

ROGER
PAULIN

From Goethe to Gundolf

ESSAYS ON
GERMAN LITERATURE
AND CULTURE





<https://www.openbookpublishers.com>

© 2021 Roger Paulin



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC BY 4.0). This license allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the text; to adapt the text and to make commercial use of the text providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information:

Roger Paulin, *From Goethe to Gundolf: Essays on German Literature and Culture*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0258>

Copyright and permissions for the reuse of many of the images included in this publication differ from the above. Copyright and permissions information for images is provided separately in the List of Illustrations. In order to access detailed and updated information on the license, please visit, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0258#copyright>

Further details about CC-BY licenses are available at, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web>

Updated digital material and resources associated with this volume are available at <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0258#resources>

Every effort has been made to identify and contact copyright holders and any omission or error will be corrected if notification is made to the publisher.

ISBN Paperback: 9781800642126

ISBN Hardback: 9781800642133

ISBN Digital (PDF): 9781800642140

ISBN Digital ebook (epub): 9781800642157

ISBN Digital ebook (mobi): 9781800642164

ISBN Digital (XML): 9781800642171

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0258

Cover photo and design by Andrew Corbett, CC-BY 4.0.

13. Under the Horse's Tail

The Poets, Statuary and the Literary Canon in Nineteenth-Century Germany¹

My real subject in this chapter is 'lieux de mémoire', 'Erinnerungsorte', 'loci memoriae' or 'places of memory'. I shall be looking at three examples in a German context and will be examining them as they affect the national memory and its myths, but also the way the nation viewed its national poets and the emergent canon that served to galvanize national cultural aspirations. If we look at the 'Urtext' of this cult of memory, Pierre Nora's *Les Lieux de mémoire* (1984–92)² and especially its German equivalent, Étienne François' and Hagen Schulze's *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte* (2000),³ we notice that the concept of these national monuments, places or spaces, common to both works, is very commodious. It can be a place, like the Minster in Strasbourg or the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin or the city of Dresden. It can also be a person, like Arminius or Frederick the Great or Otto von Bismarck. Or it can be an event like the year 1968. These figures all mark out a space in the national memory and consciousness. Seen in these terms, therefore, figures in the literary canon like Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Friedrich Schiller, the one with *Faust*, the other with *Wilhelm Tell*, also constitute such places.

And yet we must be aware of the separateness of places of memory in France and Germany as presented by Nora and François and Schulze respectively. There can be no Rheims or Panthéon for Germany (no

1 This is the much expanded and revised version of a paper first written in 2002, but hitherto unpublished.

2 Pierre Nora et al., *Les Lieux de mémoire*, 7 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992).

3 *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, ed. by Étienne François and Hagen Schulze (Munich: Beck, 2003 [2001]).

Westminster Abbey); Victor Hugo, Jules Michelet, François Guizot and Augustin Thierry may have created the nineteenth-century view of France that in many ways is still current, but Germany has no Hugo, and the greatest of its nineteenth-century historians, such as Leopold von Ranke or Theodor Mommsen, are focused elsewhere. The Teutoburger Wald, Potsdam, the Wartburg, the Walhalla are all expressions of a nineteenth-century desire for nationhood, but none of them is in a capital city like Paris. The monuments in royal capitals like Munich or Berlin, though attempts at creating a historical panorama or progression, are nevertheless above all tokens of Bavarian or Prussian achievements and are unthinkable in any other context. This is not to diminish the significance of such representations of the national history, but a comparison with France is not in the first instance workable or desirable.⁴

François' and Schulze's volumes do recapture much of what the nineteenth century would have regarded as the central symbolism and iconography of its aspirations before and after 1848 or 1871, whereas places of memory in the twentieth century cannot be disassociated from the memorialization of a less positive past, 'Mahnmale', warning monuments, not just 'Erinnerungsorte'.⁵ Thus the city of Dresden, which these volumes mark,⁶ is at once the 'Elbflorenz', the pearl of German cities, the cultural jewel with its matchless art collections, but also the city ravaged and laid waste on February 13, 1945, the city, too, described in Victor Klemperer's diaries that was still overseeing the deportation of its Jews almost up to the eve of that terrible night. I will stay with Dresden because it is a convenient example with which to lead into my subject. Today, one may be grateful for every corner of Dresden that has survived the fire from heaven in 1945 and has been subsequently restored. We should not however forget that the city and its famous skyline, already immortalized in the eighteenth century by Canaletto and Bernardo Bellotto, is a cultural artefact made up of various styles,

4 A point which emerges in François and Schulze's introduction, 'Einleitung', in *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, I, 9–24.

5 As in the articles by Peter Reichel, 'Auschwitz' and by Klaus Neumann, 'Mahnmale' in *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, III, 600–21 and 622–57. Cf. also Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich: Beck, 1999), 328–39.

6 Olaf B. Rader, 'Dresden', in *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, I, 451–70.

eclectically framed together over nearly two centuries (and let us not forget that the same Bellotto records its bombardment in 1759–60 during the Seven Years' War, an act of vandalism at the hands of Frederick the Great, about whom more later).

Whereas it is appropriate and legitimate in identifying 'Erinnerungsorte' to refer to historical cultural manifestations in the widest of terms, as in the article 'Dresden' in François and Schulze, the cultural or literary or art historian may wish to examine aspects of these places with an emphasis different from mine. (I qualify only as a literary historian.) Thus when my wife and I stood in 2002 on what was once called the Schlossplatz and has become the Theaterplatz, armed with a camera and some memories of our first visit to Dresden in 1974, we remarked that we were standing on a many-layered 'lieu de mémoire', not least because two of the constituent buildings, the royal palace and the opera house, still ruins in 1974, had been rebuilt since the 1980s, so that the symbolism of the royal capital of Saxony that the city once was, had been restored for a purpose very different from that intended in the nineteenth century. For if we take in all sides of this square — as we are intended to do — we move from the royal palace, mainly Renaissance and much restored in 1890–1902,⁷ to the baroque Hofkirche (now Dom), to Gottfried Semper's picture gallery (behind which one can see that baroque extravaganza the Zwinger), to the opera house (after Semper's design: the original building was destroyed by fire) to the centre, the equestrian statue of King John of Saxony (König Johann), by Johannes Schilling and erected in 1889 (see Fig. 16).⁸

