

**Images and Messages
in the Embellishment of
Metropolitan Railway Stations
(1850 – 1950)
Volume I: Text**

vorgelegt von
Magistra Artium
Asta Freifrau von Schröder
aus Bremen

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades

Doktorin der Philosophie
(Dr. phil.)
an der Fakultät I – Geisteswissenschaften
der Technischen Universität Berlin

genehmigte Dissertation

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wissenschaftliche Aussprache: 24. Juli 2012

Berlin 2013
D 83

gefördert von der DFG im Rahmen des
Transatlantischen Graduiertenkollegs Berlin|New York
am Center for Metropolitan Studies der TU Berlin, 2005-2007

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1 Railway Economy – The Class, Gender, and the Industrial Middle Classes	13
I Old Allegories & Class - Buying into Cultural Capital	14
I.1 From Paris Gare du Nord (“Bourla project” 1838) to Cincinnati Union Terminal (1928-33): Classical Mythology Ennobling Railway Architecture	17
I.2 New York Grand Central Terminal (1903-1913): The Glory of Commerce	18
I.2.1 Terminal City: Wilgus, Reed and Stem	20
I.2.2 The Glory of the Vanderbilts: William K. Vanderbilt and Warren and Wetmore	22
I.2.3 The Glory of the Architect: The Example of the French École des Beaux-Arts	28
II New Allegories & Gender - Symbolic Personifications Reflecting Middle-Class Gender Notions	39
II.1 From Paris Gare Montparnasse (1849-1852) to Strasburg Central Station (1878-1883): New Female Personifications Substituting Mythology.....	41
II.2 Frankfurt/Main (1879-1888): Female Personifications of the “Athena Type” Elevating Middle-Class Realities into Abstract Concepts	42
II.3 Paris Gare de Lyon (1895-1902): Female Personifications of the “Natura Type” Eroticizing the New Technologies	47
III Hybrids and Alternative Forms of Allegory	50

III.1	Limoges-Bénédictins (1924-29): Combining Old and New Allegories to Advertise Regional Industries	50
III.2	Amsterdam Centraal Station (1882-1889): The Origins of Dutch Prosperity Depicted in Scenic Allegories.....	55
III.3	Washington Union Station (1901-1907): The Progress of Railroading Embodied by Metonymic Personages	58
IV	Employing Allegories as Codified System to Achieve Representative Goals and Social Acceptance	66
Chapter 2	Railway Technology	70
I	The Railway – a Force of Industrialization	70
I.1	Königsberg (1853): Hope for Prosperity.....	71
I.2	Cincinnati Union Station (1929-33): The Image of Industry. Race, Class and Gender in Winold Reiss’s “Worker Murals”	75
I.2.1	Sponsored Artwork as a Kind of Advertisement?.....	79
I.2.2	A Picture of Reality? The “Authenticity Effect” in the Worker Murals and Visual Construction Along the Categories of Race, Class and Gender	80
II	The Railway – a Force of Globalization	98
II.1	Munich Central Station (1858-1860): The Railway Demolishing Custom Barriers.....	100
II.2	Berlin Anhalter Bahnhof (1880): Allegory of Global Traffic.....	101
II.3	Frankfurt/Main (1888): Atlas supported by Steam and Electricity.....	102
II.4	Philadelphia Broad Street (1895): The Progress of Transportation	104
II.5	Amsterdam Amstel Station (1938-1939): The History and the Importance of the Railway	108

III	The Railway – Technological Collaboration Allows for Economical Growth and Political Cooperation.....	118
Chapter 3	Railway Networks	119
I	The Railway Station Within the City	121
I.1	Cincinnati Union Terminal (1931-33): An Integral Part of Urban Infrastructure	122
I.2	Milan, Stazione Centrale (1913-31): The Center of National Unification.....	123
I.3	Lunenburg East Station (1874/1939): A Regional Center Propelled by Urban Nostalgia.....	125
II	Regional and National Networks	127
II.1	From London Euston Station (1848) to Cincinnati Union Terminal (1931-33): City Crests, Maps, and Personifications	127
II.1.1	Gare de l’Est (1847-52): Two Waterways Connected by Railway	128
II.1.2	Anhalter Bahnhof (1880): Personifications of Places as Patrons.....	130
II.1.3	Milan Stazione Centrale (1913-31): Tourist Maps and Politicized Cityscapes.....	132
II.1.4	Gare de l’Est (1924-1931): A Station Extension as War Memorial	135
II.1.5	Cincinnati Union Terminal (1931-33): Two Hemispheres and Four Time-Zones	139
II.2	Paris Gare de Lyon (1900-1981): A Century of Changes in Marketing Urban Tourism in the P. L. M.’s Network	140
II.2.1	1900 – The Mediterranean Destinations: Urban Tourism in the 19th century.....	142

II.2.2	1920s-1930s – The First Extension: Lyon, Avignon, Nîmes Displaying their Longstanding Cultural Heritage.....	146
II.2.3	1979-1981 – The Second Extension: Paris, Fontainebleau, Auxerre, Vézelay, Semur(-en-Auxois), Dijon, Beaune, Autun, Tournus, Cluny, Paray-le-Monial as Urban Sights	148
II.2.4	Landscape and City View, Metropolis and Countryside.....	149
II.2.5	Advertising the P. L. M.: From a Scenic Route to a Network of Tourist Destinations	152
II.2.6	The Panoramic Perception: Immersion and Separation	153
III	International and Transnational Railway Networks.....	159
III.1	Amsterdam (1882-1889): A Mercantile Network	159
III.2	London Blackfriars Station (1886): A Tourist Network	161
III.3	Paris Gare du Nord (1861-65): A Political Network.....	162
IV	Railway Stations Positioning Themselves Firmly Within the Networks	165
Chapter 4	Wanderlust – Travelers, Tourists, and Their Destinations.....	166
I	Travelers and Tourists	166
I.1	Amsterdam Centraal Station (1882-1889): The Aristocratic Grand Tour as Archetype of Middle-Class Traveling.....	167
I.2	Frankfurt/Main Hauptbahnhof (1879-1888): The Bildungsreise, and the Honeymoon of the Middle-Classes as a Gendered Form of the Grand Tour	173
I.3	Amsterdam Muiderpoort Station (1938): Migrating Geese as an Analogy for Modern Mass Tourism.....	179
II	Landscapes and Destinations	181

II.1	London Euston Station (1848): Landscapes as a Teaching Device	183
II.2	Basel SBB (1920s): Natural Sights and Pre-Industrial Nostalgia as Advertisement for Tourist Associations.....	184
II.3	Paris Gare de Lyon (1900-1905): The Compagnie Paris-Lyon-Marseille as Sponsor of the Fine Arts	187
III	Promoting Wanderlust while Overcoming Notions on Class and Gender	189
Chapter 5	Railways, Nation Building and National Mythology.....	193
I	National History Transformed into National Mythology.....	195
I.1	Context: Nation Building in the United States of America after the Close of the Frontier in the 1890s and the War of 1898	195
I.2	Cincinnati Union Terminal, 1931-33. The Frontier Myth and the American Dream	198
I.2.1	South Side – The Advance of Civilization	
	or: Indian Wars vs. Noble Savage.....	198
I.2.2	North Side – The History of Cincinnati	
	or: The River Age vs. the Underground Railroad	208
I.3	The Cincinnati Union Terminal Rotunda Mosaics: Visualizing	
	US-American National Mythology from a German Perspective	214
I.4	Context: Nation Building in the Union of South Africa after its	
	Foundation in 1910.....	215
I.5	Johannesburg Park Station (1926-32): A National Image Campaign Using Historical Myths, Political Ambitions, and Marketing Strategies	218
I.5.1	Balancing Motifs: Enhancing Afrikaner Status with Regards to the	
	British.....	224

I.5.2	Afrikaner <i>Voortrekker</i> Mythology Forming the Base for a Common, <i>White</i> South African History.	227
I.5.3	The Role of SAR&H in Constructing the Image of South Africa as “The Land of Contrasts”	234
I.6	Pierneef’s Johannesburg Panels: Balancing Afrikaner and British Heritage Within South African National Mythology	236
II	Shaping, Elaborating, and Interpreting National Mythology	237
III	The Limits of National Mythologies Outside of Their Culture	240
III.1	Context: Nation Building in Alsace-Lorraine after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871	240
III.2	Strasburg Central Station (1878-1883): Self-Affirmative Celebration of the German National Spirit	242
III.2.1	The Reichsland Alsace-Lorraine’s Prosperity Depending on the German Empire	242
III.2.2	Barbarossa and Barbablanca: The German Emperor William I as Heir of the Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa.....	243
III.3	Metz Central Station (1874-78): A Strategically Important Railway Hub Within the German Empire	249
III.4	Metz Central Station (1904-1908): German National Propaganda in a Culturally French Region	250
III.4.1	The Imagery of Nationalist Propaganda and its Use of National Mythology	251
III.4.2	The Myth of Roland: Both a Symbol of Imperial Jurisdiction and a Brave Defender against Barbaric Aggressors.....	254
III.4.3	The Myth of Charlemagne: The Father of Europe and a Common Ancestor	258

III.4.4	“Battle of Teutoburg Forest” and “Battle of the Huns”: Two Legendary Battles Offering Examples to the German Military	259
IV	German National Mythologies Targeted to French-identified Population ... in Annexed Regions	263
V	National Mythologies as a Tool in Campaigning Nation States	265
Summary	271
Bibliography	278

Introduction

Palaces of Steam, Cathedrals of Progress – in the famous railway terminals of the nineteenth century, vast vaults of iron and glass spanned tracks where steam-spitting locomotives stood waiting for freight and passengers. The entrance buildings were topped with old gods symbolizing the new technology: Mercury and Atlas proclaimed the achievements of the new, global infrastructure. During the Railway Age, the railway station had appeared as new building type amongst monumental public architecture.

By mid-nineteenth century, the railroad was firmly established in the Western world and formed an important part of life in the industrial era. Fighting for a place amongst the league of theatres, museums, and city halls, railway stations took an increasingly representative appearance. The more elaborate contemporary historicist station architecture became, the more often it allowed for extensive decoration programs. Especially in the metropolitan areas – state capitals or other important cities –, where often several private lines fought over a common market, architects included sculptures, frescos, mosaics or stained glass windows in their design.

It might therefore seem surprising that Marc Augé includes railway stations in his list of “non-places”, amongst the spaces devoid of the symbolic impressions of identity, relations, and history.¹ But, as spaces are shaped by the people using them (what Martina Löw calls “spacing”)², his characterization makes sense: at least nowadays most station-users don’t find or take the time to pay attention to the lectures the buildings could tell. Browsing through fictional literature where stations play a more or less important role, we find that the characters are mostly occupied with their own personal problems. Only rarely do they find to take a look at the space that serves as backdrop for a turning point in their lives (respectively the book’s plot).

¹ See Marc Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity* (London: Verso Books, 1995), 112.

² See Martina Löw, *Raumsoziologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2001).

A notable exception is W. G. Sebald's final novel "Austerlitz". The protagonist Jacques Austerlitz, an architectural historian, explains at great length the iconography of Antwerp central station's decor to the nameless narrator. Beginning with a lecture about the historical circumstances in Belgium at the end of the nineteenth century he describes how Leopold II, who had only recently turned the small kingdom into a colonial power, decreed that the sudden riches thus earned in the Congo should be used to erect public buildings which would bring international renown to his aspiring state – amongst others, a new central station designed by Louis Delacenserie and inaugurated in 1905. To Austerlitz, it was only appropriate

“that in Antwerp Station the elevated level from which the gods looked down on visitors to the Roman Pantheon should display, in hierarchical order, the deities of the nineteenth century – mining, industry, transport, trade and capital. For halfway up the walls of the entrance hall, as I must have noticed, there were stone escutcheons bearing symbolic sheaves of corn, crossed hammers, winged wheels and so on, with the heraldic motif of the beehive standing not, as one might at first think, for nature made serviceable to mankind, or even industrious labour as a social good, but symbolizing the principle of capital accumulation.”³

Austerlitz's, or rather Sebald's analysis is astute and surprisingly capacious considering the fact that all that the magnificent architectural space of Antwerp central station offered in terms of embellishment were those named escutcheons. How much more could be possibly deduced from the much more elaborate sculptures, mosaics, or paintings that adorn countless railway stations across the world!

