

Prestel Museum Guides

The Sculpture Collection in the Bode Museum

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Introduction

The History of the Collection

In the autumn of 2006, more than half a century after the Second World War compelled its closure, the Berlin Museums' Sculpture Collection could once again be seen in its entirety. Its home, which opened in 1904 as the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, has borne the name of its first director, Wilhelm von Bode, since 1957. The partition of Germany after the Second World War was mirrored in the history of the Bode Museum: until German reunification, its collection was distributed between two different locations in East and West Berlin. Artworks that remained on the Museum Island during the Second World War, and found their way to the Soviet Union after the war, were returned to East Berlin in 1958 and held there. Works that had been removed to mines at Graslleben and Kaiseroda for safe keeping were exhibited on a provisional basis, for more than thirty years, in the museum complex at Dahlem, built between 1913 and 1916 by Bruno Paul as the Asiatic Museum. Many of the works deposited during the war in the tower of the Friedrichshain anti-aircraft bunker were lost, after the bunker had been handed over to the Red Army, in the two catastrophic fires of May 1945, the circumstances of which remain mysterious; others were looted; still others survive as mere fragments. Around 1,400 works of art have been missing since the war. A catalogue of lost artworks published to mark the Bode Museum's re-opening documents the items in question.

The nucleus of the Sculpture Collection was the *Kunstkammer*, or Chamber of Art, of Brandenburg and Prussia, which was housed in the Berlin City Palace and whose origins go back to the early seventeenth century. Leonhard Kern's ivory *Adam and Eve* (1646; see no. 80) was acquired in the days of Friedrich Wilhelm of Brandenburg, the Great Elector. The facial features suggest it was made in connection with Friedrich Wilhelm's marriage to Princess Louise Henriette of Orange. The absolutist ruler was mythologized in an iron equestrian statue by Gottfried Leygebe, the Elector's Master of the Mint, who portrayed him as St. George defeating a three-headed dragon (no. 79). Among the works from the *Kunstkammer* is also François Duquesnoy's figure of *Cupid Carving His Bow*, now a mere fragment, which is recorded as early as 1689 (no. 220).

The opening of the Altes Museum (Old Museum) in 1830 marked a fundamental shift in the understanding of works of art and their function. The ownership of art was no longer a privilege of absolutist rulers. Now, art was accessible to any educated citizen. The humanist ideals of the middle class now set the tone, and the Museum Island was seen as a free space for art and scholarship. It was in that spirit that a memorandum of 1829 declared that art should "first delight, then instruct". In the newly opened Altes Museum, sculpture of antiquity and Renaissance paintings

predominated. The recently established collection of Renaissance sculpture was then no more than a supplement to the antiquities collection. The holdings were few, consisting principally of glazed terracottas by the Florentine Della Robbia family, though they also included Francesco da Sangallo's relief of the *Madonna and the Reading Child* (no. 206), which had been purchased from the Bartholdy collection in Rome in 1828. The sculptor Friedrich Tieck, then the director of the sculpture department, published the works in a small catalogue in 1835, which can be considered the Sculpture Collection's first publication.

The newly founded collection grew notably under Gustav Friedrich Waagen, the first director of the Gemäldegalerie (Picture Gallery), who acquired numerous sculptures in Italy. In 1841/42 he succeeded in buying the Pajaro collection in Venice. His account of the works that had now come to Berlin described the Berlin collection as the largest in the area of Paduan-Venetian sculpture. He had purchased "eighty sculptures, most of them large-scale, in marble, Istrian limestone, terracotta, etc." which came "from the Grimani, Tiepolo, Nani palaces, the recently demolished churches on Murano and Torcello, the dilapidated Scuola San Giovanni in Venice, and so forth". Among the most significant works in this acquisition are Jacopo Sansovino's terracotta *Sacra Conversazione* (no. 196) and Alessandro Vittoria's bust, *Portrait of Ottavio Grimani*



Fig. 1
**Tullio Lombardo, Arms Bearer
From the Tomb of Doge
Vendramin, photographed
before the Second World War**

(no. 200). Only fragments now remain of Tullio Lombardo's two arms bearers from the tomb of Venetian Doge Andrea Vendramin (fig. 1).

Waagen was able to make important acquisitions in Florence, too. Among the Quattrocento works purchased there, Desiderio da Settignano's bust of a young lady, known as Marietta Strozzi (no. 164), one of the loveliest sculpted portraits of the Renaissance, and the terracotta model for Benedetto da Maiano's *Vision of Pope Innocent III* (no. 179), are prime examples. Moschino's large-format marble relief of *The Fall of Phaeton* (no. 209) and Antonio Begarelli's terracotta altar Group (no. 204) were also bought by Waagen.