Clearly this is a congeries of buildings demonstrating royal power and its cultural attachments in the widest sense. The king, who reigned from 1854 to 1873, dominates the scene from his vantage point above a

7 Fritz Löffler, *Das alte Dresden. Geschichte seiner Bauten* (Dresden: Sachsenverlag, 1958), 353.

8 On King John of Saxony see especially *König Johann von Sachsen. Zwischen zwei Welten*, ed. by der Sächsischen Schlossverwaltung und dem Staatlichen Schlossbetrieb Weesenstein (Halle: Janos Stekovics, 2001) and *Zwischen Tradition und Modernität. König Johann von Sachsen 1801–1873*, ed. by Winifried Müller and Martina Schattkowsky, *Schriften zur sächsischen Geschichte und Volkskunde* 8 (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2004). Reference will be made to the individual essays in these volumes. On the statue itself, see Simone Mergen, 'Die Enthüllung des König-Johann-Denkmal in Dresden anlässlich der Wettin-Feier 1889. Jubiläum und Denkmal im monarchischen Kult des 19. Jahrhunderts', in *König Johann von Sachsen*, 425–48.

high and elaborate plinth, the whole competing with the great squares of Europe (see Fig. 17). Looking at the king, with his accoutrements, the traditional royal mantle and sceptre over a modern uniform, with stirrups, we might be tempted to see here the symbol of military power. But this is not, say, King Ludwig I of Bavaria on the Odeonsplatz in Munich with raised sword and defiant gesture. It is an essentially unmartial king, who tried to preserve Saxony's independence, but backed the wrong side in 1866 and was only spared the fate of Hanover through Bismarck's generosity. He is a king who went without great enthusiasm into the 'Reich' of 1871 (he was not present at Versailles and does not figure on the definitive version of Anton von Werner's famous monumental painting of the proclamation of the German Empire). Yet a monument to a king will hardly commemorate what he did not do. What sort of monument is this?



Fig. 17 Equestrian statue of King John of Saxony, Dresden Theaterplatz, by Johannes Schilling (1889). Photo by author, CC BY 4.0.

In his seminal article in the *Historische Zeitschrift* in 1968,⁹ Thomas Nipperdey identifies five different kinds of monuments which express and symbolize German ideas and aspirations in the nineteenth century. 1) The national and monarchic or dynastic (such as Frederick the Great's statue in Berlin, about which more later, or Kaiser William's (now lost); 2) the memorial church; 3) the monument to the national culture (such as the Walhalla near Regensburg); 4) the national monument of a democratically constituted nation (the Befreiungshalle at Kelheim or Hermann dominating the Teutoburg Forest); or 5) the monument of a nation now politically coalesced (the many commemorating Bismarck).

The monument to King John has manifestly elements of several of these. Erected by his son, the martial and highly popular King Albert, it is the dynastic homage to the royal house of Wettin (as indicated by the crown on the rear of the plinth), but also to the constitutional monarch (although instinctively conservative), the 'father of his people', who presides over the arts of war and peace, the 'Landesvater'. For if we read the frieze on the plinth from right to left, we see in order of sequence soldiers in the uniforms of the Franco-Prussian War, the industrial arts and crafts and agriculture, then the fine arts. There are links here with nineteenth-century kings of the stamp of King Frederick William IV of Prussia or King Ludwig I of Bavaria, both of whom were indeed King John's brothers-in-law, one with artistic leanings and the other a poet in his own right, but both very different all the same. Albert, Prince Consort, in this country, has perhaps more affinities. For the figures on the plinth are not merely borrowed from traditional iconography; they reflect the king's lively interest in all of his kingdom's activities, technical, administrative and cultural (see Fig. 18).

But what of the back of the plinth, directly under the horse's tail? It is clearly not a place of dishonour, but rather of distinction, for there one will remark the royal crown of Saxony and, below it, a relief portrait of Dante (see Fig. 19). It is a reminder that the king is also Philalethes, who as Prince John of Saxony produced a metrical (iambic) translation of the *Divine Comedy* between 1830 and 1849 and who as king issued a revised edition in 1866. Dante on the plinth does not come as a surprise when we know that the great Italian poet had already formed part of

9 Thomas Nipperdey, 'Nationalidee und Nationaldenkmal in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 206 (1968), 529–85.



Fig. 18 Equestrian statue of King John of Saxony, detail of plinth. Photo by author, CC BY 4.0.



Fig. 19 Equestrian statue of King John of Saxony, rear of plinth. Photo by author, CC BY 4.0.

the king's official iconography during his lifetime, a Dante bust already featuring on several of his official portraits or representations¹⁰

He is also noted for assembling around him an 'Accademia Dantesca' that included the poet and translator Ludwig Tieck, the translator Wolf von Baudissin, and the physician and painter Carl Gustav Carus, who between them had the oversight of the royal translation and offered their several poetic or scientific skills and insights. This is not the place to discuss the merits of this translation, as compared, say, with his contemporaries August Kopisch or Karl Ludwig Friedrich Kannegiesser or Karl Streckfuss, nor the role of the 'Accademia'.¹¹ What is important in this context is that Philalethes' Dante is one those projects in the nineteenth century which linked foreign and native cultures, thereby representing a symbiosis between German 'Bildung' and alien poetry. It descends lineally from the German reception of the Greeks, then of Shakespeare, Cervantes and others, including Dante. Its origins lie in the idea that a cultivated nation, while not yet politically united and without a capital city, may nevertheless make its mark in cultural terms. As Georg Forster formulated it in 1791:

Geographical position, political constitution and various other factors have given the Germans the eclectic character by which they can explore without prejudice and for its own sake the beautiful, the good and the perfect which is scattered in fragments and adaptations all over the earth's surface, collecting and collating it until such time as the edifice of human knowledge stands complete before us.¹²

10 See *König Johann von Sachsen. Zwischen zwei Welten*, frontis., plates 29, 299.

11 See Sebastian Neumeister, 'Philalethes: König Johann als Dante-Übersetzer' in *Zwischen Tradition*, 203–16; but also Elisabeth Stopp, 'Ludwig Tieck: Unveröffentlichte Aufzeichnungen zu Purgatorio VI–XXIII anlässlich der deutschen Übersetzung von Philalethes, ediert und erläutert', *Deutsches Dante Jahrbuch*, 60 (1985), 7–72 and 'Ludwig Tieck and Dante', *Deutsches Dante Jahrbuch*, 60 (1985), 73–95.