Yet, contemporaries controversially debated the necessity, or even the sense of decorating a railway station at all. As early as 1849, the art critic and social philosopher John Ruskin strictly opposed any decorations. In his opinion it was better to “bury gold in the embankments, than put it in ornaments on the stations” because

³ Winfried Georg Sebald, *Austerlitz* (London: Penguin, 2002), 9-14, here: 13.

“there never was more flagrant nor impertinent folly than the smallest portion of ornament in anything concerned with railroads or near them.”⁴

On the other side of the Channel, the French art critic Jules Champfleury argued:

“If there is any place to apply frescoes it is in such surroundings, where man would drive away the boredom of waiting by watching the great industrial developments brought forth by the steam.”⁵

And Gustave Courbet reportedly stated more than once that railway stations

“are already Churches of Progress and will become Temples of Art. Enter the waiting-halls and look at those admirable vast sites, airy and full of light: you’ll agree that we only need to hang pictures there to make, without any expense, the most matchless of museums, the only ones where Art can really live. For where the crowd betakes itself, there is life.”⁶

In reality, many of the actually completed decorations aimed at less lofty goals, nowadays subsumed under the headings of marketing or public relations. Thus, instead of teaching the travelers about industrial history, colorful and idealized landscapes informed them about travel destinations, and tried to persuade them to undertake a journey. And where embellishment diverted travelers from the boredom of waiting, it did so by praising the merits of the railway companies or the technological progress that they epitomized. Thematically and stylistically, the completed embellishments did not celebrate the industrial worker in the low, matter-of-fact style of Courbet’s realism, but used a grand manner featuring complex allegories that only the educated could decipher.⁷

⁴ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (London, 1900), 221.

⁵ Lacambre, Geneviève und Jean, ed., *Champfleury: Le Réalisme* (1857; reprint, Paris: Herrmann, 1973), 184. My translation.

⁶ Jack Lindsay, *Gustave Courbet: His Life and Art* (London, New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 225.

⁷ The contemporary debate was discussed in greater detail by Monika Wagner in Monika Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte: Ausstattungsprogramme öffentlicher Gebäude des 19. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland. Von der Cornelius-Schule zur Malerei der Wilhelminischen Ära* (Tübingen: Wasmuth Verlag, 1989), especially: 166-173.

The officials of the different railway companies themselves seem not to have participated in the debate about the artistic use of their stations. They wanted impressive buildings, gateways to the cities, and those had to be embellished to underline the power of the company. But they left the details to the architects. These built the new terminal stations in the eclectic style of their time, automatically including the (mainly sculptural) embellishment in their design.⁸ Yet, architectural sculpture was often employed in a very utilitarian way: sometimes it seems as if it was more important to structure a wall or façade or to create an interesting roofline than to express a certain message through its iconography. Although the architectural embellishment in stations testifies to the development of a range of railway-related themes, the architects never explicitly agreed on a set of iconographic topics, leaving, in their turn, the debate to the critics and artists. Yet, one thing seems clear: stations' embellishments mirrored all the different roles that the railway played in society – economically, politically, culturally, and socially.

The legacy of the Bauhaus and Post-World-War-II appreciation for the International Style, with its focus on clean forms and abdication of ornament, endangered many of the sometimes exuberant great terminals that proudly witnessed the prosperity of the railway age. At the same time, it sharpened the critics' eyes for the beautiful features of engineering that can still be found in the vast iron-and-glass train sheds. Thus, although many Western metropolises lost at least one of their great terminals in the 1960s,⁹ these sacrifices helped raising public awareness and shift critical opinion towards an appreciation of “industrial” architecture. Subsequently, many historic railway stations have been declared listed monuments and lovingly restored to former glory. Railway stations, like other industrial architecture, attracted the attention of systematic scholarly research.

⁸ While frescoes and other forms of two dimensional art featured prominently in the grand designs exhibited at the public competitions, they were not considered part of the architectural design and were therefore often not executed to save expenses. Sculptural embellishment, however, played a crucial role in nineteenth century architecture. See Drexler, Arthur, and Richard Chafee, eds., *The architecture of the École des Beaux-Arts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977); Robert Jan van Pelt and Carroll William Westfall, *Architectural principles in the age of historicism*, Architecture (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), esp. pp 270f; Barry Bergdoll, *European architecture 1750 - 1890* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁹ For instance, London's Euston station was torn down in 1962, New York's Pennsylvania Station in 1963, Paris' Gare Montparnasse in 1969. In Berlin, most terminals had already been destroyed in the war, their tracks often ran into occupied territory and had hence become useless. The last survivor, Anhalter Bahnhof, was demolished in 1960.

The first important standard works were published in 1956 by the American architectural historian Carroll Meeks¹⁰, who attempted to show a chronologic stylistic development in station architecture, and in 1969 by Mihály Kubinszky,¹¹ who focused on the European evolution of the building type. In the 1980s, Ulrich Krings' systematic study on German metropolitan stations¹² opened up many new insights on the development of the building type while concentrating on details of construction. Meanwhile in the United Kingdom, Gordon Biddle had lead researchers in examining the British railway architecture, concentrating mainly on the architecture of the Victorian era.¹³ Alas, station embellishment is rarely mentioned in these publications, and even rarer are detailed photographs or descriptions.

In the 1970s, railway stations became interesting to sociologists and social historians. The groundbreaking book by Wolfgang Schivelbusch, "The Railway Journey", has been constantly in print since its first publication in 1977 and was translated into countless languages.¹⁴ An exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou,¹⁵ and the seminal book by Jeffrey Richards and John MacKenzie, "The Railway station – A social history",¹⁶ began fanning out a kaleidoscope of aspects: stations as architecture and topic of art, the role of stations in urban planning and military strategy, stations as social spaces and stations as work places. The exhibition catalogue edited by Jean Dethier also included a

¹⁰ Carroll Louis Vanderslice Meeks, *The railroad station: An architectural history* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1956).

¹¹ Mihály Kubinszky, *Bahnhöfe Europas: Ihre Geschichte, Kunst und Technik* (Stuttgart: Franckh'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969).

¹² Ulrich Krings, *Bahnhofsarchitektur: Deutsche Großstadtbahnhöfe des Historismus*, Studien zur Kunst des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, vol. 46 (München: Prestel Verlag, 1985), 46.

¹³ John Betjeman, *London's Historic Railway Stations* (London: John Murray (Publishers) Ltd., 1972); Gordon Biddle, *Victorian Stations: Railway Stations in England & Wales 1830-1923* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973); Gordon Biddle and Jeffery Spence, *The British Railway Station: Railway history in pictures* (Newton Abbot, London: David & Charles, 1977); Binney, Marcus, and David Pearce, eds., *Railway Architecture* (London: Orbis, 1979); Gordon Biddle and O. S. Nock, *The Railway Heritage of Britain* (London: Sheldrake Press Ltd., 1983); Gordon Biddle, "Historic railway structures in Britain: a continuing appraisal", in *Conserving the Railway Heritage*, ed. Peter Burman, and Michael Stratton (London, Weinheim, New York: E & FN Spon, 1997); Simmons, Jack, and Gordon Biddle, eds., *The Oxford companion to British railway history: From 1603 to the 1990s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁴ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise: Zur Industrialisierung von Raum und Zeit im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2004); Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*, 2nd edition (1977; reprint, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

¹⁵ Dethier, Jean, ed., *Le temps des gares: Catalogue de l'exposition* (Paris: CCI-Édition, 1978).

¹⁶ Jeffrey Richards and John M. MacKenzie, *The railway station: a social history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

chapter on décor,¹⁷ although it took another ten years until Dethier would publish his theses more lavishly.¹⁸

Subsequently, many publications focused on national developments: for example the Netherlands,¹⁹ Belgium,²⁰ France,²¹ or the United States.²² Like most “coffee table books” aiming at railway enthusiasts,²³ Potter’s book is in large parts confined to a mere enumeration of passenger stations, and far too often obliged to commemorate their destruction.²⁴ On the bright side, this less scholarly type of publication often features lavish photographs that offer insights which stations would be interesting subjects for extended study. Fortunately, and maybe due to the restricted sample group of those small nations, the aforementioned Benelux works are rather detailed when it comes to embellishment, and Ragon mentions artwork that is above the ordinary, such as mosaics or mural paintings.

Thus, literature treating station embellishment in greater detail is scarce, although there are, of course, exceptions. Christine Kyburz published an article about the landscape oil paintings in Swiss railway stations, explaining their entanglement with the tourism industry and mourning their declining numbers.²⁵ Monika Wagner dedicated a whole chapter of her book on the embellishment of public buildings (mostly museums and universities) to station frescoes, in order to explain the origin of technical personifications in the context of polytechnics and technical universities.²⁶ Karen Bowie, in her study of the metropolitan railway terminals of Paris, always paid attention

¹⁷ Dethier, *Le temps des gares*, 17–23.

¹⁸ Jean Dethier, "L'art et la gare", in *Gares d'Europe*, ed. Jean Dethier (Paris: Denoël, 1988)

¹⁹ H. Romers, *Spoorwegarchitectuur in Nederland 1841-1938* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1981).

²⁰ Hugo de Bot, *Architectuur des Gares en Belgique 1835-1914* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002).

²¹ Michel Ragon, *L'architecture des gares: Naissance, apogée et déclin des gares de chemin de fer* (Paris: Denoël, 1984).

²² Janet Greenstein Potter, *Great American railroad stations* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1996).

²³ For instance Steven Parissien, *Station to station* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997); Alessia Ferrarini, *Railway stations: From the Gare de l'Est to Penn Station; Aix-en-Provence, Arnhem, Berlin, Florence, Frankfurt-am-Main, Kyoto, Lyons, London, New York, Paris, Singapore, Seville, Zurich* (Milan: Electa, 2005).

²⁴ Nevertheless, she did publish an article in which she details information about three major depots. See Janet Greenstein Potter, "Public Art in Stations", *Vintage Rails*, no. 13 (July/August 1998).

²⁵ Christine Kyburz, "Zum malerischen Schmuck der Bahnhöfe", in *Schweiz im Bild - Bild der Schweiz: Landschaften von 1800 bis heute*, ed. Kunstgeschichtliches Seminar der Universität Zürich (Aarau, Zürich: 1974) See also chapter 4 of this dissertation.

²⁶ Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, Chapter 4: Personifikationen der Technik für die „Kathedralen des Fortschritts“: 165-195). See also chapter 2 and 3 of this dissertation.

to station embellishment, especially architectural sculpture, but her necessary confinement to the French capital does not allow for many general insights.²⁷

Similarly, most of the monographs dealing with a single large terminal treat any decorative program thoroughly enough, but rarely manage to embed their results into the larger, more general context of a world-wide phenomenon. Nevertheless, these publications are enumerated where appropriate in the following chapters, and were discussed at length in the detailed analyses of the respective stations.

This dissertation aims at establishing the iconography of permanent railway station embellishment – architectural sculpture, mosaics, stained-glass windows, mural or ceiling paintings and any decorative artwork deemed necessary and included at the time of the station’s design. Later additions, such as a range of commemorative plaques or memorials to patrons, engineers, railway employees, soldiers, or other *genii loci* – such as e. g. the bronze statue of “Paddington Bear” at London’s Paddington station²⁸ – will therefore not be treated.

These questions were central: Which topics were deemed suitable for the new building type? And did it make a difference if the principal was a private or a national railway company? Because the spread of railway technology was an international phenomenon, it would be interesting to see if station embellishment was similar all over the world, or if there were differences between various nationalities. The dissertation also examines whether topics changed over time, as the building type matured, and whether certain forms, styles, or materials were preferred over others.

In order to find answers that allowed a certain extent of generalization, the researched time period encompassed the centenary of the “Railway Age” – from approximately 1850, when the railway was firmly established as a modern means of mass transport, till about the time of World War II, after which increasing automobilization led to a rise in individual traffic and a decline of even well-established railway systems.

Geographically, the focus was on Western Europe and North America, because it was

²⁷ Karen Bowie, “L'eclectisme pittoresque” et l'architecture des gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle”, (Dissertation, Université de Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1985); Bowie, Karen, ed., *Les grandes gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1987a). See also chapter 3 of this dissertation.