It was not only from Italy that important sculptures entered the Berlin collection under Waagen. In 1850, the Ravensburg *Virgin of Mercy* (no. 26) was acquired, though initially it went to the *Kunstammer*, since that was where sculpture from north of the Alps was held. In the same year, or perhaps already in 1848, further important additions were made to the Berlin collection in the form of Artus Quellinus's *Samson and Delilah* (no. 117) and the fifteen busts from the choir-stalls in the Fugger Chapel in Augsburg (no. 59). In 1858, the busts of Nuremberg patricians Willibald and Anna Imhoff by Gregor van der Schardt (no. 74) were acquired from the Minutoli collection. A major French sculpture of the eighteenth century, Jean-Baptiste Pigalle's *Mercury* (no. 138), came to the *Altes Museum* from the royal collections. Louis XV had made a gift to Frederick the Great of this figure and its companion piece, the *Venus*, which was also moved to the Museum Island when the Kaiser Friedrich Museum was opened. Both sculptures originally stood in the park of Sanssouci by the water basin at the foot of the palace terrace.

From 1872, Wilhelm von Bode (fig. 2), then an assistant in the

Gemäldegalerie, was in charge of the Sculpture Collection; from 1885 he was its director; from 1890 he also ran the Picture Gallery; and in 1905 he was finally made director general.



Fig. 2
Wilhelm von Bode (1845–1929)

It was he who developed the sculptural holdings into a world-class collection. When he first began working for the Berlin Museums, his chief responsibility was to enlarge the collection of Renaissance casts in the Neues Museum (New Museum). However, the steady expansion of this collection, established in 1841 and on display on the first floor of the Neues Museum from 1859, had, in Bode's words, led to "a paralysis and, in the end, virtually a freeze of any activity, that is to say, any enrichment [of the Sculpture Collection] by new acquisitions". Within a few years of taking up his position, Bode was able to demonstrate that it was still quite possible to buy originals of artistic importance at affordable prices. In 1873 he returned from his first business trip to Italy with Pietro Bracci's bust of Pope Benedict XIV (no. 229), among other pieces. In 1877 in Florence he succeeded in making major purchases from the Palazzo Strozzi. In the *Festschrift* that appeared in 1880 to mark the fiftieth anniversary

of the royal museums, Bode outlined his concept of how the collection should be enlarged. The chief objective should be to systematically expand the holdings of large-format Italian sculptures, while at the same time developing a collection of transalpine sculpture. Both areas should also include small-format works and reliefs. The aim was to present the evolution of all of Western sculpture up to the early nineteenth century.

One cornerstone for the German sculpture collection was Hans Leinberger's bronze Madonna (no. 51), acquired in 1882. A short time later it was followed by Tilman Riemenschneider's *Four Evangelists* from the Münnerstadt retable (no. 39), which Bode managed to buy in 1887. In the same year his acquisition of Presbyter Martinus's Madonna of 1199 (no. 142) brought a major work of medieval Italian sculpture to the Museum Island. Bode had a particular interest in acquiring Renaissance portraits, which were the focus of considerable international attention at the time. In purchasing the terracotta model for Benedetto da Maiano's marble bust of Filippo Strozzi, now in the Louvre, Bode achieved one of the most dazzling enrichments of the Berlin collection (no. 175). In 1883, effectively as a showcase for his acquisition strategy up to that date, Bode marked the silver wedding of the crown prince and princess with an exhibition entitled *Italian Portrait Sculptures of the XV Century in the Royal Museums in Berlin*.

After the *Kunstkammer* was dissolved in 1875, an additional number of works designated "independent sculpture" entered the Renaissance department of the Royal museums, while the "purely applied-art part" went to the new *Kunstgewerbemuseum* (Museum of Deco-

rative Arts). However, numerous small-format works from the *Kunstkammer*, especially the small pieces from the baroque era that were not highly valued at that time, were sold off at auction in Berlin in the 1880s. Not until 1885 was the Sculpture Collection made an independent department of sculptures from the Christian era; it lasted in that form until 1939.

Bode, who had studied law and was largely self-taught in art history, saw himself as the spiritual pupil of Jacob Burckhardt, whose *Cicerone* he revised and edited for later editions. These labours gave him a new perspective on art, especially that of the Italian Renaissance, so that he saw the individual work of art not in isolation but in its cultural and artistic context. In this spirit, within a few years of starting work for the Berlin Museums he was already planning a dedicated Renaissance museum for the growing collections of paintings and sculptures.