12 Georg Forster, *Sämtliche Schriften, Tagebücher, Briefe*, ed. by Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 18 vols (Berlin: Akademie, 1963–), IV, 285. The original reads: 'Gleichwohl hat uns geographische Lage, politische Verfassung und so manches mitwirkende Verhältniß den eklektischen Charakter verliehen, womit wir das Schöne, Gute und Vollkommene, was hie und dort in Bruchstücken und Modifikationen auf der ganzen Erdoberfläche zerstreut ist, uneingennützig um sein selbst willen erforschen, sammeln und so lange ordnen sollen, bis etwa der Bau des menschlichen Wissens volendet da steht, —oder unsre Rolle gespielt ist und künftige Menschenalter die Steine, die wir zusammentragen, zu einem neuen Gebäude brauchen'.

The translator and critic August Wilhelm Schlegel,¹³ lecturing on European literature in Berlin in 1801, stated that the Germans, while yet essentially without a nationality of their own, do possess depth and universality, a different way of expressing the German cultural embrace of the Other. Or in 1818–19, in a very different cultural and political climate, the literary historian Ludwig Wachler, though fixated on the idea of the renewal of the national fibre through Teutonic virtues, nevertheless praises openness to other nations' attainments (Dante, Calderón, Shakespeare) as an essentially German quality.¹⁴ Something similar is still being echoed by Georg Gottfried Gervinus in his *Neue Geschichte der poetischen Literatur der Deutschen/New History of the Poetic Literature of the Germans* (1842) and his call there to incorporate into the national literary culture those aspects that are common to Europe as a whole (such as the reception of Shakespeare).¹⁵ Like the so-called 'Schlegel-Tieck' translation of Shakespeare, like A. W. Schlegel's Sanskrit editions — but exceeding both in the extent of its annotations — Philalethes' *Göttliche Comödie* sees itself as both scholarly and poetic.¹⁶

In that sense, the Theaterplatz in Dresden is a 'lieu de mémoire', not just a memorial to national or dynastic values. It is, more discreetly (the small plaque of Dante) a monument to those aspects of the national character which expressed themselves in the belief that the Germans had an innate empathy with certain figures of foreign national culture and might be seen to understand them as well if not better than their own compatriots. The example of Shakespeare springs to mind. This place of memory might be Saxony's response to another monument

-
- 13 August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Kritische Ausgabe der Vorlesungen*, ed. by Ernst Behler, Frank Jolles et al., 6 vols (Paderborn etc.: Schöningh, 1989-), I, 195 ('sie [die Deutschen] allein verbinden Tiefe und Universalität, und ihre Nationalität besteht darin, sich derselben willig entäußern zu können').
- 14 Ludwig Wachler, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der deutschen Nationalliteratur*, 2 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Hermann, 1818–19), I, 17 ('dankbare Gerechtigkeit gegen Gutes, Wahres, Schönes, von wannen es komme, als Gründung teutscher Eigentümlichkeit zu gelten').
- 15 See Jürgen Fohrmann, *Das Projekt der deutschen Literaturgeschichte. Entstehen und Scheitern einer nationalen Literaturgeschichte zwischen Humanismus und Deutschem Kaiserreich* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1989), 38f.
- 16 'Ein Dichter wie Dante, der voll historischer, theologischer, astronomischer u.s.w. Beziehungen ist, bleibt ohne Noten ungenießbar'. *Dante Alighieri's Göttliche Comödie. Metrisch übertragen und mit kritischen und historischen Erläuterungen versehen von Philalethes, 2. unveränderter Abdruck der berechtigten Ausgabe von 1865–66*, 3 vols in 2 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1871), I, i, vii (preface of 1833).

(about which more later) that makes quite a different cultural statement, Berlin's statue of Frederick the Great. For that statue, like the one to Frederick William III in Cologne, is, as we shall see, flanked by significant ancillary figures, whereas King John stands above, but also represents symbolically, the 'general people' who populate his plinth. It might also be a restrained message to William II, the newly ascended young Kaiser, ridden by the same cultural meddlesomeness as his great-uncle Frederick William IV but who, unlike him, was about to embark on two decades of royally and imperially sponsored vulgarity.

But to make the Theaterplatz a 'place of memory' in the full sense, we must of course not overlook that it has on one side one of the great world-class collections of Italian, Spanish and French art, forming one flank of the square, a reminder that the appellation 'Florence on the Elbe' was open to the widest and most positive of interpretations. Moving however to Semper's opera house, also in its turn a monument to European, not exclusively national, culture, and coming round to its right entrance, we see two over-life-size seated statues. They are Goethe and Schiller, looking across to the king and poet-translator on his pedestal, both classically attired and surmounting symbolic reliefs with the connotations of genius and inspiration. They are here for what they are, but also because as young men both underwent crucial experiences in this city. Given their supernal status in the nineteenth century, one might almost say that they were necessary to round off the iconography and symbolism of this public square as a cultural and political space and entity.