²⁸ “Paddington Bear” is a popular character from a series of children’s books by Michael Bond. The sculpture is by Marcus Cornish, based on the original book illustrations by Peggy Fortnum, unveiled February 24, 2000.

mainly these early industrialized regions that invented, developed, and promoted railway technology, and accordingly, railway architecture.²⁹ The inclusion of the USA allowed several crucial comparisons: the densely urbanized European regions had to adapt and amend their historically grown infrastructures with the new technologies, while large parts of the United States consisted of rural, undeveloped landscapes where railway tracks often formed the first and only roads. Besides, railway companies in continental Europe were often nationalized long before 1900, while companies in the USA and in Great Britain remained private at least until the 1920s.

The first step was to gain a general idea of the subject matter. By thoroughly going through the published literature – specific publications for railway buffs, general architectural histories, monographs of specific stations, and contemporary journals such as editions of the *Deutsche Bauzeitschrift* (from 1867 till 1920) – enough information was gleaned to sort the obvious subject matter into five groups:

- 1) railway economy
- 2) railway technology – industrialization and globalization
- 3) railway networks – local, national and international
- 4) tourism and
- 5) political propaganda.

These five topics form the structure of the dissertation's main part. A possible sixth group, which would have encompassed different types of monuments and the station as memorial space, had to be excluded, because most of the memorials were installed in hindsight, several years or even decades after the station was opened, and can therefore not be regarded as true *architectural* embellishment.³⁰

The next step was to select the examples to be treated in greater detail. It had soon become very clear that the establishment of a comprehensive catalogue for both the proposed geographic and temporal range would not only be extremely difficult –

²⁹ Most South American, Asian, or African railways were constructed either by Western colonial powers, or at least under the supervision of European (British), or North-American engineers. See Richards and MacKenzie, *The railway station*, 66. The inclusion of South Africa (Johannesburg Park station, chapter 5) is an exception – nevertheless, the artist was raised in the Netherlands, the dominating political classes in South Africa were direct descendants of Dutch and British colonists.

³⁰ The Paris Gare de l'Est extension building doubling as war memorial is an exception. Because of its references to a specific topographical battle site it has been included in Chapter 3 – Railway Infrastructure.

railway stations were constantly modernized, razed, reconstructed, expanded, or targeted and destroyed in numerous wars, all of which made it difficult enough to establish the relevant data for single specific building site, let alone all terminals in one of the larger metropolises. The task of collecting comprehensive data concerning the structures of several nations, or even – as planned – of two continents seemed fruitless, especially since such an encyclopedic approach would probably not yield many interesting results. After all, industrialization (and the ensuing installation of a railway network) spread at a very different pace even within the Western world.

Instead of a merely empirical, quantitative collection of data, an extended analysis of selected railway terminals promised better insights into the ways in which a specific general topic would be implemented in different cities, regions, or nations at different times – both absolute time and developmental time (with regard to the economic, political, and social development of the station's surroundings – e. g., year X of industrialization). Therefore, the dissertation treats more than fifty different station buildings under the headings of the five thematic chapters mentioned above. More than thirty decoration programs have been studied in greater detail.

The selection was based on several criteria:

- a) The state of preservation – a destroyed example (such as Königsberg 1853, or Munich 1860) was only included if the existing documentation allowed for informed inferences.
- b) Access to archival or already published information (monographs; papers; reports on listed monuments; original drawings and/or plans; statements by or interviews with artists/architects/art critics etc) – within the last 150 years, nations were formed and re-formed, wars were fought, railway companies went bankrupt or were reorganized, such that single-handed archival research for more than fifty stations would have been extremely difficult and time-consuming. Whenever possible, already published data was utilized, built upon, and placed into a larger context.
- c) Diversity of material, form, and style – because each topic was expressed in a variety of manners, depending on such criteria as place, time, architectural framing, artistic ability, allotted cost, or representative need, the dissertation tries to present as broad a choice of artistic expression in the formation of the embellishment as possible.

d) Variety in time, location, and public/national ownership – in order to allow conclusions about continuities and variations in the choice and depiction of subject matter, as well as comparisons between embellishment in public (nationalized) and private railway stations, and in different regions and countries, each topic is examined in station programs from different time periods, locations and ownerships. Needless to say that none of these lists are exhaustive or dare make a claim to be complete.

e) Artistic quality – if possible, embellishment by well-trained and well-known artists (with the promise of higher quality) has been preferred to embellishment by unknown or less trained artists. While there are generally but few examples of modern or avant-garde art in station decoration, a surprisingly large number of quite prestigious members of the established academies were commissioned for the execution of station art. Nevertheless, quality is a very “soft” category. If it seemed possible that examples of clearly “bad” art – such as the newest part of the mural above the ticket stalls in Paris Gare de Lyon – could offer interesting socio-historical insights, such examples were included.

Generally, each and all chapters attempt to fulfill the dual goal of both corroborating the alleged general themes and statements with an enumeration of examples while at the same time trying to reveal the meanings and messages of one or more specific station decors through extended analyses. Time and again, the same general message (for instance, “the railway brings prosperity”) would be expressed in very idiosyncratic, locally relevant forms (for instance, referring to specific regional industries), such that similar topics would receive very different treatments. In addition to classic tools from art history and architectural history, embellishment programs were analyzed with methods and questions derived from a variety of fields. Depending on the respective context it was often helpful to include theories from the history of technology, mobility, and economy, as well as social and cultural history, cultural studies, rhetoric, or sociology (including gender studies). Although all examples treated in the following chapters share a common subject matter, their specific executed forms can reach such variety and diversity that a common methodological approach was used to bind the different analyses together, such that some of the individual chapters receive the character of a self-contained, independent paper.

Thus, with regard to content, chapter 1 deals with railway economy. At the same time it is concerned with the preference of academic style over more modern approaches, which was most obvious in the abundant reliance on allegories and symbolic personifications. This can be explained with the railway industry's need for representation and their craving for acceptance by established social groups. Sociological theories, amongst others by Pierre Bourdieu and Georg Simmel, are used to flesh out and back up this explanation, working out the value systems of the industrial middle classes, especially in terms of gender, as underlying precept in station embellishment. While the impact of "class" was most extensively treated in the analysis of New York Grand Central Terminal, notions of gendering are detailed in the sculptural program of Frankfurt/Main. An extraordinarily eroticized version was introduced in the façade reliefs of Paris Gare de Lyon.

Whenever it seemed appropriate or useful, the results of this approach were taken up again in later chapters, where they could lead up to an intersectional approach, such as in the study of the Cincinnati Worker Murals in chapter 2. Because its common topic is railway technology in relation to industrialization and globalization, most of the other examples in this chapter are studies under aspects of economic history (Königsberg, Munich) or technological history (Frankfurt, Philadelphia, Amsterdam Amstel). All examples share a certain propagandistic approach, which cheerfully sells prophecy and wishful thinking as already achieved reality.

Chapter 3 deals with railway networks – within the city, on a regional or national scale, and its international or transnational challenges and opportunities. Aside from the recurrent theme of projecting a wished-for but as yet unfulfilled future as factual truth, the specific examples reveal a wide range of motives for their propaganda: mercantile, tourist, or political interests were at stake. Thus, some railway companies tied links to complementing industries in order to foster business in trade and freight transport (Cincinnati, Amsterdam Centraal), some focused on marketing their destinations to tourists (Paris Gare de Lyon, London Blackfriars), and others placed their networks in a political context (Paris Gare du Nord, Paris Gare de l'Est, Milan Centrale). The latter two topics are further enhanced in the last two chapters.

Chapter 4 focuses on the emerging mass tourism by falling back on the sociological tools established in chapter 1. Nineteenth century travel behavior is thus analyzed under intersectional aspects, focusing on the transformation of the classic aristocratic Grand

Tour (Amsterdam Centraal) into the bourgeois Bildungsreise and its heavily gendered derivate, the honeymoon (Frankfurt/Main), before including the emerging, true mass tourism of the working classes at the beginning of the twentieth century (Amsterdam Muiderpoort). Preferring the immediate impact of landscape art to allegories, the tourism industry took the initiative in forming and selling “place-myths” (Rob Shields) to an urban clientele full of rural nostalgia (Basel SBB, Paris Gare de Lyon Buffet). Across all genres, the tone deemed appropriate for this kind of marketing always preferred an emotionally moving “grand style” over a more sober, informative approach – quite in accordance with the teachings of rhetorical theory.

Chapter 5, finally, focuses on political propaganda, specifically efforts to campaign nation building in three different states: In the USA, the Cincinnati Union terminal mosaics stand for an affirmative campaign after the fact, while in South Africa the Johannesburg Park station landscapes (similar to the two examples from Imperial Germany) represent ongoing campaigns. In both non-European cases, the executing artists depicted the national mythologies with the eyes of an outsider, but as first-generation immigrants believed in them with the fervor of the converted. On the other hand, the examples of the two railway stations in German Reichsland Alsace-Lorraine (Strasbourg and Metz) show how a campaign shifted its direction of impact when it became clear that the propaganda’s target group, the Alsatian population, did not identify as German but as French. For the understanding of the formation of nation states, research by Eric Hobsbawm had been crucial. Additionally, rhetoric and communication theory were helpful, and some methodology was borrowed from and used in analogy to the theory of “Sectarian Tension” developed by Rodney Stark and William S. Bainbridge in order to explain the formation of religious movements.

Thus, the chosen topics in railway station embellishment were by no means arbitrary – they all related to and mirrored aspects of public life introduced and fostered by the railway. Nevertheless the actual realization of these topics, their combination, their particular form, medium, material, and style, were always determined by very specific local factors, so that each station achieved a unique and idiosyncratic appearance of its own that tied it firmly and unambiguously to its urban surroundings.

Chapter 1 Railway Economy – The Class, Gender, and the Industrial Middle Classes

It has been remarked that “transportation, particularly transportation by rail, plays the leading role in the development of agriculture, industry and commerce. It is obviously the vital thing in the growth of cities. Cities untouched and avoided by railroad lines are doomed. They can never grow.”³¹ Consequently, economic topics play a key role in station architectural embellishment. References to trade, industry and agriculture as one of the railway’s main functions belong to the oldest pictorial decorations on railway stations and are amongst the most common, even in small rural stations that hardly sport any figurative decor. The decoration mirrored all aspects of the railway as new economic sector which within decades had created completely new professions, offering thousands of jobs, both within the railways and in complementing sectors. It’s interdependency with industry and agriculture facilitated the transport of freight and labor over long distances and made trade more reliable. But the railway had also quickly become an industry all by its own, and its economy was founded on the same industrial sectors (coal, steel) and the same capitalist principles that also spurred the Industrial Revolution.³² Many, but not all, passenger stations were operated separately from the goods stations, shielding the traveling clients from the aspect – and keeping them out of the way – of hard working freight haulers. Yet, both in terms of revenue and public visibility, the type of monumental passenger station building emerging in nineteenth century metropolises was but the highly polished, glittering tip of the iceberg.

Jeffrey Richards and John M. MacKenzie summarized:

“The station’s prime economic function was as a reception and distribution point for goods of all kinds. The magic castle that is London’s St Pancras Station rests upon a forest of unseen arches, forming a vault which in the railway’s heydays, from the 1870s to the 1920s, housed the thousands of barrels of beer that arrived daily from

³¹ Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, *The Cincinnati Union Terminal Pictorial History: Originally published to commemorate the dedication of Cincinnati Union Terminal March 31, 1933* (Cincinnati, OH, reprint 1987), n. p.

³² Richards and MacKenzie, *The railway station*.

Burton-on-Trent. Nothing could more eloquently express the nature of the Victorian railway system – a towering, splendid, multi-faceted edifice built four-square on a foundation of industry and trade.”³³

Thus, Richards/MacKenzie chose the perfect symbol for the railway’s “foundation of industry and trade”, for the structural details of the building’s basement are hidden away from passengers and clients.

I Old Allegories & Class - Buying into Cultural Capital

Yet, in their figurative decoration most stations were less reticent: embellishments – sculpture, mosaic, lead glass or paintings – included many references to industry and agriculture in general, or to more specific regional economic sectors. Of course, this artful imagery did not aim to faithfully depict the grim and grubby realities of the railway industry. Rather, the artists were forced to develop a completely new set of iconography that allowed them to lend beauty and dignity to the depiction of menial, manual, labor.