In a memorandum of 1883, published on the occasion of an exhibition of old master paintings from Berlin private collections, Crown Princess Victoria expressed her own ideas on the expansion of the royal museums and outlined her conception of how exhibits "can be most beautifully put on show". "Hitherto," she observed, "the approach taken to the display of art collections in museums seems always to have been guided by scholarly principles. A precise classification, and a separation of the different visual arts, has always been maintained. [...] Often one regrets that works of art that one formerly knew in palaces and churches are now dully stood somewhere in galleries or arranged in rows along the wall, when in fact they should be the splendid adornment of a fine



Fig. 3 **The Basilica in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum**

room, and impress us by their beauty [...].” She went on: “A grey room of stucco or stone, filled with ugly pedestals and grey statues, is not a pleasing sight for anyone. [...] Could one not create a splendid, harmonious totality if statues and paintings, busts and reliefs were placed together in attractive rooms where there were also tasteful display cases showing medallions, cameos etc.?”

Crown Princess Victoria had drawn up the memorandum together with a circle of friends, and Bode probably played an instrumental part in the formulation of this document, which was nothing short of programmatic. And it was ultimately Bode who put these pioneering ideas into practice. In 1897 construction work began, at the northern tip of the Museum Island, on the Renaissance museum, designed by Eberhard von Ihne, which was to bear the name of the spouse of the Empress Victoria, who had been a widow since 1889.

The great innovation in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, which opened in October 1904, was that it added decorative carvings and furniture to the existing collection. The intention was to place the paintings



Fig. 4 **The Bronze Room in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum**

and sculptures of the Italian Renaissance in an effective contemporary setting. At the same time, “the monumental impression of the rooms was not only preserved, it was enhanced” (Bode). In the years prior to the opening, historic architectural features and fittings had been deliberately targeted for acquisition in Italy, such as portals, fireplaces, ceilings, coats of arms and furniture. The centre of the building is the space known as the Basilica, which rises two storeys high, built in reminiscence of the High Renaissance Florentine church of San Salvatore al Monte. The altarpieces of the Della Robbia workshop, Begarelli’s altar group, and large-format altar paintings were displayed in the niches, while in the middle were shown the choir-stalls from the Certosa di Pavia (see fig. 3). The Bronze Room, on the upper floor overlooking the Spree (fig. 4), boasted a magnificent Venetian coffered wood ceiling, a Venetian fireplace from the Sansovino workshop, and portals from Northern Italy, and would surely have reminded visitors of a great hall in a palazzo on the Grand Canal. In the new layout of the museum, not only the bronzes but also the other sculptures were presented, for



Fig. 5 **The Della Robbia Cabinet in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum**



Fig. 6 **The Donatello Room in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum**

the most part, according to the material of which they were made; thus the glazed works of the Florentine Della Robbia family, for example, had a cabinet to themselves (fig. 5). The upper floor was mainly reserved for paintings, which tended to be shown separately from sculptures; it was only exceptionally that works of the two genres were placed together. On the other hand, the lower floor, with its large rooms on the Spree and Kupfergraben sides, was the ideal setting for the exhibition of sculptures (fig. 6).

Bode's concept differed from traditional modes of museum presentation. For the first time, the figurative arts, painting and sculpture, were displayed in parallel, and on terms of equality in their development, within one building. This chiefly represented an upward reevaluation of sculpture, which the museums of the metropolis had generally displayed together with the decorative arts or objects of regional interest. As it happened, Bode's original concept was to hold its ground for only a few years. As early as 1910, integration of the extensive collection of casts into the rooms on the Kupfergraben side of the lower floor meant that all of the Italian sculp-

tures were relocated to the upper floor, where they were shown in a decorative way, in mostly overcrowded rooms, alongside paintings and furniture. Bode regretted this, since "the different character of paintings and the plastic arts", as well as "the contrasting colours", led to "some disharmonies that were difficult to resolve". As he put it: "The sheer physicality of the sculptures detracts from the merely painted image, which tends to look flat and ineffectual beside them." In the eyes of the public, however, this combined form of presentation defined the Bode concept, and was imitated by American museums in particular.