Leaving Dresden, we move to Prussia, the royal house of Hohenzollern and the residence of Sanssouci in Potsdam. There is no need even to begin to justify ranking this among the potential 'lieux de mémoire' of Germany, any more than one would need to produce arguments for Versailles in France, so commanding is the case for inclusion (François and Schulze however think differently). Of course, on the surface, we may have to look hard and possibly in vain for any connection here with a specifically German culture, so much do Frederick the Great's palaces and park bear the stamp of French taste and artistic execution. Yet let us not forget that two Prussian kings, not just Frederick, were active in setting the mark of their very different personalities on this cultural landscape: Frederick the Great of course, but also his

great-great-nephew, Frederick William IV, the so-called 'Romantic on the Throne'. In fact Frederick William was, out of piety for his famous ancestor, responsible for restoring the palace of Sanssouci to its original French rococo state. On the other hand, as crown prince and then as king, he interspersed throughout the park of Sanssouci buildings that stand in marked contrast to Frederick's. They are either Italianate (like the Neue Orangerie) or Romanesque, like the Friedenskirche, where he and his wife are buried, with its very un-Hohenzollern sentiments on the 'Prince of Peace', or they are classical Roman, like the Charlottenhof, to which I now turn.¹⁷

Built for his wife Elisabeth, the Charlottenhof emerged between 1826 and 1851 under the guidance of the architects Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Ludwig Persius and Peter Joseph Lenné (quite a trio in their own right). It seems to have been transplanted from the Roman countryside, with its Doric-columned front, its vestibule, and its park with copies of Greek statues, and its herms. The herms, designed in 1851 by Gustav Bläser, certainly look very classical in form until we look closer and remark that their sculpted heads are in fact modern. For as we enter one of the alleys of the grove to the rear of the house, we encounter Goethe and Schiller, and on the other side Christoph Martin Wieland and Johann Gottfried Herder. At the other end, complementing them, are Dante, Boccaccio, Ariosto and Tasso.

Clearly the king did not wish the park of Sanssouci to echo only to the now departed sounds of French. To that end he had used his famous ancestor's Neues Palais and its rococo theatre, where in Frederick's day nothing in German would have been performed, for the first German production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It was that epoch-making event in 1843, with Ludwig Tieck directing and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy providing the incidental music. Eclectic to a fault, he had also had Sophocles' *Antigone* and Jean Racine's *Athalie* performed, with the same producer and composer. But nothing concrete remains to commemorate that event in German musical and theatrical history except the music itself.

But what of the herms, but a short walk distant from the Neues Palais? Was the king thinking of the garden at Belriguardo in Goethe's

17 On the Charlottenhof, see Florian Müller-Klug, 'Schloss und Park Charlottenhof — Ein Arkadien', *Clio Berlin* (December 2, 2014), <https://clioberlin.de/blog-architektur/76-schloss-und-park-charlottenhof-ein-arkadien.html>



Fig. 20 Herms of poets at Charlottenhof, Potsdam. Photo by author, CC BY 4.0.

Torquato Tasso, with the herms there of Virgil and Ariosto? Whatever, these figures ensure that the park of Sanssouci has its own corner that makes a statement about the national literary canon.

At a time (1851) when public monuments to Germany's heroes of culture were springing up, to Albrecht Dürer in Nuremberg (1829), to Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz (1834), to Schiller in Stuttgart (1839), to Ludwig van Beethoven in Bonn (1846), the king sets up his own idea of who is significant in German — and Italian — letters. The Italians need not surprise us: Frederick William's additions to the park of Sanssouci are themselves a blend of the German and the Italianate. But the Romantic on the Throne, who shared his love of Dante with his royal cousin and brother-in-law in Dresden and who followed closely the progress of Philaethes' translation,¹⁸ would know that it was the German Romantics who had done so much for the mythology of the great 'archpoets', Dante especially. But Wieland and Goethe, too, form part of the statuary of the Charlottenhof, the one (Wieland) also associated with the Ariostian epic in German guise, the other (Goethe) with the

18 Cf. Hubert Ermisch, 'König Johann und König Friedrich Wilhelm IV.', *Neues Archiv f. Sächsische Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 32 (1921), 89–135 (95).

troubled life of Tasso. (And both had revived the Boccaccian novella in their respective collections.) The Italians were there too in Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung/On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* (where Schiller even tried his hand at translating a passage of Ariosto) and in Herder's grand schemes of western poetry and its canon. In a sense, by inviting the frail and elderly Ludwig Tieck to be a kind of court poet in Potsdam, Frederick William was honouring not only the Shakespearean scholar but also the former member of his royal cousin Philaethes' 'Accademia Dantesca'.

The king's taste in German literature still accorded with the general classical ranking granted to Goethe and Schiller, whose status was beyond doubt, but also to Wieland and Herder. True, a liberal historian (and liberal politician) like Georg Gottfried Gervinus, might withhold some recognition from Weimar Classicism and its court culture,¹⁹ for him a triumph in poetic terms only, but not the galvanizing force of a cultural nation. Seen thus, all four German poets in the Charlottenhof garden — Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Wieland — could be seen to represent a Weimar under princely patronage. It is a conservative canon: there is no Gothold Ephraim Lessing, but Berlin would make up that deficiency (as the statue of Lessing in Brunswick already had). But German poets had received no recognition from Frederick the Great, and so here, in this very Frederician 'lieu de mémoire', they are receiving some belated remembrance.

Lessing, as said, had not been forgotten, but his initial commemoration in Prussia was to be almost incidental, in a much more public space than Sanssouci: on Unter den Linden, the most important thoroughfare in Berlin, but as a supporting figure on one of its most prominent features, the statue of Frederick the Great by Christian Daniel Rauch, unveiled on March 31, 1851, the same year as the herms of Sanssouci (see Fig. 21). (Lessing did not receive his own memorial in Berlin until 1890, the one still standing in the Tiergarten.)

Frederick, it hardly need be said, is an 'Erinnerungsort' in his own right.²⁰ The statue has a storied past. Suffice it to say that plans for such a commemoration went back as far as the last years of the great king's

19 G. G. Gervinus, *Neuere Geschichte der poetischen National-Literatur der Deutschen. Vierter Theil* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1843), 5f.