The industrial revolution of the nineteenth century had led to an utter shift in long-established social structures. To use the terminology established by Pierre Bourdieu³⁴ – as social classes were no longer discernible by their *economic* capital alone, *cultural* capital became the most important marker for class affiliation, and its adoption an important factor for (upward) social mobility.³⁵ This explains why the industrial middle-classes were modeling their architecture, like all their tastes (their clothes, their language, and their food), after the fashion of the leading upper classes (high bourgeoisie/aristocracy).³⁶ These, of course, once copied, would quietly proceed to

³³ Richards and MacKenzie, *The railway station*, 185.

³⁴ See Pierre Bourdieu, "The forms of capital", in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1986); Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008).

³⁵ See Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 69.

³⁶ Similar thoughts are voiced by Ulrike Gall in the final summary of her dissertation. Ulrike Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters: Motivhistorische Studien zu Kontinuität und Wandel bildlicher Verkörperungen 1870 - 1912* (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre Verlag, 1999), 232–233.

adopt a new style and taste in order to keep distinguishing themselves and preserve their social privileges.³⁷

In an attempt to legitimize their existence within the urban fabric, the architecture of the industrial middle-classes in the nineteenth century, their public buildings (museums, theaters, opera houses, or universities, but also city halls, court halls or stock exchange buildings), emulated in a rather eclectic way patterns and styles once championed by the culturally leading aristocracy. Decorative programs for traditional buildings were borrowed freely from aristocratic antetypes. In the renaissance, ancient mythology had been reinstalled to symbolize human virtues, abilities and abstract intellectual concepts. Since then, palaces and academies had included rich sculptural and pictorial embellishment: theaters were thus adorned with depictions of the Nine Muses, court houses or city halls with allegories of Justice or the Good Reign, universities bore personifications of the liberal arts. Alas, the railway stations, all too recent offspring of the industrial revolution, could not be fitted with symbols equally hallowed by tradition.

The rules of decoration and ornament had trickled down from aristocratic antetypes to the more established public building types named above, as the buildings of the middle classes began to imitate and increasingly to appropriate their functions. On the other hand, the railways and railway architecture were the offspring of the recent industrialization, and thus, similar to “new money”, considered social upstarts which could not deny their working-class roots – and, as many strongly opinionated, should not, either. One of the leading arbiters in cultural capital, the English art critic John Ruskin, was most clear about it, when he wrote:

“There never was a more flagrant nor impertinent folly than the smallest portion of ornament in anything concerned with railroads or near them. [...] Better bury gold in the embankments, than put it in ornaments of the stations. [...] Railway architecture has, or would have, a dignity of its own if it were only left to its work. You

³⁷ See Georg Simmel, "Die Mode", in *Philosophische Kultur: Über das Abenteuer, die Geschlechter und die Krise der Moderne* (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 1998), 43. For a translation of the essay, see Georg Simmel, "Fashion", *The American Journal of Sociology* 62, no. 6 (May, 1957).

would not put rings on the fingers of a smith at his anvil.”³⁸

Despite these strongly voiced reservations, railway stations, from 1850 onwards, received increasingly elaborate décor. Yet, nineteenth century artists concerned with station embellishment gave their best to express the desired relation to economic sectors of all sorts without conveying any aspects of actual manual labor – the dirty, undignified, and therefore inappropriate, working-class roots.

They achieved this by scouring the traditional and accepted form of Greco-Roman mythology and choosing the deities considered most useful and appropriate for their means. Soon, several ancient gods formed the staple of railway iconography: Hermes/Mercury – youthful trickster and messenger of the gods, crosser of boundaries, god of trade, commodities, and travel³⁹ – almost immediately became the most popular and naturally fitting patron deity. His representation can be found in railway stations all over the world. Because his attributes – a staff called *caduceus*, which is decorated with wings and two snakes coiled around its shaft, as well as a winged helmet – are easily recognizable, their inclusion was often enough to complete the allusion. Demeter/Ceres – goddess of crops and fertility⁴⁰ – was a similarly convincing choice for the representation of agriculture. Hephaestus/Vulcan – god of beneficial fire and smithery⁴¹ – soon came to symbolize the iron industry, and in extension all industrial capital. The maiden goddess Athena/Minerva embodies the civilizing forces: both belligerent defender of citadels and cities, and inventive patron of handicrafts, poetry and medicine,⁴² she stood for the crafts and the sciences.

Alone, or in varying compositions, these deities were used for station embellishment all over the western world and remained popular for over a century.

³⁸ John Ruskin, *The seven lamps of architecture* (140; reprint, London: The Electric Book Company, 2001), 115–116. Emphasis added.

³⁹ See Walter Burkert, *Greek religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 156–159.

⁴⁰ See Burkert, *Greek religion*, 159–161.

⁴¹ See Burkert, *Greek religion*, 167–168.

⁴² See Burkert, *Greek religion*, 139–143.

I.1 From Paris Gare du Nord (“Bourla project” 1838) to Cincinnati Union Terminal (1928-33): Classical Mythology Ennobling Railway Architecture

To name but a few examples, already the – not executed – plans for the gate of the first **Gare du Nord (the “Bourla project” of 1838)**, which was to accommodate the lines to Belgium and beyond, was supposed to be “decorated with attributes of commerce and the city arms of Paris [...]”⁴³ as well as the names of the cities served by the line. Not surprisingly, the “attribute of commerce” in question would have been a *caduceus* adorning the pillars framing the station’s gate. (Figure 1-1)

A decade later, the great hall of Philip Hardwick’s **Euston Station of 1848-49** was decorated with a large sculpture group featuring a seated Britannia, clad in helmet and armor, which loomed above the door to the general meeting-room.⁴⁴ (Figure 1-2) Britannia is accompanied by an imperial lion and two deities sitting at her feet: Minerva, at the left, and Mercury, to the right. Unusually, Mercury holds not only his *caduceus*, but also a hammer, which he rests on an anvil to his feet. The appropriation of Vulcan’s attributes clearly signified that the success of British commerce was inextricably interconnected with the iron industry.

Mercury’s head and staff can also be found at Hittorf’s **Paris Gare du Nord (1861-66)**, on a console in the central pediment of the main façade, right below the statue representing the city of Paris (Figure 1-3). Mercury’s head is flanked by two medallions featuring the heads of Neptune (left), and Vulcan (right) (Figure 1-4; 1-5), who together could stand both for their elements water and fire – steam in combination – or industry and sea-faring: from Gare du Nord, trains connect not only with the richest and most active industrial zones of France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Northern Germany, but also with the trading and fishing ports on the French Atlantic coast: Dunkerque, Boulogne, and the important transit port to England: Calais.⁴⁵

In Germany’s **Hannover Hauptbahnhof (1872)**, 22 heads of Mercury were repeated across the façade, alternating with 27 Minerva’s heads, and 16 owls, Minerva’s

⁴³ Karen Bowie, "Les grandes gares parisiennes: historique", in *Les grandes gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle*, ed. Karen Bowie (Paris: 1987b), 99. My translation.

⁴⁴ See N. N., "New Station of the London and North-Western Railway, Euston Square", *The Illustrated London News*, June 2, 381.

⁴⁵ See Henri Lartilleux, *Géographie des Chemins de fer français* (Paris: Édition Chaix, 1962), 114. For information about the city personifications on the façade see chapter 3.

symbol⁴⁶, and the contemporary **Anhalter Bahnhof in Berlin** (1880) was adorned with two large medallions (2 x 2 m) sporting the heads of both Mercury, and Ceres, goddess of the Grain/Agriculture, by Theodor Litke.⁴⁷ In **Bremen Hauptbahnhof (1890)**, Mercury featured even twice: his head adorns the keystone of the arch in the center of the façade (Figure 1-6), and a full bodied sculpture, accompanied by a putto holding a world globe) sits on the left pylon framing the main façade (Minerva with a cogwheel and a putto with an anchor sits on the right pylon).⁴⁸ (Figures 1-7 and 1-8)

The Graeco-Roman mythology remained popular even in the twentieth century: **Milan Stazione Centrale (1913-31)** sports a floor mosaic featuring a caduceus (Figure 1-9), and two medallions with the heads of Vulcan and Mercury. (Figures 1-10, 1-11) There is also a full sculpture of Mercury in the entry hall. (Figure 1-12) At **Gare de Bénédictins in Limoges (1924-29)**, Ceres and Mercury are placed on the sides of the great arch on the Southern, principal façade (figure 1-13).⁴⁹ Almost contemporary, the complete figure of the travel god is shown in relief on the façade of **Cincinnati Union Terminal (1928-33)**, next to a figure symbolizing Transportation (Figure 1-14, 1-15).

Naturally, this list is not remotely complete – there are many more examples, both earlier and later than the ones enumerated here. One of the finest and most famous examples is the sculpture group adorning the monumental clock atop New York’s Grand Central Terminal (1903-1913). The building history of this station also shows exceptionally well the railway industry’s deeply felt need for representation, amplified by the social ambitions of the founder’s family.

I.2 New York Grand Central Terminal (1903-1913): The Glory of Commerce

It is by far not a new insight that the railway companies had a need for prestige and representation which expressed itself in the décor of the metropolitan terminal stations. It has also been stated many times before that the celebration of the latest technologies and economic branches relied on the use of traditional allegorical depiction in order to be acceptable. According to Bowie: “The sculptural ornament of Montparnasse station

⁴⁶ See T. U., "Der Bahnhof zu Hannover", *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, 47, November 23, 1872.

⁴⁷ See Helmut Maier, *Berlin Anhalter Bahnhof* (Berlin: Verlag Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 1984), 212–214.

⁴⁸ See Karl Emil Otto Fritsch, "Der neue Haupt-Personen-Bahnhof in Bremen: Architekt: Professor Hubert Stier in Hannover", *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, 64, August 09, 1890, 383.

⁴⁹ More details later in this chapter.

of 1848-1852 marks a precise moment in that evolution: ‘new’ concepts borrowing an allegoric parlance that could only work thanks to conventions hallowed by centuries of usage.”⁵⁰ Yet, the new allegories quite clearly were very recent inventions and not at all “hallowed by centuries”. Rather, for most of the nineteenth century, artists and critics led a fiery debate about the sense and use of allegories, even if theoretical considerations were immediately led ad absurdum by artistic practice.⁵¹

Traditional were only the historicist architectural styles, which often seemed to be chosen at random. Yet, it was the styles –no matter if Tudor gothic, Italian renaissance, French baroque or neo-classicist – that entailed specific decorative forms. If critics notice the particulars of architectural embellishment at all, they still tend to deplore the uninspired or retrograde forms, the preference for academic artists and the neglect of modern styles expressive of an avant-garde attitude, all of this without a closer look at the modern twists, the evolution of traditional ornament performed by these academicians. Many scholars still struggle with the question – why did the artists choose to invent a vocabulary based on the old grammatical structure of allegory, instead of developing consequently a new language in accordance with the new technologies? – which also becomes evident in the obviously continued need to justify a research interest in nineteenth century allegory.⁵²

Similar questions are posed in the discourses of class. Bourdieu’s addition of “cultural capital” and “social capital” to the already familiar economic capital has made observable the complexities of intra-class relations. In order to be accepted within a very stratified society, owning money is simply not enough – quite the contrary. Being counted among the “nouveau-riche” can even prevent your acceptance within certain circles which at the same time would gladly include persons with less money but an accepted proficiency in “cultural capital” – such as artists, writers, intellectuals. On the other hand, “social capital”, i. e. having or forming personal relations to the “right people”, would help your social success if you were deficient in either of the other

⁵⁰ Bowie, "Les grandes gares parisiennes: historique", 91–92. My translation.

⁵¹ For overviews of the debate see Heinz-Toni Wappenschmidt, *Allegorie, Symbol und Historienbild im späten 19. Jahrhundert: Zum Problem von Schein und Sein* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1984); Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, 7–19; Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 91–101.