The personality of Wilhelm von Bode left its mark on the fundamental character of the Sculpture Collection. A not insignificant impact on the acquisitions, albeit primarily of a financial nature, was also made by the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museums-Verein, founded in 1897, which was under the personal patronage of the Kaiser. This association, which is still active today, was a small circle of well-to-do art lovers, most of them prominent in public life or the world of finance, who were themselves collectors and wanted to advance the



Fig. 7 **The Simon Cabinet in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum**

interests of the Gemäldegalerie and the Sculpture Collection. Close to 300 works have been acquired for the two collections by the Verein since it was founded. One might single out Adolph von Beckerath's collection of small bronzes, including Francesco di Giorgio Martini's relief tondo of *St. Jerome* (no. 172), which the Verein acquired in 1905 in exchange for a lifetime annuity paid to the former owner. Numerous private collectors whom Bode had advised and assisted as they built up their collections showed their gratitude by donating works of art to the museum. It was in this way that a major work of the Berlin collection of bronzes, and indeed one of the greatest of small bronzes from the Early Renaissance in Florence, came into the Sculpture Collection. This was the figure of *Hercules* (no. 181), traditionally ascribed to Antonio del Pollaiuolo, which was a gift of the South African industrialist Alfred Beit. Bode's close connections to the international art market ensured that even art dealers offered their patronage. Thus the Florentine rare-book dealer Luigi Grassi presented two important baroque *bozzetti* to the Berlin Museums (nos. 223, 224).



Fig. 8 **The Medieval Room in the Deutsches Museum**

By far the greatest patron of the Sculpture Collection was the humanist Berlin businessman James Simon, who like most of the other major Berlin collectors was of the Jewish faith. For the museum's opening in 1904, he donated his extensive collection of Italian art. This collection, which had been built up in close consultation with Wilhelm von Bode, consisted of Renaissance paintings, sculptures and medallions, the principal work surely being Andrea Mantegna's *Madonna and Child* painting. The collection was displayed in a cabinet of its own on the upper floor of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum (fig. 7). Bode's manner of presentation alluded to the private ambience of Simon's Tiergarten villa, and was intended "in the richness and diversity of the furniture and setting [...] to emphasize both the gift as such and its origin" (Bode). The immediate juxtaposition of artworks of different genres made this room fundamentally different from the others in the newly opened Kaiser Friedrich Museum. In 1918 a further gift from James Simon (to whom the Berlin Museums also owe the bust of Nefertiti) brought his comprehensive collection of German, French and Spanish art to the Museum Island.

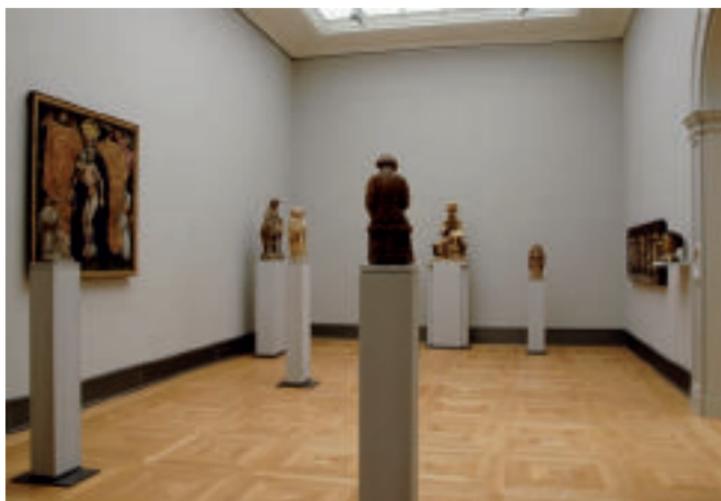
Wilhelm von Bode himself was also a patron of the Sculpture Collection. The list of his donations runs to almost 150 works, and Bode additionally provided numerous items for the interior décor and furnishings of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum. Bode's most significant gift was surely Donatello's *Putto with Tambourine* (no. 157), which he was able to buy from a London art dealer for a modest price. Bode had immediately recognized that the statuette, which in London was considered to be an Empire-style bronze or a fake, was one of the original angelic figures from the baptismal font in Siena. To mark Bode's fortieth year of service and the upcoming opening of the Deutsches Museum in the north wing of the Pergamon Museum, friends of Bode and of the royal museums established the Bode Jubilee Foundation. Among the many works of art purchased through this fund is *The Dangolsheim Madonna* (no. 21),

a major achievement of Late Gothic sculpture.

By 1914, just ten years after the Kaiser Friedrich Museum was opened, the collection of German sculpture had almost doubled. The swiftly growing collection of transalpine art was given a new home in the north wing of Alfred Messel's Pergamon Museum, completed in 1930, and reached from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum via a bridge across the railway line between the two buildings; Bode did not live to witness the move. In contrast to the new presentation of Italian sculptures in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, sculptures and paintings in the Deutsches Museum were at times densely juxtaposed, as is the case in medieval German art, "where the altar works in fact combine multicoloured sculptures with paintings" (Bode). But this style of display, which contemporaries considered exemplary, was short-lived, continuing only until 1939 (fig. 8).