20 Frank-Lothar Kroll, 'Friedrich der Große', in *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, III, 620–35.



Fig. 21 Equestrian statue of Frederick the Great by Christian Daniel Rauch (1851), Unter den Linden, Berlin. Photo by author, CC BY 4.0.

reign.²¹ Some, if executed, would have involved huge mausolea or Trajan-style columns. Looking at Rauch's statue today, we find it hard to visualize it as a part of the huge 'lieu de mémoire' that its precinct once was and was to become, extending from the royal palace as far as the Tiergarten park. Thus, in 1918, at the end of the Hohenzollerns' reign, it would have presented the beholder with a whole forest of statuary, from Andreas Schlüter's equestrian Great Elector in front of the palace, Alexander Calandrelli's equestrian statue of Frederick William IV in front of the National Gallery, Reinhold Begas's enormous monument to Kaiser William I on the other side, various allegorical nudities on the Schlossbrücke, Prussian generals flanking Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Neue Wache, then Christian Daniel Rauch's Frederick himself, with Begas's Bismarck in front of the Reichstag building, then Kaiser William II's supreme folly and triumphal avenue, the Siegesallee in the Tiergarten, with its three dozen Hohenzollern rulers in marble, a riot of dynastic self-display and ostentation. What is left? In the mean time, the palace

21 On the history of the monuments to Frederick the Great see Friedrich Mielke and Jutta von Simson, *Das Berliner Denkmal für Friedrich II., den Großen* (Frankfurt, Berlin, Vienna: Propyläen, 1975).

has been blown up (the Humboldt Forum is now emerging in its place), the Great Elector is in Charlottenburg, William I has gone (only the lions from his monument survive, but elsewhere). Frederick William IV is still there, but the generals languish in the Prinzessinnengarten, Bismarck is on the Grosser Stern, and the Siegesallee, or what is left of it, is in a private museum in Spandau.²² Unlike Paris, where in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries statues came and went,²³ Berlin ultimately had World War Two and its aftermath to thank for the radical reordering of its monuments. (Frederick was even banished to a corner of Sanssouci between 1950 and 1980.) That leaves Frederick isolated in a way that he never was for a good part of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. His nearest neighbours now are the brothers Humboldt, whose statues sit in front of the former palace of the king's brother Prince Heinrich, today the Humboldt University. These are all good reasons for not passing him by and for looking very hard at the rider, the horse and what is under the tail.

The statue is the one chosen by Thomas Nipperdey to exemplify his category of 'national monarchical or dynastic monuments'.²⁴ In that sense it is very different from Frederick William IV's private neoclassical villa in Sanssouci. But if one looks at all aspects of the statue it emerges as a hybrid. The king, though over-life-size, does not completely dominate the area, for he is flanked on the plinth by numerous other figures, also larger than life, who have been brought into the king's ambit. Some words of explanation are needed.

For the foundation stone to be laid on June 1, 1840, the centenary of Frederick the Great's accession to the throne, numerous elements had to be in place. There had to be agreement on the form and costume of the statue — and royal assent to it. It was not to be antique; it was to reflect not just Frederick's military achievements but all aspects — administrative and cultural — of his reign. These were to be represented by supplementary figures on the plinth. It was also to be the apotheosis

22 On this see Oliver Moody, 'Germany Offers Statue Topplers a Lesson in How to Master the Past', *The Times* (June 26, 2020), <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/germany-offers-statue-topplers-a-lesson-in-how-to-master-the-past-9j6brshls> and generally Richard J. Evans, 'The History Wars', *New Statesman* (June 19, 2020), <https://www.newstatesman.com/international/2020/06/history-wars>

23 June Hargrove, 'Les statues de Paris', in Nora, *Les Lieux*, La Nation II, 245–83.

24 Nipperdey, 'Nationalidee', 534–40.

of an enlightened reign: Alexander von Humboldt's speech to the Prussian Academy of Sciences (founded by the king in 1740) stressed the 'wise man on the throne' who had reconciled the conflicting needs of rule and freedom.²⁵ The works of Frederick the Great (all in French) were also issued between 1846 and 1857 by a distinguished committee of the Prussian Academy,²⁶ a further token of the king's contribution to eighteenth-century European culture. A happy coincidence saw C. F. Köppen's *Friedrich der Große und seine Widersacher. Eine Jubelschrift/ Frederick the Great and his Adversaries. A Festive Volume* appear in 1840, with its emphasis on the king's enlightened values. Eduard Duller's *Die Geschichte des deutschen Volkes/ The History of the German People* in the same year, with illustrations by Ludwig Richter²⁷ and above all Franz Kugler's *Geschichte Friedrichs des Großen/ History of Frederick the Great*, illustrated by the young Adolph Menzel (also 1840 and successively reprinted) were able to present Frederick as a figure of national identification.²⁸ That these values were to be subject to severe constraints during the years 1848–49 and challenged by the sentiments uttered at the unveiling in 1851, does not affect the figures on the plinth, which are our main concern here.

If the period roughly 1840 to 1870 sees, as one author has put it, 'literary history in bronze and stone'²⁹ through the erection of monuments to the emerging nation's greatest poets, do those incorporated on royal statues in Dresden, Berlin or, as we shall see, Cologne, differ in status from more general forms of poetic memorialization? Would they not seem to be a continuation of earlier patterns, like the poetic 'Grabmal' (Gellert's in Leipzig is the best-known example), the bust in a discreet corner of a royal park, the plaque, the shrine-like grave (such as Klopstock's in Ottensen)? Whereas the free-standing civic statue is an unmistakable and

25 Richard Nürnberger, 'Rauch's Friedrich-Denkmal historisch-politisch gesehen', *Jahrbuch Preußischer Kulturbesitz*, 8 (1979), 115–24 (120–21).

26 *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, 30 vols (Berlin: Decker, 1846–47).

27 Nürnberger, 'Rauch's Friedrich-Denkmal', 117.

28 Dorothea Entrup, *Adolph Menzels Illustrationen zu Franz Kuglers 'Geschichte Friedrichs des Grossen'. Ein Beitrag zur stilistischen und historischen Bewertung der Kunst des jungen Menzel* (Weimar: VDG, 1990), 272.