⁵² In the context of station embellishment see for instance Elisabeth Walter, "Le Décor", *Monuments Historiques*, no. 6 (1978); Dethier, "L'art et la gare", 178–180; Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, 1–39; see also Bowie Bowie, "Les grandes gares parisiennes: historique", 112.

departments.⁵³ With the help of this framework, a closer look at the decision-processes concerning the design of New York Grand Central Terminal reveals how many representational layers its decoration needed to fulfill. First of all, there is the railway station itself, a new technology, an “upstart” within the established urban fabric. Secondly, there are the representational needs of the Vanderbilt family, a dynasty of nouveau-riches trying to be accepted by the close-knit circle of New York society that was proud of their pre-revolution heritage. And thirdly, the architect’s dream of seeing American art and architecture accepted by the leading academy of the world, the Paris École des Beaux-Arts.

1.2.1 Terminal City: Wilgus, Reed and Stem

The complex processes surrounding the Grand Central Terminal’s construction have been already described several times elsewhere⁵⁴ – among these, Kurt Schlichting’s detailed inquiry into the circumstances of the terminal’s creation, and the resulting impact on New York City urban planning and social life is not only the most recent, but has to be set apart for its original research and shall therefore serve as foremost reference.⁵⁵ The social ambitions of the Vanderbilt family were most clearly described by Elaine Abelson.⁵⁶

The planning process started after a grave accident in 1902, when the Grand Central Railroad line was forced to abandon steam technology and electrify its lines. With rare foresight, the company’s chief engineer William J. Wilgus developed many of the stunning and groundbreaking features that would end up transforming the railway

⁵³ See Bourdieu, "The forms of capital".

⁵⁴ The most important monographs on Grand Central Terminal include William D. Middleton, *Grand Central ...the World's Greatest Railway Terminal* (San Marino, CA: Golden West Books, 1977); Nevins, Deborah, ed., *Grand Central Terminal: City within the City* (New York, NY: Municipal Art Society of New York, 1982b); Kenneth Powell and Andrew Bordwin, *Grand Central Terminal: Warren and Wetmore*, Architecture in detail (London: Phaidon Press, 1996). The terminal was also widely discussed in newspapers, journals, and anthologies amongst these N. N., "New York Central Station Building Started", *Real estate record and builders' guide*, 2124, November 28, 1908; N. N., "Monumental Gateway to a Great City: Completing the Grand Central Terminal, New York", *Scientific American*, December 7, 1912; N. N., "The Grand Central Terminal", *Real estate record and builders' guide*, 2364, July 5, 1913; Ernest G. Rademaker, "Die New York Central Eisenbahn: Grand Central Terminal", *Archiv für Eisenbahnwesen*, no. 62 (1939); Carl W. Condit, *The Port of New York: A history of the rail and terminal system from the grand central electrification to the present* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Peter Pennoyer and Anne Walker, *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore* (New York, London: W.W. Norton, 2006), 78–109.

⁵⁵ Kurt C. Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal: Railroads, engineering and architecture in New York City* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

⁵⁶ Elaine Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection", in *Grand Central Terminal: City within the City*, ed. Deborah Nevins (New York, NY: Municipal Art Society of New York, 1982)

station into a veritable urban center that came to be known as “Terminal City”. As an engineer, he focused on technical details, such as introducing electrification, separating suburban traffic from through service, or the ingenious use of ramps (instead of stairs) within the building, but most importantly he conceived of the revolutionary two-level subterranean design which allowed the development of the “air rights” above ground.⁵⁷

The necessary electrification of the tracks permitted to roof over the former train yard, so that some thirty blocks of prime real estate “in the busiest and most compressed part of the continent”⁵⁸ were freed for future urban planning, generating revenue which in turn would help to cover the costs of the redevelopment. Because the railroad companies “undertook to fashion anew that entire section of the city where the old station stood, to build or cause to be built thirty blocks of buildings in Manhattan, all guided by one hand that would supervise their purposes and direct the general harmony of architecture”⁵⁹, the Grand Central architects could certainly hope to fill many more orders in the decades to come. (Indeed, the development of “Terminal City” continued into the 1930s.)⁶⁰ In the public, too, hopes for the results of the massive undertaking ran high:

“Ultimately, when the whole area shall have been covered in, there will rise upon the site of the old and unsightly yard with its smoke and dirt and noise, a new section of the city, which in the dignity and harmony of its architecture will be unequaled in any part of Greater New York.”⁶¹

It is possible to view the railway station as the equivalent of a social upstart amongst the civic building types forming in the cities of the nineteenth century. Seen in this light, consciously aiming at becoming the gravitational center for new urban development was similar to wanting to become an industrial leader, a tycoon, or a “robber baron” – rich, influential, but not necessarily accepted by the opinion leaders in established

⁵⁷ For Wilgus influence, see especially Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 55–114.

⁵⁸ N. N., “New Grand Central Opens Its Doors: With the Surrounding Buildings It Covers an Area of Thirty City Blocks - Can Accomodate 100,000,000 People a Year”, *The New York Times*, February 2, 1913.

⁵⁹ N. N., “New Grand Central Opens Its Doors: With the Surrounding Buildings It Covers an Area of Thirty City Blocks - Can Accomodate 100,000,000 People a Year”.

⁶⁰ See Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 158–170.

⁶¹ N. N., “Monumental Gateway to a Great City: Completing the Grand Central Terminal, New York”, 487.

society. Grand Central Terminal and Terminal City were revolutionary in their approach to technology and engineering.⁶² But in order to fit in with the urban structure and to be accepted by the rest of the city, the engineer needed the help of an architect.

In 1903, four architectural firms were invited to a limited competition: Daniel Burnham (Chicago), MacKim, Mead and White (New York), Samuel Huckel Jr. (Philadelphia), and Reed and Stem (St. Paul).⁶³ Somewhat surprisingly, the price went to the underdog: the firm of Charles A. Reed (1858–1911) and Allen H. Stem (1856–1931). Then again, Wilgus was married to Charles Reed's sister, and, according to Schlichting "had discussed ideas [with his brother-in-law] for the new terminal at some length before Reed and Stem's formal submission."⁶⁴ Thus, it was easy for the firm to hand in a design that was very close to the ideas that Wilgus had already proposed. At first, it looked like the engineer would get his way.

I.2.2 The Glory of the Vanderbilts: William K. Vanderbilt and Warren and Wetmore

But suddenly, the plans changed. William K. Vanderbilt, the grandson of the company's founder and the sole remaining heir on the board of directors, pulled all his weight to influence the structure and design of the new Grand Central Terminal Station. He cared less about engineering finesse, or income revenue, and more about personal representation. The new building was to symbolize "the power of Vanderbilt's railroad and the role they played in the life of New York City, the state, and the country."⁶⁵

The self-made tycoon Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794-1877), nicknamed "the Commodore", had begun his career in shipping, quickly taking up and profiting of the opportunities offered by steamboats. In the 1860s, he started to concentrate his business efforts on railways. In 1870, with the foundation of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad, "the Commodore" had become the most influential railway tycoon of the United States.⁶⁶ To accommodate the growing freight service he built a freight terminal cum warehouse occupying a whole block south of Canal Street in 1869. Scandalously,

⁶² For detailed descriptions of the astonishing features of engineering necessary for the construction of Grand Central Terminal while keeping service running at all times see N. N., "The Grand Central Terminal", 31; Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 64–80.

⁶³ See Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 118.

⁶⁴ Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 119.

⁶⁵ Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 31.

⁶⁶ See Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 9–26.

the Commodore had in the pediment of this freight depot put up a large bronze memorial to himself, complete with statue (Figure 1-16) and flanking bronze reliefs, an act of immodesty which was much derided and ridiculed, but which clearly displayed his need for recognition.⁶⁷ The incident revealed that economic capital alone was not enough to be socially accepted. The Commodore, although “acknowledged as a leading New York citizen [...] was nevertheless condescended to by the social arbiters of his day.”⁶⁸

In 1871, he built the Grand Central Depot, with much foresight far outside the city, at 42nd street – the new railway station was at the time the only railway terminal serving Manhattan.⁶⁹ It was also the largest station in the world, larger than London’s St. Pancras station – this time, the building itself was supposed to be his memorial.⁷⁰ Yet, his self-celebration was slightly more subtle – no statues, just sheer size and, of course, the naming of Vanderbilt Avenue.⁷¹

When the Commodore died in 1877, he was the richest man in America.⁷² In the eight years after his death, his son William Henry continued to expand the railroad business, more than doubling the already immense family fortune to a staggering \$194 million: The Vanderbilts began building magnificent mansions along Fifth Avenue, gave parties and collected arts, and displayed their wealth by all possible means. According to Abelson, “new heights of extravagance were demonstrated and ever-new ways of consumption were devised for this ‘world of triumphant ostentation.’”⁷³ But still, all their fortune could not buy them “entry into the innermost circle of New York society.”⁷⁴

After William Henry’s sudden death in 1888, his sons Cornelius II and William Kissam took over in a joint legacy.⁷⁵ This third generation set out to spend their money rather than making more, and one of the foremost goals of the socially ambitious wives of the

⁶⁷ See Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection", 113. The artist was Ernst Plassman. An essay with a short description of the statue and its provenance in Dianne Durante, *Forgotten Delights: The Producers: A Selection of Manhattan Outdoor Sculpture* (New York, NY: Forgotten Delights, 2003), 85–93.

⁶⁸ Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection", 112.

⁶⁹ See Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 30.

⁷⁰ See Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection", 113.

⁷¹ See Condit, *The Port of New York*, 95.

⁷² See Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection", 114.

⁷³ Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection", 115.

⁷⁴ Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection", 114.

⁷⁵ See Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 40–47.

nouveau-riches Vanderbilt heirs was to be finally accepted into “good society”.⁷⁶ Although he left the “day-to-day management of the Central [...] in the capable hands of its professional managers” such that “the Vanderbilts eventually came to play the role of minor stockholders”⁷⁷, William K. remained influential on the board of directors (Cornelius ad died in 1899), even after he stepped down from all active management posts in 1903.⁷⁸

William K. Vanderbilt shared his grandfather’s “hunger for public glorification”⁷⁹, as did his wife, Alva Smith – “by all accounts the most socially competitive of all the Vanderbilt women.”⁸⁰ While she undertook to control the design of her private mansion, built after her wishes by Richard Morris Hunt like “a little Chateau de Blois”⁸¹, her husband saw his chance in the reconstruction of Grand Central Terminal. When “his distant cousin and social acquaintance”⁸² Whitney Warren (1864–1943) of the architectural firm Warren and Wetmore⁸³ approached him, eager to be included in the commission, Vanderbilt saw the chance to enforce representative architectural design over functional engineering aimed at the highest revenue.

Whitney Warren had been trained in Paris at the École-des-Beaux-Arts, which counted amongst the best architectural trainings available at the time. Since the 1860s, the École’s neo-classical style, with facades full of columns, level roof lines adorned with sculpture, and spacious yet very functional floor plans, had become very popular for public buildings. The preference for the Beaux-Arts-style –at the time also known “modern French”⁸⁴ – had grown even more after the success of Burnham’s “White City”, a set of impressive but temporary exhibition buildings for the 1895 World Columbian Exhibition in Chicago.⁸⁵ At Vanderbilt’s insistence, Warren and Wetmore,

⁷⁶ See Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 48.

⁷⁷ Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 50.

⁷⁸ See Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection", 119.

⁷⁹ Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection", 113.

⁸⁰ Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection", 117.

⁸¹ Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection", 117.

⁸² Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 121.

⁸³ For detailed information on Whitney Warren and the firm Warren & Wetmore see Pennoyer and Walker, *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore*.

⁸⁴ Pennoyer and Walker, *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore*, 8.

⁸⁵ See Pennoyer and Walker, *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore*, 10–27; Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 135–139; Deborah Nevins, "Grand Central: Architecture as a Celebration of Daily Life", in *Grand Central Terminal: City within the City*, ed. Deborah Nevins (New York, NY: Municipal Art Society of New York, 1982a), 13–14. For more information on Beaux-Arts architecture in the USA, see Drexler and Chafee, *The architecture of the École des Beaux-Arts*; Donald Drew Egbert and David van Zanten, *The beaux-arts tradition in French architecture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,

although never invited to the competition, were included into the work for the terminal, and in 1904 formed Associated Architects with the reluctant original winners, Reed and Stem.