Bode's systematic acquisitions strategy was continued by his successor, Theodor Demmler, and Demmler's deputy, curator Ernst Friedrich Bange, who played a key

Fig. 9
Gallery in the newly installed Bode Museum, with late medieval French works



role in the reinstallation of the German and Italian collections between 1930 and 1937. One innovation at the time, significant in museum terms, consisted of separating the display collection and the study collection, and treating the latter not as a depot but as a full and valuable part of the museum. In the current reinstallation, this time-honoured principle has been revived in the Italian sculpture section.

The Second World War had grave consequences for the Sculpture Collection. In 1939, a start was made on crating up the works of art and removing them for safe keeping, ahead of the anticipated air raids. Towards the end of the war, large portions of the collection were moved to salt mines in Thuringia, but the approach of the front made it impossible to move everything. Evacuated artworks retrieved in 1945 by American and British forces were taken to Wiesbaden or Celle; it was not until 1955, after lengthy negotiations, that they were returned to Berlin. The works that were taken to the Soviet Union after the war came from those stored in the Friedrichshain anti-aircraft bunker and from those that had remained on the Museum Island. In 1958 they were returned to Berlin, but only in part. It is feared that a substantial number of the museum's possessions were destroyed during the fires in May 1945. The most vivid expression of the collection's decades-long separation can be seen in the fate of the Naumburg *Triumphal Crucifixion Group* (no. 7): the monumental crucifix remained in East Berlin, while the grieving Virgin Mary, evacuated to the west, found her way to Dahlem.

Museum colleagues in East Berlin were cut off from the international art market and found it impossible to



Fig. 10 **Gallery in the newly installed Bode Museum, with German classicist works**

make major acquisitions. Those in West Berlin were able to expand the collection kept at Dahlem with artistically valuable purchases. Bernini's *Putto on a Dolphin* (no. 218), Puget's *Assumption of the Virgin* (no. 225) and Canova's *Dancer* (no. 233) were new highlights. The Kaiser-Friedrich-Museums-Verein also made important post-war acquisitions possible, such as Bouchardon's bust of Baron von Stosch (no. 135) and Houdon's portrait of Dorothea von Rodde-Schlözer (no. 137). Since reunification, major acquisitions have been funded by the Kulturstiftung der Länder, the Ernst von Siemens Stiftung, and the Deutsche Bank. The different locations of the sculptures resulted in varying nomenclature; since 1991, the reunited holdings formerly in East and West Berlin, which merged in the year 2000 with the Museum of Byzantine Art, have been known as the Sculpture Collection.

When the Bode Museum reopened in autumn 2006, the Sculpture Collection, seriously decimated in the Second World War but still a first-class ensemble, returned to its old home. The Museum of Byzantine Art displays its treasures in four of the building's galleries, while on the



Fig. 11 Gallery in the newly installed Bode Museum, with Florentine Renaissance sculpture



Fig. 12 Cabinet in the newly installed Bode Museum, with Italian Mannerist sculpture

upper floor a selection from the rich holdings of the numismatic collections is on view in five rooms. Since 1998 the Gemäldegalerie has been located in a new building at the Kulturforum; originally it occupied the entire upper floor of the former Kaiser Friedrich Museum. Now, more than a hundred paintings from its holdings supplement the Sculpture Collection in various areas. In the reconstructed Basilica, sculptural works and painted altarpieces can once again be seen together, following the original style of presentation. Some display rooms, such as the cabinet of small Mannerist sculptures, with Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus* in the centre (fig. 12), recall former times in their integration of historic furniture. At the end of the upper floor gallery with Italian baroque *bozzetti* the visitor will find a little room whose wood panelling, fabric surfaces and patterned parquet echo the museum's appearance in the days of Wilhelm von Bode. On the same floor, in the opposite wing, is a similar room where some of the artworks irreparably damaged in the Second World War are on display.

The Sculpture Collection now resides once again in that palace of

the visual arts, the Bode Museum, which forms the bold tip of the Museum Island. In the fabric of the museums located here, however, the collection is much more like the very core. It bridges the wide gap between the collections of classical antiquity and the art of the nineteenth century on view in the Old National Gallery.