29 Rolf Selbmann, *Dichtendenkmäler in Deutschland. Literaturgeschichte in Erz und Stein* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1988). See also Günter Hess, 'Panorama und Denkmal. Erinnerung als Denkform zwischen Vormärz und Grunderzeit, in *Literatur in der sozialen Bewegung. Aufsätze und Forschungsberichte zum 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Alberto Martino (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1977), 130–206, esp. 150–53.

visual tribute to national and local pride (Schiller in Stuttgart, Goethe in Frankfurt, Jean Paul in Bayreuth), the poetic memorialization on a royal statue is always secondary and ancillary. Only informed beholders will be aware of the significance of Dante on King John of Saxony's plinth, whereas Goethe and Schiller stand free in their own right. Even King Ludwig's Walhalla (inaugurated in 1842) is first and foremost a public architectural monument with a symbolic setting between East and West. The interior contains a (later) full-size seated figure of the king himself, whereas the 'worthies', who include a number of poets, are reduced in size under the huge vault and its allegorical representations.³⁰

It was only in the first years of the post-1815 Restoration that monuments to non-royal personages were permitted in the German lands. Significantly, the first was to a military hero, Blücher (1818) and then not in Prussia.³¹ The first in Prussia was the Luther statue in Wittenberg (1821), but then again both person and place transcended any mere local significance and took on the lineaments of a national monument.³² Frederick William III's opposition to a Beethoven statue in Bonn, completed under his son Frederick William IV, is well documented.³³ It is noticeable that the first statues to figures in German national culture are in Free Imperial Cities or their equivalent (Dürer in Nuremberg, Gutenberg in Mainz, Goethe in Frankfurt) or in minor residences (Lessing in Brunswick, Schiller in Stuttgart, Johann Peter Hebel in Karlsruhe).³⁴ In Prussia, by contrast, statues to Immanuel Kant in Königsberg, to Lessing, Goethe and Schiller in Berlin, came relatively later, and in the case of Berlin never in competition with the main royal and dynastic 'lieu de mémoire'. The inclusion of such figures (Lessing,

30 The selection of poets' busts, done mainly some time before the completion of the Walhalla, is eclectic but reflects literary taste around 1815: Goethe and Schiller, Wieland and Klopstock, Herder and Johannes von Müller, Bürger and Heinse (there is no Lessing). It is almost Madame de Staël's pantheon. Cf. Nipperdey, 'Nationalidee', 556–8 ('betont monarchisches Denkmal').

31 *Ibid.*, 557.

32 *Ibid.*

33 See Horst Hallensleben, 'Das Bonner Beethoven-Denkmal als frühes bürgerliches Standbild'; Susan Schaal, 'Das Beethoven-Denkmal von Ernst Julius Hähnel in Bonn', in *Monument für Beethoven. Zur Geschichte des Beethoven-Denkmal (1845) und der frühen Beethoven-Rezeption in Bonn*, ed. by Ingrid Bodsch, Katalog zur Ausstellung des Stadtmuseums Bonn und des Beethoven-Hauses (Bonn: Stadtmuseum, 1995), 28–37, 39–133.

34 Hess, 'Panorama und Denkmal', 152.

Kant) as ancillaries or incidentals on Rauch's statue of Frederick the Great is therefore of some significance. From the point of view of art history, it is somewhat of a hybrid, while from a purely cultural viewpoint it is an attempt to summarize in bronze a whole epoch, not its supreme hero alone.

We need to bear in mind that eleven years passed between the laying of the foundation stone of Frederick's statue in 1840 and its unveiling in 1851. The liberal hopes that had been expressed in 1840 had been subjected to the ultimate test of 1848, and the aspirations once placed in Frederick William IV as a liberal and cultured monarch had been severely tried. The speeches at the unveiling were thus not free of references to the recent 'fateful year' and what it had boded and to the need to reflect on the Prussian virtues for which Frederick had stood: order, discipline, hard work, the military qualities that had accompanied his victories.³⁵ Although the emphasis in 1851 was not entirely or exclusively on his military prowess, it nevertheless set the tone and helped to initiate more strident identifications with Frederick the Great later in the century.

But we have not examined the statue itself. It shows the king in old age in the historical costume of the eighteenth century, with tricorne and marshal's baton,³⁶ his achievements behind him, not as he may have placed himself at the head of his army as it marched eastwards along the Frankfurter Strasse towards Küstrin, Kunersdorf or Prague. Below, flanking the plinth, are his generals, one architect of his victories on each corner, accompanied by allegorical representations of fame, peace and the like. At the rear (see Fig. 22), which interests us, are the equestrian statues of the generals Seydlitz and Zieten. Immediately below the tail of Frederick's horse are two allegorical figures representing the arts and sciences, between them an image of fame, below them peace and plenty (the branch and the cornucopia). Grouped around the base of the rear plinth, between the generals, are Ernst Wilhelm von Schlabrendorff, the defender of Silesia, Carl Wilhelm Finck von Finckenstein, Frederick's

35 Nürnberg, 'Rauch's Friedrich-Denkmal', 121f.

36 Mielke and Simson, *Das Berliner*, 17; Alfred Kuhn, *Die neuere Plastik von Achtzehnhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Delphin, 1922), 30; Walter von Zur Westen, *Zur Enthüllung des Rauchschen Friedrichsdenkmals in Berlin. Fest- und Erinnerungsblätter aus dem Anlaß der 75. Wiederkehr des Enthüllungstages* (Berlin, n.p. 1926), 10.

cabinet minister, Johann Heinrich von Carmer, the jurist and one of the framers of the 'Landrecht', Carl Heinrich Graun, Frederick's court composer, then Lessing and Kant. Beneath these, there is a plaque listing names that include Samuel von Cocceji, Georg Wenzeslas von Knobelsdorff, Christian Wolff, Karl Wilhelm Ramler, Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim, Christian Garve, Ewald von Kleist, Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, Pierre Louis Maupertuis, Antoine Pesne, Charles-Étienne Jordan and Johann Joachim Winckelmann.



Fig. 22 Equestrian statue of Frederick the Great, detail of plinth. Photo by author.
CC BY 4.0.