After Wilgus' resignation in 1907, caused by professional disagreements with his employers,⁸⁶ Warrens influence over the design grew. When Charles Reed died suddenly in 1911, his partner Stem was immediately fired and a new contract negotiated with the firm of Warren and Wetmore alone.⁸⁷ Although Warren tried, he did not succeed in eliminating all of the features that had been introduced by the engineer-architects: for example, the controversy around the elevated roadways and interior ramps (as opposed to stairs) lasted for years, and was only decided when the New Haven company (who shared the costs of the building) put their foot down in favor of the ramps and elevated road of the Wilgus plans.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the powerful and monumental Beaux-Arts building that Whitney Warren went on to design would celebrate the achievements of the Vanderbilt family in all its architectural details.

Grand Central Terminal's main façade is on 42nd Street, facing the elevated street level constructed to ease motored traffic flow. (Figure 1-17) It is structured by three arched windows, each flanked by a pair of colossal columns – respective pilasters at the outer edges – giving the impression to span only one instead of the actual five stories within. The narrow strip of wall between the coupled columns is broken up by a rectangular window pane reaching up two-thirds of the neighboring openings; the upper third, which corresponds in size to the semicircular archivolt, is occupied by a standing oval oculus richly framed with sculpted festoons. Above the cornice, a low attic zone hides the low copper roof and stresses the façade's center with a broken segmental pediment

1980); for Beaux-Arts in station design see Meeks, *The railroad station*, 125–134; Sally A. Kitt Chappell, "Urban Ideals and the Design of Railway Stations", *Technology and Culture* 30, no. 2; Special Issue: Essays in Honor of Carl W. Condit (April 1989); for an introduction to Burnham's White City see Clinton Keeler, "The White City and the Black City: The Dream of a Civilization", *American Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (Summer 1950); David F. Burg, *Chicago's White City of 1893* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky,); Carolyn Kinder Carr, *Revisiting the White City: American Art at the 1893 World's Fair* (Hanover: National Museum of American Art and National Portrait Gallery Smithsonian Institution; University Press of New England, 1993);

⁸⁶ See Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 105.

⁸⁷ See Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 112; 115-154.

⁸⁸ See Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 126-28;; Nevins, "Grand Central: Architecture as a Celebration of Daily Life", 15.

housing a monumental Tiffany clock of 13 ft (ca. 4 m) circumference, adorned with the famous statuary group featuring “The Glory of Commerce”. (Figure 1-18)

The interior revolves around the Grand Concourse, a dramatically large central space encompassing five stories. Warren highlighted the dramatic height of the vaulted ceiling by having it decorated with a depiction of the Milky Way, more than 2500 stars in various sizes in gold, some of them represented by light bulbs, on a bright, azure blue background. (Figure 1-19) In a design by popular French artist Paul César Helleu⁸⁹, the most famous of the constellations were outlined as the figures of the zodiac, aiming for astronomical correctness:

“The view presented is a section of the heavens seen from October to March, from Aquarius to Cancer. Extending across the ceiling from east to west are two broad bands of gold, representing the Ecliptic and the Equator. The figures and signs in their relation to one another and to the Ecliptic and Equator are as nearly as possible astronomically correct, it is said. [...] To insure astronomical accuracy and beauty of form, the highest authorities were consulted, among them being Dr. Harold Jacoby of Columbia University.”⁹⁰

The effect was stunning, and the audience overwhelmed. Nevertheless, some know-it-all soon found fault with it, pointing out that the constellations were in fact displayed backward. We will never know if “the highest authorities”, or the artist, or the executing painter⁹¹, failed, or if the ceiling was indeed – as the defenders contested – intended to be viewed “from outside of the solar system”, similar to mediaeval manuscripts.⁹² After destruction by water damage in 1945, panels were glued to the ceiling and hid the stars

⁸⁹ See H. W. S., "Helleu, Paul", in *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künste von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker, and Hans Vollmer (Leipzig: Engelmann,), 16 (1923); E. S., "Helleu, Paul", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon: Die bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten und Völker*, ed. Saur (München: Saur), 71 (2011).

⁹⁰ N. N., "Central Terminal Opening on Sunday: Men Working Day and Night to Finish Main Section of the Great Station", *The New York Times*, January 29, 1913.

⁹¹ The painting was executed by Charles Basing of the Hewlett-Basing Studio, according to N. N., "Central Terminal Opening on Sunday: Men Working Day and Night to Finish Main Section of the Great Station".

⁹² Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 218. See also Nevins, "Grand Central: Architecture as a Celebration of Daily Life", 16.

from view.⁹³ Only after the restoration in 1998 could the starry ceiling again fulfill its “appropriate meaning”, that is “reflect the guidance of travelers of old”.⁹⁴

The ceiling opens on both sides into arched windows whose lunettes were richly carved with two alternating motives designed by Sylvain Salières (1865-1920).⁹⁵ The first shows a globe adorned with Mercury’s staff. (Figure 1-20) The second features the winged wheel that symbolizes around the world the speed of the railway, adorned with lightning bolts to signify the line’s recent electrification. (Figure 1-21) Both motives are furnished with leafy branches of oak and laurel. The latter, of course, is an ancient symbol of glory, while the former cunningly incorporated the adopted family crest of the Vanderbilts: three acorns and the motto “Great oaks from little acorns grow”.⁹⁶ Oak leaves and acorns reminded the family of their humble origins, and at the same time represented strength and longevity.⁹⁷ The motive is repeated everywhere in the station ornament – above the entrance to the railroad tracks as well as in the stonework of the water fountains, the windows frames, or the design of the magnificent chandeliers.

The ornamentation of Grand Central Terminal was praised for their “admirable restraint and sense of composition, although in places they fairly seem to spill from the stone of the building.”⁹⁸ The reviewer exulted that the ornamentation’s subject matter was appropriate to a railway station, symbolizing “in an original way ... commerce and its consequent abundance.”⁹⁹ In a European context, especially in the elaborate architecture of the *École des Beaux-Arts*, the correspondence of function and décor would have been all but taken for granted. In the United States, this attention to detail was still rare at the time. But the ornament did not alone celebrate the railway; it also celebrated the House of Vanderbilt. When Abelson observed that “there are no clear links between the Vanderbilts and the modern Grand Central. The family seems to have been

⁹³ See Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 218.

⁹⁴ N. N., "The Great Railway Terminal of the Future: "It will be a Way Station", says Whitney Warren, Chief Architect of the Grand Central", *The New York Times*, February 9, 1913.

⁹⁵ See N. N., "Salières, Sylvain", in *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künste von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker, and Hans Vollmer (Leipzig: Engelmann), 29 (1935); N. N., "Salières, Sylvain", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon: Die bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten und Völker*, ed. Saur (München: Saur), 8 (2000).

⁹⁶ See Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection", 116.

⁹⁷ Tschirch, John, and Carolyn Pitts, "The Breakers: (Cornelius Vanderbilt II House)." <http://www.nps.gov/nhl/designations/samples/ri/breakers.pdf> (accessed May 27, 2011).

⁹⁸ N. N., "New York's Grand Central Terminal Gets Decoration: Group on Grand Central terminal by Jules Coutan", *The Christian Science Monitor*, Aug 1914.

⁹⁹ N. N., "New York's Grand Central Terminal Gets Decoration: Group on Grand Central terminal by Jules Coutan".

conspicuously uninvolved”¹⁰⁰, her notion is openly contradicted by the ubiquitous references to the Vanderbilt coat of arms in station embellishment.

I.2.3 The Glory of the Architect: The Example of the French École des Beaux-Arts

Just like their private homes, the architecture of Grand Central Terminal was a public statement: the splendor of the materials, the generous use of space, and the customized ornamental details aimed at emphasizing the Vanderbilt’s place within the elect circles of New York society. The success of this message was closely tied to the architectural language fashionable at the time.

And what was fashionable at the time was defined by the unchallenged social arbiter, Mrs. William B. Astor (née Caroline Webster Schermerhorn), and her elect “circle of four hundred”.¹⁰¹ In matters of style, Mrs. Astor and her circle directed their gaze firmly across the ocean, to Europe, to France – amongst the most fashionable artisans decorating many of the private summer mansions in Newport, Rhode Island, was the Parisian interior designer Jules Allard and Sons.¹⁰² In such times, an architect like Whitney Warren, who came from within their own circle, and was moreover educated at the foremost French institute for architecture, the École des Beaux-Arts, had bright prospects.¹⁰³ Warren’s education in Paris soon began to pay off. The taste for European style also explained his own preference for hiring European artists who were used to such designs.

It is clear that Whitney Warren’s success as an architect in New York was intrinsically linked to his relations to the Paris École des Beaux-Arts. After a brief stint at Columbia University’s School of Architecture, whose curriculum he had found uninspiring, Warren left in 1884 for Paris. In 1887, he matriculated at the École, receiving his customary practical education in the atelier of Honoré Daumet and Charles Louis Girault. He was promoted to first class studies in 1891, but had not yet received an official diploma by the time he returned to New York in 1891.¹⁰⁴ After an initial success with the Newport Country Club (1894), Warren’s architectural career remained static

¹⁰⁰ Abelson, "The Vanderbilt Connection" 119.

¹⁰¹ Frederic Cople Jaher, "Nineteenth-Century Elites in Boston and New York", *Journal of Social History* 6, no. 1 (Autumn 1972).

¹⁰² See Thomas Gannon and Paul Miller, *Newport Mansions* (Newport, RI, 2010).

¹⁰³ See Pennoyer and Walker, *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore*, 10–27.

¹⁰⁴ See Pennoyer and Walker, *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore*, 11.

for several years.¹⁰⁵ It would only take off after he met the lawyer Charles Wetmore, who had invested in and developed real estate around Harvard University even during his time in law school. In 1898, the two men joined forces, and the combination of Warren's sense for design and Wetmore's mind for business was the foundation for the success of the firm.¹⁰⁶

Warren always stayed in contact with his European Alma Mater. In 1894, he and other alumni of the École established the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects in order to "keep the old crowd together [...] and to hand on the torch to those who were to come after us in our own country."¹⁰⁷ Together with his brother Lloyd, who had followed in his footsteps, and received his French diploma in 1900, he initiated informal ateliers, and founded several prizes for architectural students, which in turn led to the accreditation of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, a formal course of architectural studies based on the principles of the École.¹⁰⁸

For his efforts in adapting the French curriculum for the education of American architects he even was made a foreign correspondent of the section of architecture of the Academy of Fine Arts. In 1906, the New York Tribune reported:

"The initiative taken by the New-York Beaux Arts Architects in training American architects and draughtsmen according to the system prevailing at the French School of Fine Arts is followed with great interest in Paris. [...] The modification of the rules of the French School of Fine Arts, obtained from the faculty last year by Whitney Warren, of New-York, now enables young American architects who have obtained at home the Prix de Paris to study for two years with the students of the first class at the School of Fine Arts without undergoing the examinations hitherto required before leaving the second class."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ See Pennoyer and Walker, *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore*, 15–19.

¹⁰⁶ See Pennoyer and Walker, *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore*, 19–24.

¹⁰⁷ Whitney Warren quoted in Pennoyer and Walker, *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore*, 26.

¹⁰⁸ See Pennoyer and Walker, *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore*, 26–27.

¹⁰⁹ C. I. B., "Americans Honored: Those Who Have Been Made Academicians of France", *The New York Tribune*, Jan 15, 1906.

There is no doubt that Warren was very proud of this distinction, which he shared with only eight other Americans, most of them scientists. Also, he knew how to take advantage of his close connections – he consciously employed them to strengthen his position and the position of his architecture within a society that openly looked to the Old World for leadership in cultural capital. This becomes obvious in the genesis of the key element of Grand Central Terminal’s southern façade: the “Glory of Commerce” by Jules Félix Coutan. (Figure 1-18)

“The Glory of Commerce” by Jules Félix Coutan

The most notable feature of the sculpture group is its immense size: standing fifty feet tall (14, 60 m), it spans almost sixty feet (18, 30 m), and weighs fifteen hundred pounds (680 kg).¹¹⁰ Mercury stands top center, holding his staff, the *caduceus*, in his outstretched left. He wears his trademark winged helmet and some loose drapery, which billows behind him, at the same time conveniently covering his nudity. His elegant *contrapposto* stance is weakened by an eagle peering around the standing right leg and spreading his wings to both sides of Mercury’s loins, thus giving the strange impression of pushing the half standing, half flying god off of his pediment.