Volker Krahn

Senior Curator, Sculpture Collection

Germany



Trier, late 10th century

**1 Moses Receiving the Tablets
of the Law – Doubting Thomas**

Ivory, h. 24 cm, w. 10 cm

Acquired 1935, inv. nos. 8505, 8506

The panels show motifs unusual both in their subject matter and in their juxtaposition. The link between the two scenes is presumably the concept of divine revelation. The figures possess a dynamic tension in these narrow visual areas. Spiral columns accentuate the upward movement of Moses, to whom the hand of God is



passing down the tablets of the law. An even more arresting impression is made by the figure of Thomas, who, having doubted the Resurrection, is seen here from the rear in a confined space as he stretches to put his finger into the wound in Christ's side. Working in a period from which little evidence of any monumental sculpture

exists, the carver of these panels had rediscovered classical sculpture's physical presence and sense of dynamic, as a means to lend powerful and vivid expression to the key idea in a scene. HK



Western Germany, c. 1000

2 The Annunciation

Ivory, h. 17 cm, w. 11.9 cm
Acquired 1841 for the Kunstkammer,
inv. no. 567

This panel must have decorated the cover of a book. Due to its monumental character, it occupies a stylistically isolated position. Both figures are wearing simple garments of a kind that recall the ancient world, the folds of the cloth underlining the narrative content of the scene. The archangel Gabriel, seen in profile, is gazing fixedly at Mary, his right hand raised in a speaking gesture, his left hand gathering up his garment. The resulting tensely bundled folds of fabric, which are used to emphasize his gesture, match the analogous, though looser, draping structure of Mary's cloak. The woman, who will give birth to the Son of God, seems to be listening to the angel's words with her head slightly bowed; her open hands, emerging from her cloak, are also indicative of a receptive response to the message. The two figures are

standing on mounds of earth, and between them a tree grows upwards, dividing the scene into two sections like parts of an arcade. Branches grow from the twisting trunk, ending in leaves that touch the acanthus ornamentation of the frame – it is as if nature were blooming anew in the face of the unfolding story of salvation. HK

Rhineland, mid-11th century

3 The Descent from the Cross

Pear wood, h. 26.7 cm, w. 17.7 cm
Acquired 1908, inv. no. 3145

Joseph of Arimathea is seen taking hold of Christ's dead body as Nicodemus frees it from the cross. Mary is holding her son's right hand, her face approaching as if to kiss it. This round-arched relief panel, which was originally painted, was the centrepiece of a triptych with hinged wing panels. The typological models



were tripartite ivory carvings from Byzantium, an excellent example of which is also in the Berlin collection (inv. no. 1578). This wooden panel, slightly larger than the Byzantine triptychs, is unique among artefacts surviving from the Early Romanesque period. HK

Cologne, c. 1170

4 Angel at the Tomb of Christ

Poplar wood, original polychromy, h. 62 cm
Acquired 1904, inv. no. 2969

This angel, a major achievement of Romanesque art in Cologne, is announcing to the women who have

come to visit the tomb of Christ that He has risen. Missing are the group of women themselves (one of them is in the Keresztény Múzeum in Esztergom, Hungary), the angel's wings, and probably a sceptre in his left hand. Architectural representations of the tomb of Christ (such as that at Gernrode), or sculptural groups showing the figures at the tomb, played a key role in the Easter liturgy for centuries. The workshop that made this angel evidently followed Cologne merchants to Jutland, the principal trade junction in the Baltic; among the works made there was the Madonna of Viklau, now in the Historiska Museet in Stockholm. HK





Lower Saxony, c. 1160/70

5 Capitals from the Benedictine Monastery of Huysburg near Halberstadt

Sandstone, h. approx. 29–35 cm
Acquired 1914, inv. nos. AE 357, 358
Gift of Fritz Hahn

The area that was once the medieval duchy of Saxony produced a wealth of Romanesque architectural sculpture. Among the surviving pieces, the capitals from the monastery of Huysburg occupy a special place. They are comparable in artistic quality to the outstanding work preserved at Königslutter and Riechenberg; other similar pieces are only to be found at the monastery of Ilsenburg, which is also in the territory of the bishopric of Halberstadt. The Huysburg capitals in Berlin (inv. nos. 353–362) were origi-

nally part of ruined sections of the monastery complex and do not all date from the same period. Most of them are strictly based on the cubic capital form, whose design was developed out of the interaction of square-cut and spherical forms; in Lower Saxony, this form can first be found in the monastery Church of St. Michael at Hildesheim, built by Bishop Bernward and partially consecrated in 1022. Unlike the “prototype”, the faces of the Huysburg monastery capitals are ornamented with motifs of vegetation. The two illustrated here feature figural representations of both saints and virtues whose style show similarities with the Siegburg Madonna in the Schnütgen Museum, Cologne. It is possible that stonemasons from the Rhineland were involved in building the monastery of Huysburg. HK