A strategy similar to that on the later statue of King John of Saxony is being observed; the rear of the plinth is clearly reserved for non-military deeds or achievements. We are expected to read along the pedestal from front to rear in a symbolic order. As we saw on the Dresden statue, we read (German terminology) from 'Wehrstand' to 'Nährstand' to 'Lehrstand', defence, agriculture, learning, and we end our survey at the rear. Frederick rarely had anything good to say about poets or 'Scribenten' in general, especially those writing in German. But the sculptor, acting according to later royal wishes, has placed administration (Jordan), law (Cocceji), music (Graun), poetry and thought in equality of position, with Lessing and Kant as embodied representatives. I find

it therefore surprising to read in an otherwise very informed study of nineteenth-century monuments to poets and thinkers (1988) the view expressed that Kant's position 'under the horse's tail' represented the reaction of 1851, a historical panorama in which the liberal aspirations of the educated middle classes were trampled underfoot.³⁷ I think the observable facts speak for themselves, remarkable enough as they are. For the decision to include Kant and Lessing was part of a general design approved in the 1830s by the king and the crown prince.³⁸

If these figures or names are intended to represent the Enlightenment for which Frederick the Great also stood, they are well chosen. Graun illustrates the king's love of music and deserves his prominence for that reason, a kind of 'Flötenkonzert' in bronze. Kant's admiration of Frederick is well known and documented (and regretted by some), although the king never received him or even set eyes upon him, which is another matter. But Lessing is quite a different proposition: a non-Prussian, but associated with Berlin nevertheless, no friend of Frederick's however. Indeed, liberal commentators on Lessing in the 1840s and 1850s make the point that Frederick was actually ill-disposed towards Lessing.

Yet the royal committee in the 1830s had caught the spirit of things. For Lessing emerges in the literary historiography of the nineteenth century, from the 1820s onwards, as the great pioneer and liberator, a second Luther, indeed a figure more positively evaluated than Goethe and Schiller.³⁹ And in 1851 we are chronologically not far from the re-writing of German national literary history from roughly 1860 on, with say Hermann Hettner, that equates Lessing's role in the realm of the mind with that of Frederick in the sphere of war and politics. It prepares the way for the reinterpretation of history in the biography by Erich Schmidt (1884–92) in which Lessing becomes a loyal Prussian and Wilhelminian and where Bismarckian ideologies can be satisfied. And so the 'sacra conversazione' on the rear of the statue, between

37 Selbmann, *Dichterdenkmäler*, 60.

38 Christian Eggers, *Christian Daniel Rauch*, 5 vols (Berlin: Duncker, 1873–91), IV, 71–103.

39 See Eva D. Becker, 'Klassiker in der deutschen Literaturgeschichtsschreibung zwischen 1780 und 1860' (1968), in *Literarisches Leben. Umschreibungen der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft 45 (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 1994), 7–26 (21–23).

Lessing and Kant (which cannot be real) is symbolic of a coalescence of intellectual forces as the nineteenth century perceived them. Kant seems to be making a point to Lessing, who listens intently. But the statue is not dealing in philosophical nuances: Kant is addressing Lessing, one assumes, as the author of *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*/*The Education of the Human Race*, less as the author of *Emilia Galotti* or *Nathan der Weise*.

What of the 'supplementary list' appended below the 'big six'? Here we encounter some of the names mentioned and illustrated in Kugler's and Menzel's popularizing account of 1840, men who surrounded Frederick with taste and wit and learning: Knobelsdorff, the architect of Sanssouci, Pesne, the court painter, Maupertuis, mathematician and first president of the Prussian Academy of Sciences, Jordan, Frederick's secretary and confidant (this would have pleased Berlin's Huguenot community, whose church on the Gendarmenmarkt Frederick built). Indeed two of Menzel's best-known images, of the circle at Sanssouci, and of Pesne decorating the interior at Rheinsberg, are associated with this list.⁴⁰ Ewald von Kleist's is another name in that work, as far as I can see the only German writer whom Kugler and Menzel mention or illustrate, not for his poetry, but for his ultimate death at the battle of Kunersdorf. Christian Wolff, the rationalist philosopher banned by Frederick's father but called back by the son, needs no introduction, except that Kant, the author of the First Critique might find his presence dubious, and Lessing also might have his doubts. Christian Garve, the practical moralist, is a Silesian, which commends him to Frederick the annexer of that province, but he is also the translator of Cicero's *De officiis* for the king. The poets Gleim and Ramler both sang of Frederick's deeds, indeed Ramler is a kind of unofficial German court poet, while of course never actually being received at Frederick's court. Both Ramler and Gleim still hold their own in histories of literature around 1850, so that their inclusion here is not anachronistic or a retrospective canonization merely for their association with Frederick. Gellert is still remembered in 1850 for his fables, but also for his legendary meeting with Frederick that had entered into the royal folklore. Like Lessing, he is also a Saxon, here

40 See generally Jost Hermand, *Adolph Menzel das Flötenkonzert in Sanssouci. Ein realistisch geträumtes Preußenbild* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1985).

enrolled among the honorary Prussians. Winckelmann was from Stendal and thus Frederick's subject, but he turned his face against anything Prussian⁴¹ and never came back to his homeland. He is doubtless here for the sake of completeness, not of historical accuracy, for it was the court in Dresden, not in Berlin, that enabled him on his way to Rome. His is the only 'big name' among these *poetae minores* on the plaque, and one might question the commodiousness and legitimacy of this account of Frederician culture which does not stop at cultural annexation.