Mercury is accompanied by two reclining figures framing the clock: The male figure to the left is usually identified as Hercules, although he lacks his usual attributes of gnarly club and lion’s skin,¹¹¹ and is instead depicted amidst an anchor, cogwheel, anvil and hammer, as well as a beehive, grapes, wheat ears and a sickle – the piece of fur covering his nudity is not visible from below. He seems in the act of rising, pushing himself up with his left and turning his torso, his bearded face gazing at Mercury above him. (Figure 1-22)

The female figure to the right rests her head on her left arm while she ponders the roll of parchment spread out in her lap, her right hand ready to take notes with a pencil. A globe, a measuring compass, volumes of books and thick wreaths of laurel all lead to her identification with Minerva, goddess of Wisdom, but also of the Crafts. (Figure 1-23)

¹¹⁰ See Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 209.

¹¹¹ See Burkert, *Greek religion*, 209.

The existing literature has hardly paid attention to the sculpture and its French origins. In fact, most authors do not seem to have given a second glance to the completed statue, just as most of them obviously never bothered to check the name of the artist. Various given as “Jules Coutant”¹¹², “Jules-Alexis Coutan”¹¹³, or “Jules Alexis Coulan”¹¹⁴, his name was in fact Jules Félix Coutan (1848-1939).¹¹⁵ Coutan, who had become professor at École des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1900 and professor at Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1905, had worked at the Grand Central sculpture from 1907 until 1913.¹¹⁶ The circumstances of his engagement are unclear, but according to the *New York Times*, Coutan “was chosen by Whitney Warren, the architect, for the execution of a work of art that will be one of the most conspicuous in New York.”¹¹⁷

Thus it seems that he was hired directly by Whitney Warren, without a public competition – when he died, 30 years later, the *New York Times* reported: “His selection by Whitney Warren, the architect, over American sculptors caused considerable comment.”¹¹⁸ This procedure denied American sculptors any chance of securing this prestigious assignment, although there must have been any number of talented artists in the US – if no other, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, who shared with Warren the honor of being a correspondent of the Paris Academy of Fine Arts.¹¹⁹

Indeed, the *New York Times* commented: “That American sculptors, such as Bartlett and Grafly, MacMonnies and Barnard, were passed over has been the cause of some criticism”, adding graciously

“but I do not think American artists are themselves envious on this account. They are satisfied that their own country should possess as many examples as possible of the kind of work for which foreign countries show the

¹¹² N. N., “Facade of the Terminal the Key to the Structure”, *The New York Times*, February 2, 1913.

¹¹³ See Middleton, *Grand Central*, 72; Nevins, *Grand Central Terminal*, 16; Powell and Bordwin, *Grand Central Terminal*, 15.

¹¹⁴ Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 144.

¹¹⁵ See Hans Vollmer, “Coutan, Jules Félix”, in *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künste von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker, and Hans Vollmer (Leipzig: Engelmann,), 8 (1913).

¹¹⁶ See K. S.-D., “Coutan, Jules Félix (Jules)”, in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon: Die bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten und Völker*, ed. Saur (München: Saur), 22 (2009). The original Thieme-Becker entry does not yet list the New Yorker Mercury Group as it appeared in print already in 1913.

¹¹⁷ Special Correspondence, “Holds Poor Opinion Of American Art”, *New York Times*, May 31, 1912.

¹¹⁸ N. N., “Jules Coutan: French Sculptor Had Executed a Grand Central Terminal Group”, *New York Times*, Feb 24, 1939. Unfortunately, none of the alleged comments could be found in contemporary publications of the relevant major newspapers.

¹¹⁹ See C. I. B., “Americans Honored: Those Who Have Been Made Academicians of France”.

highest appreciation, rightly thinking that this is one of the best means of advancing popular education in art.”¹²⁰

The assessment of Michele Bogart, a specialist on New York public sculpture of the time, reads differently:

“Most American sculptors would have jumped at the chance to have this commission, described by the New York Times as the largest in the world. But even at a time when enthusiasm for civic sculpture was at a height, architect Whitney Warren chose to hire a Frenchman, Jules A. Coutan [sic] –a clear sign that American sculptors had not achieved unconditional support for their work.”¹²¹

In other words, by hiring a well established European artist, professor of the *École des Beaux-Arts* and the *Académie des Beaux-Arts*, member of the Belgian Royal Academy, officer of the French Legion of Honor, Warren tried to transfer all these honors onto his own project, thus adding further artistic legitimation to his American architecture.

Yet, although the Grand Central sculpture group is very European in its form, its accepted meaning is quite distinct from its European counterparts. It seems that Whitney Warren was mainly responsible for the message, which he personally published and repeated several times in both professional and public media, and which is duly reiterated in all standard publications about the terminal:

“Such is the Grand Central Terminal, and the motive of its façade is an attempt to offer a tribute to the glory of commerce as exemplified by that institution. The architectural composition consists of three great portals, crowned by a sculptural group, the whole to stand as a monument to the glory of commerce as typified by Mercury, supported by moral and mental energy – Hercules and Minerva. All to attest that this great enterprise has grown and exists, not merely from the wealth expended, nor by the revenue derived, but by the

¹²⁰ Special Correspondence, "Holds Poor Opinion Of American Art".

¹²¹ Michele Helene Bogart, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City, 1890-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 377.

brain and brawn constantly concentrated upon its development for nearly a century.”¹²²

It does not matter that the demigod Heracles/Hercules, according to Greek mythology¹²³, was never known for his great “moral energy” – Warren’s “brain and brawn” interpretation hit a mark with the American audiences and has never been seriously questioned. The belief that individual efforts, both mental and physical (or moral?), will implicitly also serve the greater good of the community lies at the heart of American capitalism, of which the “robber baron” Vanderbilt was a prime exponent.

The French sculptor, on the other hand, obviously had some difficulty to express the – in the context of European station decoration – rather unusual idea. Although commissioned as early as 1907, work on the composition took much longer than expected. The *Christian Science Monitor* reported that when Coutan “was asked to expedite it, [he] declined to be hurried, saying that he was putting his reputation into the work.”¹²⁴ At the time of an interview published on May 31, 1912, the composition seemed not yet arrived at a final stage, so that he refused to talk about it in detail.

Nevertheless, he readily provided detailed information about the “general conception”:

“The group, of course, will be heroic in scale, and it will stand forth boldly, as is necessary for sculptured figures placed at a great height. For the purpose in view the work must combine the classical and the symbolical, but slavish conventionalism will not satisfy modern taste. The difficulty of the problem which I have before me is to give the vitality of the present to a symbolism that is consecrated by centuries of literature and art and philosophy. I think I shall succeed, but I do not underrate my task.

¹²² Whitney Warren, “Apologia”, *Scientific American*, December 7, 1912; first quoted in N. N., “Facade of the Terminal the Key to the Structure”; N. N., “Massive Sculptures of City’s Newest Station”, *The New York Tribune*, May 31, 1914., also in Middleton, *Grand Central*, 72; Nevins, *Grand Central Terminal*; Powell and Bordwin, *Grand Central Terminal*, 31; etc. , and even the official website: <http://www.grandcentralterminal.com/info/walkingtour.cfm>, *Destination Grand Central: The Grand Central Self-Guided Tour*; available from <http://www.grandcentralterminal.com/info/walkingtour.cfm>; Internet; accessed May 27, 2011.

¹²³ See Burkert, *Greek religion*, 208–212.

¹²⁴ N. N., “New York’s Grand Central Terminal Gets Decoration: Group on Grand Central terminal by Jules Coutan”. A more colorful anecdote, featuring the Grand Central President Newman calling personally on the artist, is related by N. N., “Massive Sculptures of City’s Newest Station”.

My central figure is Mercury, the god of speed, of traffic and of the transmission of intelligence. This much of the classical seems obligatory. On one side of him will be represented Physical Force, modern mechanical industry and skill, and on the other Intellectual Force, in its multiple manifestations. That is as much as I can permit you to say now. It will be some months before the group will be fully modeled.”¹²⁵

An important clue shedding some light on Coutan’s difficult design progress is a drawing published by Kenneth Powell in his 1996 book on Grand Central Terminal.¹²⁶ (Figure 1-24) Powell titles it “Detail of 42nd Street elevation showing Coutan’s original proposal dated 1910”, yet the inscription in the lower right corner states “REVISED - FEB 10 1910”, suggesting that at least one earlier design had already been rejected.¹²⁷

The composition in the drawing is similar to the final version, but differs in several important ways: Mercury is not standing, but seated on the eagle, holding his staff in the right hand (not the left). More importantly, both accompanying figures are bearded men, reclining in classical nudity and only scarcely covered by billowing drapery which lends them a rather baroque appearance. The left man’s head is veiled and he shields his eyes with his left arm, while playing with a compass in his right. Because both figures are similarly attributed with cog-wheels, anvils, compass, and set square, it is unclear which of them symbolizes Physical Force, and which Intellect – especially as both are also similarly muscular and reclining in a pensive pose. It comes as no surprise that the design was sent back once more to be modified into expressing its message more clearly.

Another reason for the rejection of the drawing could be the all too open lack of really original design. In fact, the composition shown is strikingly reminiscent of Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux’s “Imperial France Bringing Light to the World and Protecting

¹²⁵ Special Correspondence, "Holds Poor Opinion Of American Art".

¹²⁶ Powell and Bordwin, *Grand Central Terminal*, 56–57.

¹²⁷ Unfortunately, Powell’s illustration acknowledgements, given for the drawings on pages 49-59, are unclear.

Agriculture and Science”, executed 1863-1866 for the South façade of the Pavillon de Flore at the Louvre palace in Paris.¹²⁸ (Figure 1-24).

There, two reclining figures symbolizing science (to the left) and agriculture (to the right) frame a crowned, half nude woman signifying Imperial France. She is seated on a flying eagle and holds a torch in her outstretched right hand. Coutan simply exchanged “Imperial France” for “Mercury” – changing the gender, substituting the crown with the winged helmet and the torch with the *caduceus* – otherwise the composition is nearly identical. But for the final version he had to include some more obvious changes to make his borrowings less conspicuous – thus, Mercury would later stand up and hold the staff in his other hand, while the eagle would peer around from the other side. Unfortunately, the bird makes more sense as a mount for the seated figure of “France” within the original composition than as a companion for the standing Mercury in New York.

Equally similar are the appearance and posture of “Science” – pensive, with the covered head propped up on the left elbow, which rests on books, the left hand shielding the eyes, the right holding a compass – and “Agriculture” – alert, arms crossed before the chest and propped up on the back of a reclining cow (Carpeaux) or the curve of the clock (Coutan). For the final version, Coutan would reverse the action of the figures as well as introducing more specific mythological deities: The concentrated study of sciences embodied by Minerva would appear on the right side, while the more active persona of Hercules, combining Force, Industry and Agriculture in his stance, would be moved to the left.

Thus, the final design borrowed less heavily from Carpeaux’s finished piece, but the result is still pretty conventional. Mercury was already regarded as “obligatory”, and Minerva, goddess of the sciences and crafts, was of course a natural and well established choice for the depiction of “Intellectual Force”. The only real deviation from already canonical iconography was Hercules as symbol for “Physical Force”, especially as it was specified as “modern mechanical industry and skill”. Usually these features were symbolized by Vulcan.

The Greco-Roman god of fire and metalworking served as an ideal and very common metaphor for the modern (steel) industry. Even the combination of Mercury, Vulcan and

¹²⁸ See N. N., "Carpeaux, Jean-Baptiste", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon: Die bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten und Völker*, ed. Saur (München: Saur), 16 (1997).