Lower Saxony, c. 1170

6 West End Gallery from the Abbey Church of Gröningen

Stucco, h. 127 cm (without base ledge), w. 660 cm

Acquired 1902, inv. no. 2739

This gallery formed the upper end of a Last Judgement whose other parts were painted in the apse. Christ is seen enthroned on a rainbow, with scrolls of text hanging from his arms. To his right and left sit the Apostles on benches, in groups of two and three, their heads for the most part no longer extant. The gallery, from the former Benedictine abbey at Gröningen, was part of a whole programme of scenes designed not only for the apse but for the entire church. Today a rich colouring, restored to its original state, leaves its mark on the appearance of the cloister church of St. Vitus, where a plaster copy replaces the original

gallery. In the twelfth century, Saxony was a major centre of ornamental and sculptural stucco work, of which the Gröningen gallery serves as an important example. LS

Upper Saxony, c. 1220

7 Christ and the Virgin Mary, from a Triumphal Crucifixion Group

Oak, traces of the original polychromy, h. 260 cm and 165 cm

Acquired 1913, inv. nos. 7089, 7090

Mary's right hand is lifted in a defensive gesture. In her left, which she has raised to her face, she is holding a cloth whose lower end falls downward from her waist. She is wearing a cloak of blue, pulled over her head, and a robe that was formerly gold and whose neckline was at one time probably

decorated with a semi-precious stone. The head of the crucified Christ is raised, despite the heavy crown of thorns, and he is looking with wide-open eyes to his right. The two figures, together with a St. John that is now lost, likely constituted a triumphal crucifixion group in the Church of St. Moritz in Naumburg, where they were found in the loft in 1889. A triumphal crucifixion group consists of a depiction of the crucified Christ, together with the Virgin Mary, St. John and sometimes other figures, mounted on a beam in the triumphal arch of a church, i.e. the arch between the nave and the choir. Groups of this kind were a standard element of

church furnishings throughout Europe in the High and Late Middle Ages; particularly early examples can be seen in England (e.g. Winchester Cathedral, 1047). LS

Trier, c. 1240

8 Two Prophets, Isaiah and Ezekiel

Sandstone from Jaumont, h. 184–187 cm
Acquired 1916, inv. nos. 8246, 8248

These life-size sandstone figures were originally installed on the west façade of the Church of Our Lady in Trier –



a central-plan church to the south of the cathedral and one of the earliest Gothic churches built in Germany. All four prophets in the Berlin Sculpture Collection were originally positioned in pairs at the corners of the façade, high above the portal area. Appropriately, their gaze is somewhat suggestively focused in the distance. It is probable that stonemasons who worked on the new cathedral of Reims were also employed for the Church of Our Lady in Trier; the orientation of the figures' gazes and bodies to a point far beyond their location on the building was one of the features derived directly from Reims. From there also came the idea of positioning sculptural figures on the entire building, at every height, and not only at the portal. HK



Western Germany, c. 1330/40

9 Apostle from the Shrine of St. Patroclus in Soest

Repoussé silver, cast and gilded, h. 25.2 cm
 Reacquired in 2003 with the assistance of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museums-Verein, inv. no. 1/2003

The bones of St. Patroclus, a Roman patrician martyr, were acquired in the eastern Champagne region in the year 960 by the Archbishop of Cologne, Bruno of Troyes, and subsequently gifted to the monastery of St. Patroclus, which he founded at Soest. In 1311 the dean and chapter decided to re-inter the saint's relics in a new shrine, which they commissioned in 1313 from the goldsmith Sigefridus. The shrine he made was in the form

of a house, in the tradition of twelfth- and thirteenth-century shrines from the Rhine and Meuse regions, but Gothic in architectural style, which gave it a resemblance to French works such as the shrine of St. Taurinus at Evreux. On the narrow and long sides were silver statuettes of Christ, the Virgin Mary, St. Patroclus, Archbishop Bruno, who had also been canonized, and the Apostles. While the shrine was saved from being melted down in 1841 by its purchase by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, it was evidently destroyed in the Friedrichshain bunker fire of 1945. A few of the figures were saved, while others were stolen and later had to be reacquired. This statuette of an Apostle, re-purchased in 2003, is of an especially fine quality, with lively facial features and delicately worked curly locks. This masterpiece of the goldsmith's art was probably added to the work done by Sigefridus around 1340. HK