The omissions are also patent. Where is Anna Louisa Karsch, who so praised Frederick? But women, it seems, must not feature in this account of a misogynist king. (She had also slipped in general esteem.) Where is Moses Mendelssohn, the Berliner by choice and famed well beyond its confines? But Jews, especially ones whom Frederick refused to receive, must not form part of this narrative either. Where is Voltaire, so memorably portrayed by Menzel in conversation with the king at Sanssouci? But Voltaire, unlike Frederick's loyal Frenchmen, had become slippery and perfidious. Not least, his enlightened scepticism could be associated with the French Revolution and thus with recent events in Berlin, of unhappy memory. Generally, it could be said that Frederick William IV, through his capricious and unpredictable behaviour in 1848, had forfeited the legacy of enlightened liberalism that people were still willing to associate with Frederick in 1840. Nevertheless, the canon of German writers, conceived largely in the 1830s and visible only to diligent beholders willing to devote a thorough scrutiny to the plinth, was one which had not lost its validity in the debates concerning the king's physical representation. It could be said that the martial monument and the notion of a national or patriotic literature maintained a balance that would be sustained for a good part of the nineteenth century.⁴²

The less well-known equestrian figure of Frederick William III on the Heumarkt in Cologne, sends a slightly different message. The work of Gustav Bläser and others, with its foundation stone laid in 1865 and unveiled in 1878, a generation after Rauch, it has elements of the Berlin statue, the monarch represented by horse and rider but with mantle and sceptre, and supplemented by supporting figures on the plinth. It might

41 His inclusion was at the insistence of Baron Bunsen in 1845. Eggers, *Christian Daniel Rauch*, IV, 118f.

42 Hess, 'Panorama und Denkmal', 150–52.



Fig. 23 Equestrian statue of Frederick William III, Cologne. Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Reiterstandbild_Friedrich_Wilhelm_III_K%C3%B6ln_Heumarkt.jpg, CC BY-SA 4.0.

appear at first glance to symbolize the superimposition of Prussian (and Protestant) rule on a less than willing Rhineland in 1815 under the aegis of Frederick William III, and some features seem to bear this out. Yet it was erected as a result of a local initiative, not through a directive from Berlin.⁴³ The emphasis was to be on the Wars of Liberation and

⁴³ See Michael Puls, 'Zur Genese des Reiterdenkmals für Friedrich Wilhelm III. in Köln bis 1878. Ein Thema in plastischen Variationen zwischen Rauch und Begas', in *Köln: Das Reiterdenkmal für König Friedrich Wilhelm III. auf dem Heumarkt*, ed. by Rolf Beines, Walter Geis and Ulrich Krings (Cologne: Bachem, 2004), 74–199 (76).

the Restoration of 1815,⁴⁴ years which had also seen the foundation of the University of Bonn (under Frederick William's son, Bonn also received its Beethoven monument). The flanking figures are mainly generals or administrators (Blücher, Gerhard von Scharnhorst, Freiherr vom Stein, Prince Hardenberg, for example), with the brothers Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt, Ernst Moritz Arndt and Barthold Georg Niebuhr representing science and culture. Some (Alexander von Humboldt, Niebuhr, Arndt) have Rhineland connections, but all are Protestants. It is on the relief panels placed behind the main supporting figures that we remark the useful arts, industries and trades of the Rhineland provinces. Individual figures are picked out in friezes representing these areas. Here at least there are some Catholics, such as the brothers Sulpiz and Melchior Boisserée or Ferdinand Franz Wallraf (under 'Baukunst') or even Beethoven himself. But there are also poets and writers. What narrative do they provide about the poetic canon in 1865 or 1878? One, August Wilhelm Schlegel, might once have been part of such a canon, but no more;⁴⁵ in fact, after Heinrich Heine's attack of 1835 and Rudolf Haym's disparagement of 1871 he was at the nadir of his esteem. And so he is here as a founding professor at the University of Bonn, under 'Wissenschaften' and next to the Berlin luminaries Schleiermacher or Hegel, which might have irked him. There was some amnesia at work in the choice of the main supporting figures, but this was not the place for nuances: Wilhelm von Humboldt had been dismissed by the king; Alexander, his brother, was more oriented to France than to Berlin; at least Arndt, whom the king had suspended from office, maintained his reputation as a poet and patriot throughout the century and was part of its canon. Seven minute figures representing 'Freiheitskriege' might seem to be out of touch with the times in 1878.⁴⁶ But one, Fichte, was never absent from the general consciousness, if only for his *Reden an die deutsche Nation / Addresses to the German Nation* of 1808. Three other figures, all poets, had outlived any exclusive association with the Wars of Liberation: Max von Schenkendorf's works were reprinted in 1871, Theodor Körner's frequently during the nineteenth century (twice during the 1870s), while Friedrich Rückert, who had died as recently

44 Ibid., 89f.

45 Becker, 'Klassiker', 24.

46 Puls, 'Zur Genese', 150.

as 1866, was now known better for his oriental poetry. As in Berlin, it is only the enterprising beholder, climbing on to the plinth, who can garner this information on the history of literature .

The Rauch statue in Berlin had an unfortunate sequel in the 'Siegesallee' that Kaiser William II created as a triumphal account of the house of Hohenzollern.⁴⁷ If Rauch's figures still contained some reverence for the notion of a Prussian enlightenment tinged with French ideas, the Siegesallee was an unadorned display of monarchical principles and the divine right of kings. The statues of rulers, which are unmemorable, need not concern us here, but the supporting figures may do. For each ruler is flanked by the bust (at suitable distance) of two prominent representatives of his respective reign. There is no place for poets in this scheme of things, but there are some notable redistributions. Schwerin, Frederick's field marshal, stays with his king but is joined — astonishingly — by the Thuringian Johann Sebastian Bach, doubtless on account of his one visit to Sanssouci and his Musical Offering. But Bach, near the end of his life when he came to Sanssouci, is a rather anachronistic choice. Frederick William II is joined, as is appropriate, by Johann Heinrich von Carmer, who saw the Allgemeines Landrecht to its completion. But he is made to share the company of Kant. The inclusion of Kant is truly bizarre, for the edicts of Frederick William's minister Johann Christoph von Wöllner had almost put an end to Kant's publishing and teaching career and represented a reaction against everything that Kant had stood for. It did not worry William II, and this late Wilhelmsian statuary has in the fullest and most literal sense stood under the horse's tail of history, in a place of dishonour and now of oblivion.

47 See Uta Lehnert, *Der Kaiser und die Siegesallee. Réclame Royale* (Berlin: Reimer, 1998).