in terms of religious and ethnic identities as well as national ones: Catholicism in Poland and in Spain (where it functioned in opposition to those countries' Protestant and Islamic pasts); the Russian version of a neo-Byzantine (and, under Putin, neo-neo-Byzantine) visual language exported to satellite states from the Balkans to Georgia and Armenia; German castles along the Rhine as an anti-French declaration.

Medieval architecture also played an important role in the emergent heritage tourism that is another characteristic of modernity. Gothic cathedrals became a centerpiece of the guidebooks to the battlefields of the First World War produced by the Michelin tire company in the war's immediate wake and published in English-language editions intended for Americans and Britons on driving tours of France.[60] The Italian fascist re-

Powell's *Depositions: Scenes from the Late Medieval Church and the Modern Museum* (New York: Zone Books, 2012).

60 Stephen L. Harp, *Marketing Michelin: Advertising & Cultural Identity in Twentieth-Century France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 89–125.

gime similarly promoted national and international tourism via invented traditions such as pseudomedieval civic spectacles and public monuments.[61] Tourism and its impact on the modern understanding of medieval art figure in several essays in this volume that consider subjects including the unabated appeal of Notre-Dame of Paris (Murphy) or the Roman sites and monuments associated with the foundations of Christianity (Cecalupo), the sense of historic continuity projected onto the physical remains of medieval castles (Carqué, Moreno Martín), and the exoticism of Al-Andalus (Lamprakos) and the eastern Mediterranean (Mavromatidis and Villano).[62]

The second group of essays in *Medieval Art, Modern Politics* queries the ways in which medieval images and objects lent themselves to politicized interpretations (and manipulations) when displayed and disseminated in the modern world. Publications and exhibitions have played a crucial role in mediating the medieval legacy, even if, unlike restoration and rebuilding, they do not physically alter its material substance. Scholarly writings, popular media, facsimile reproductions, and temporary and permanent museum displays are some of the arenas addressed in this section. Inseparable from this knowledge production at both the erudite and popular level are technological and institutional developments. Although the role of printing in bringing medieval art to modern audiences has been less studied than the equivalent function of exhibitions and museum displays, multiple contributions to our volume tackle its role in shaping modern understandings of medieval art. Cecalupo shows that printing enterprises controlled by the papacy were key to making early Christian catacomb art accessible to the broader public. Mavromatidis and Villano discuss how a range of antiquarian publications and scholarly histories used the contested funerary heritage of medieval Cyprus for competing political purposes. Danielson's discussion focuses on two "middlebrow" genres—textbooks and advertising—and examines how these new forms of dissemination shaped twentieth-century Americans' view of the art and history of the Middle Ages in a country far removed from Europe and its storehouse of medieval art and architecture.

Much like active approaches to the medieval architectural patrimony—which buildings do we preserve and in what style?—political formations and cultural institutions have had a considerable impact on how, in the course of the nineteenth century, medieval art, having acquired a larger public presence, was interpreted. The creation of the museum around 1800 was a paradigm-changing outgrowth of the mod-

61 D. Medina Lasansky, *The Renaissance Perfected: Architecture, Spectacle, and Tourism in Fascist Italy* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

62 Disneyland and the Disney universe, with their recurrent medievalizing imagery, are a metaincarnation of this development. See Tison Pugh and Susan Aronstein, eds., *The Disney Middle Ages: A Fairy-Tale and Fantasy Past* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012) and Wolf Burchard, *Inspiring Walt Disney: The Animation of French Decorative Arts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), 65–101. Despite the subtitle, the latter includes material on how Uta of Naumburg was the source for the representation of the evil queen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937).

ern concern for citizen education, and studies of the way in which medieval art was exhibited in these new institutional spaces have become an active area of recent scholarship.[63] One of the first museums to open to the public was the Musée des Monuments Français created by Alexandre Lenoir (1761–1839). He made it his life's work to salvage as many works as he could from the Revolutionary vandalism that had hacked through his country's artistic landscape during the preceding years. Half of Lenoir's collection consisted of medieval sculpture, which he arranged in a secularized Parisian convent in an innovative display that introduced the concept of period rooms.[64] This was an early expression of the same compulsion to preserve that Faiers examines through a consideration of how contested local, regional, and national interests affected the display of a late medieval sculptural group. Similar tensions between different institutional jurisdictions were at play in the conception and design of the Swiss national museum. Here, as Sears discusses, the Middle Ages were enlisted to perform Swiss identity. Supporting nation-building efforts was not the only function of the display of medieval art in museums. Salto Santamaría examines a series of transnational exhibitions of Mosan art mounted across Europe in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, stressing how they allowed politicians, museum officials, and visitors to come to terms with that region's turbulent recent history. This contribution, like every essay in this volume, reaffirms a core tenet that unifies *Medieval Art, Modern Politics*: when past and present meet, art history, knowledge, and power unavoidably intersect.

63 Two notable collective volumes are Enrico Castelnuovo and Alessio Monciatti, eds., *Medioevo/Medioevi: Un secolo di esposizioni d'arte medievale* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2008) and Wolfgang Brückle, Pierre Alain Mariaux, and Daniela Mondini, eds., *Musealisierung mittelalterlicher Kunst: Anlässe, Ansätze, Ansprüche* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2015).

64 Alexandra Stara, *The Museum of French Monuments 1795–1816: "Killing Art to Make History"* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013); Geneviève Bresc-Bautier et al., eds., *Un musée révolutionnaire: Le musée des monuments français d'Alexandre Lenoir* (Paris: Hazan, 2016).