Upper Rhine, c. 1300

**10 Reliquary Bust of
a Female Saint**

Limewood, original polychromy preserved
in part, h. 42.5 cm

Acquired 1929, inv. no. 8449

The relic, perhaps a fragment of bone, was at one time visible beneath a rock crystal in the oval depression at the breast. This bust, which originated in the Basel area, is an outstanding example of the sculptor's craft in the Upper Rhine region at the start of the fourteenth century. It shows the influence on the one hand of those who worked on the west façade of Strasbourg Cathedral under Erwin von Steinbach's direction, and on the other hand of a carver such as Heinrich von Konstanz, creator of the Christ and St. John group at the St. Katharinenthal monastery. Unfortunately the coloration of the face has been removed down to the chalk



ground. The robe was worked most exquisitely, with delicately embossed dragon motifs and leaf ornamentation, and an ornamental border with relief quatrefoils. HK

Region of Lake Constance, c. 1310

11 St. John the Apostle Leaning on Christ's Breast

Oak, old polychromy, h. 89 cm, w. 45 cm
Acquired 1909, inv. no. 7950

The Gospel according to St. John tells us that at the Last Supper “there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved”. Here the two figures have been detached from the narrative context of the Biblical account, in line with the practice of other devotional images made after about 1300, which were intended to encourage the faithful to have a personal relationship with Christian doctrine. The two were seen as both a symbol and a model of the union of Man with God. In the fourteenth century, groups showing Christ and St. John were especially common in convents in southwest Germany and Switzerland. The Berlin work is reputed to have come from the Augustine convent of Inzigkofen, near Sigmaringen. HK



Nuremberg, 1385–1396

12 Head of a Prophet, from the “Beautiful Fountain” in Nuremberg

Sandstone, h. 21 cm
Acquired 1886, inv. no. 365
Gift of A. Thieme, B. Suermond

The architecture of the “Beautiful Fountain” was completed by 1392 by Heinrich Beheim, a city councillor and architect of the Church of St. Sebald in Nuremberg. The fountain, in the market square, was completely restored after 1821 and from 1897 to 1902, the figures being replaced with copies. The heads are from the pyramidal tower in the centre of the fountain. In the upper tier were patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament, and in the lower nine heroes renowned in history and seven Electors representing the electoral college of the Holy Roman Emperors. There was a specific purpose in placing prophets who called for justice on earth on a fountain: the concept of justice is associated in their writings with images of springs and flowing water. HK



Prague, c. 1390

13 St. Agnes

Limestone, original polychromy,
h. 78.5 cm

Acquired 1925, inv. no. 8366
Gift of Wilhelm von Bode

When only a girl, the saint was executed for her Christian faith, on the orders of the prefect of Rome. Here she is seen holding in her left hand a lamb (or what remains of it). Legend has it that her parents had a vision on the eighth day of the vigil after her death: Agnes appeared to them in a host of virgins robed in gold, accompanied on her right by a lamb that was whiter than snow. The lamb symbolizes Christ, the

saint's heavenly bridegroom, for whom she had preserved her chastity on earth. This figure is surely one of the major examples of Bohemian art at the time when the "Beautiful Madonnas" were being made. The facial features of the bride of Christ have a sensuousness that was previously unknown in representations of female saints. HK

Prague, c. 1400

14 Heads from a Pietà (Virgin Mary and the Dead Christ)

Limestone, h. 18 cm (Christ),
20 cm (Mary)
Acquired 1903, inv. no. 2743

The work to which these heads belonged, originally from Baden near Vienna, was badly damaged just after the Second World War in a fire at the Friedrichshain bunker to which it had been evacuated. Fortunately, the delicately worked heads of Christ and Mary survived. A pietà, which is a group showing the Madonna with the dead Christ following the removal of his body from the cross (the Deposition), is known in German as a *Vesperbild*, since the Deposition occurred at vespers (the time for evening prayers, in the canonical division of the day). Since the early fourteenth century, the *Vesperbild* has been a common type of devotional image in Germany, intended to appeal to the emotions, allowing the believer a more profound personal access to the idea of salvation. Around 1400 in Prague, the pietà was



reconceived as a counterpart to that other innovation of Bohemian sculpture, the “Beautiful Madonna”, and both subjects were exported through Central Europe. HK

Salzburg or Passau, c. 1435

15 Pietà (Virgin Mary and the Dead Christ)

Limewood, original polychromy,
h. 89.5 cm, w. 83 cm
Acquired 1914, inv. no. 7669

The pietà unites two principal concerns of late medieval faith: to make the Passion of Christ vividly real to the devout, and to encourage veneration of the Virgin Mary as a mediator between God and humankind. The theme of Mary with her dead son in her lap has no precedent either in the Gospels or in the Apocrypha. Rather, it originates in the hymns and spiritual meditations of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the grief of the mother of Christ served as a means of establishing a more intimate relationship with the dead Saviour. Behind this group, which originally came from Braunau am Inn, Christ’s cross once stood. HK