Minerva was not at all unusual. There are similar programs, for instance in **Mainz Hauptbahnhof (1884)**, where the deities were combined with modern personifications of Industry and Agriculture.¹²⁹ (Figures 1-26, 1-27, 1-28, 1-29, 1-30)

Because the Grand Central Hercules was equipped with so many attributes typical of Vulcan – the anchor, cogwheel, anvil and hammer – while lacking the more visible props typical for his own appearance – gnarly club, lions fur with the head still attached – it would have been difficult to correctly identify the demigod if it had not been for Warren’s effective marketing of the “official” interpretation. Even the inclusion of agricultural products like grapes or corn, which would extend the industrial meaning of Vulcan to further aspects of the economy, was already well established. The bee-hive, too, ancient symbol for diligence and frugality, had extended its meaning from the literal Latin “*industria*”,¹³⁰ to a more general “accumulation of capital” (as in **Antwerp Centraal Station, 1905**).¹³¹ (Figure 1-31)

Coutan was still grappling with the final composition between February 1910 (date of the preliminary drawing) and May 1912 (date of the interview cited above), but he must have found his solution soon after that. In December 1912, Warren published his “Apologia”, both announcing and interpreting the sculpture group.¹³² In an article dated February 2, 1913, the readers of the New York Times learn that “one model in plaster rests over the fireplace in the office of Whitney Warren”, but that “the working model from which the group is to be fashioned is still in the Paris atelier of Jules Coutant [sic]”.¹³³ Said working model was much larger than the plaster cast on Warren’s mantelpiece – a quarter of the size of the final group.¹³⁴ It was sent to the firm of William Bradley and Sons of Long Island City, who started transposing it to full size into Bedford lime stone on December 1, 1913 and finished, thanks to the collaboration with John Donnelly and Ricci, only five months later.¹³⁵ According to a postcard

¹²⁹ See Schomann, Heinz, and Volker Rödel, eds., *Kulturdenkmäler in Hessen*, 3 vols., Denkmaltopographie Bundesrepublik Deutschland, vol. 2.1 (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2005), 2.1: 232f.

¹³⁰ See Ernst Seidler, ""Wissen ist Macht! Einigkeit macht stark!": Vortrag, gehalten am 8. Februar 1859 im Gewerbeverein zu Dresden", *Friedrich Georg Wieck's Deutsche Gewerbezeitung* 24, no. 2 (1859), 73; Cäcilia Rentmeister, "Berufsverbot für die Musen", *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* 7, no. 25 (1976), 101.

¹³¹ See Sebald, *Austerlitz*, 13.

¹³² See Whitney Warren, "Apologia".

¹³³ N. N., "Facade of the Terminal the Key to the Structure".

¹³⁴ See N. N., "World's Largest Sculpture Group For New York: Figures for Grand Central Station Are 50 Feet High", *The New York Times*, June 14, 1914.

¹³⁵ See Nevins, *Grand Central Terminal*, 16. This approach made sense: Coutan could hardly be persuaded to leave Paris for several years in order to work on a single if immense sculpture; and a

annotation by Warren (figure 1-32),¹³⁶ the finished sculpture was finally put into place on July 11, 1914, almost exactly one and a half year after the official opening of the new terminal on February 1, 1913.¹³⁷ Facing south, whence the metropolis slowly grew northwards past 42nd street, and visible from afar, the “Glory of Commerce” lends strong emphasis to the portal of the building. Thus, the sculpture group put very literally the finishing touch to the design of the terminal.

Nevertheless, Coutan’s final version was – at least in a European context – less unorthodox than he would have the public believe. While including Hercules into railway environment was indeed an unusual idea, he approached his appearance as close to the established iconography of Vulcan as to make them almost interchangeable to the uninformed observer. Not only his iconography is conventional; but also his composition relies heavily on classical examples. Yet, within the United States, architectural sculpture stood in a different tradition – and on a different level. Coutan might not have spent much effort on a truly original design for his group – possibly his open contempt for the state of American Art¹³⁸ led him to believe that whatever he delivered would be good enough – but within the United States, far away from the European originals serving as examples for both iconography and composition, his statue was truly exceptional and unique, not only in its impressive size, but also in both content and form.

The complex planning and construction history of Grand Central Terminal is well documented and the many different actors are credited for their individual contributions. Despite their different interests, the resulting building is still stunning today, both for its engineering, its functionality and its representative Beaux-Arts-style. While functional features such as the internal passenger ramps or the elevated road leading around the building are usually attributed to Wilgus, Reed and Stem, researchers agree that

transatlantic shipping of the finished group would have been difficult, costly and dangerous to the artwork. It was therefore a common procedure for artists at the time to create a scale model in clay or plaster and then “outsource” the actual carving to a stonemason working on-site. For a very detailed account of the technical challenges of producing a sculpture of this size and weight see N. N., "Massive Sculptures of City's Newest Station".

¹³⁶ Published by Nevins, *Grand Central Terminal*, 16; Powell and Bordwin, *Grand Central Terminal*, 16, figure 28.

¹³⁷ See N. N., "New Grand Central Opens Its Doors: With the Surrounding Buildings It Covers an Area of Thirty City Blocks - Can Accomodate 100,000,000 People a Year".

¹³⁸ See Special Correspondence, "Holds Poor Opinion Of American Art".

Whitney Warren was mainly responsible for the architectural design, including the ornamentation.

It could be said that the engineer Wilgus, and his architectural team of Reed and Stem, were ahead of their times. Without many of their features, the terminal would not have been able to hold its position in the urban fabric of Manhattan for more than hundred years: electrification, which enabled them to go underground; the consequential development of the air rights which led to Terminal City, the segregation of local commuter traffic and long distance passengers, the use of ramps instead of stairs – all this led to the functional success of the Grand Central and secured its place at the heart of New York City.¹³⁹ Schlichting attests the plans for Terminal City to have been successful: “Grand Central still resonates with the life and vitality of the city and functions efficiently almost one hundred years after Wilgus first wrote to the president of the New York Central and presented his revolutionary plans.”¹⁴⁰ Yet, in order to capture the imagination of the New Yorkers, the new buildings had to take an established and representative architectural form.

This form was sought after by William K. Vanderbilt and provided by Whitney Warren of Warren and Wetmore. Being himself a member of the highest social circles, Warren knew exactly what his clients wished for. Having received his professional training at the Paris École des Beaux-Arts, he knew how to combine a functional floor-plan with representational, even monumental, architecture, generous use of space and customized sculptural detail. The beauty of his design rubbed off on the name of Vanderbilt, whose name was still closely connected to the Grand Central, even if they had given over the reigns to other management several years ago. Not content with that, Warren distributed subtle clues to the Vanderbilt dynasty by repeating details of their family crest – acorns and oak leaves – everywhere in the station ornament. Later, when the fame of the “Commodore” had moved from recent memory to the realm of legend, more obvious references were added: In 1929, the initially much derided statue of the “Commodore” was relocated from St. Paul Freight Depot and put up on the elevated street facing 42nd street,¹⁴¹ and later still the former waiting room would be renamed “Vanderbilt Hall”.

¹³⁹ Even today, similar plans of urban redevelopment made possible by subterranean stations (for instance Stuttgart 21), are presented as amongst the most modern and innovative.

¹⁴⁰ Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal*, 130.

¹⁴¹ See Durante, *Forgotten Delights: The Producers*, 90.

Part of Warren's success lay in the fact that, due to his French education, he could provide the "cultural capital" necessary to be accepted by the arbiters of New York society. What was considered "good" in art, and especially in architecture, had to come from Europe, especially Paris, and a formal education in the Old World was not only technically more sound (in comparison with the institutions in the USA) but remained also more accepted by the social elites. The European artists on the other hand – Helleu, Salières, and especially Coutan – were equally convinced of the superiority of European art and the fact that they were preferably hired over American artists seemed to confirm their opinion. Coutan not only announced his disdain in public,¹⁴² a fact that was never forgotten,¹⁴³ but even went so far as to design a sculpture group that showed so few original ideas that only its US-American setting saved it from being run-off-the-mill. Yet, while its composition certainly looks European, its meaning – as devised and popularized by Whitney Warren – is in fact quite American in celebrating not the abstract possibilities or the general technology behind the railway phenomenon, but the very specific individual who had created the Grand Central line: the Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, who had concentrated his "brain and brawn constantly [...] upon its development."¹⁴⁴ In order to be accepted within the existing social structures, the parvenu copied the traditional forms, but instilled them with his own values, gave them his own twist, and went beyond their established meaning to make it his own. The mixture of Old World form and New World content lies at the heart of Grand Central Terminal's success.

II New Allegories & Gender - Symbolic Personifications Reflecting Middle-Class Gender Notions

Industrialization and the ensuing rise of the industrial middle-classes led to an increase in urbanization and prosperity, while at the same time mass production made many goods for the first time both necessary and affordable for large part of the population. The old cultural elites, who had defined matters of "art" and "taste" both as producers and clients for most of European history, were increasingly marginalized: on the one hand, the sheer pressure of demand could no longer be fulfilled by the number of alumni of the traditional academies and schools, on the other hand, the nouveau-riche

¹⁴² See Special Correspondence, "Holds Poor Opinion Of American Art".

¹⁴³ See N. N., "Jules Coutan: French Sculptor Had Executed a Grand Central Terminal Group".

¹⁴⁴ Whitney Warren, "Apologia".

clientele of the industrial middle-classes themselves often lacked the education (i. e. the cultural capital) to “properly” judge the quality of the production of architecture, art and design. Thus, there was enough insecurity in terms of cultural capital to shy away from the naked functionalism of the “Iron Age” – instead, historicizing elements were used to help “cover up the social realities of societies”¹⁴⁵ while at the same time aiding in the ongoing search of national identity. Before this background, artists, critics, and art historians disputed in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century whether allegories were still an appropriate medium to express abstract ideas, or whether they should be abolished as outdated, dry, and obscure.¹⁴⁶

At the same time, even though the antique gods remained in use until far into the twentieth century, artists felt the need to develop a new symbolic language to grapple with the appropriate depiction of inventions, new technologies and new social realities generated by the Industrialization. Assiduously, they invented new personifications for contemporary phenomena, and for increasingly specific ideas and concepts. Usually, these used the model “woman in timeless drapery with attribute”, popularized since the late sixteenth century by the influential emblem maker Cesare Ripa and his followers.¹⁴⁷ Iconographically, the resulting figures were usually very conventional and tended to resemble each other greatly, although they varied, of course, in their degree of artistic skill. While most of these new allegories were designed to visualize ever more specialized branches of industry, agriculture, or technology, some of them aimed at

¹⁴⁵ Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 85.

¹⁴⁶ Influential critics were f. i. Jacob Burckhardt, “Die Allegorie in den Künsten: 1887”, in *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Emil Dürr (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1933); Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, 1st edition, Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, vol. 225 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2004), 225. A commented collection of texts of the 19th century discussion was published by Bengt Algotz Sørensen, *Allegorie und Symbol: Texte zur Theorie des dichterischen Bildes im 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert*, 1st edition (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1972). For further discussion e. g. Wappenschmidt, *Allegorie, Symbol und Historienbild im späten 19. Jahrhundert*; Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, esp. 21-30; Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 91–101.

¹⁴⁷ Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia* (Rome, 1593). First french translation César Ripa, Jacques de Bie and I. Baudoin, *Iconologie, ou, Explication nouvelle de plusieurs images, emblemes, et autres figures hyeroglyphiques des vertus, des vices, des arts, des sciences, des causes naturelles, des humeurs differentes & des passions humaines: oeuvre augmentée d'une seconde partie, necessaire à toute sorte d'esprits.../tirée des recherches & des figures de Cesar Ripa; moralisées par I Baudoin; [gravées en cuivre par Jacques de Bie]* (Paris, 1643; reprinted Dijon, 1990). First English translation Caesar Ripa and J. Fuller, *Iconologia or Moral Emblems by Caesar Ripa ... illustrated with three hundred and twenty-six humane figures, with their explanations, newly design'd and engraven on copper by J. Fuller, Painter, and other masters* (London, 1709). A very successful collection of contemporary allegories was published by Gerlach, Martin, ed., *Allegorien und Embleme: Originalentwürfe von den hervorragendsten modernen Künstlern, sowie Nachbildungen alter Zunftzeichen und moderne Entwürfe von Zunftwappen im Charakter der Renaissance* (Wien: Gerlach & Schenk, 1882). For Gerlach see Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 98–101.

general themes, competing directly with the already established mythological personifications.¹⁴⁸

II.1 From Paris Gare Montparnasse (1849-1852) to Strasburg Central Station (1878-1883): New Female Personifications Substituting Mythology

Thus, standard personifications of “Lady Industry” and “Lady Agriculture” began to appear next to Vulcan and Ceres, for instance in **Paris Gare Montparnasse** (1849-1852). In her seminal books on the history of the Parisian terminals,¹⁴⁹ Bowie described two feminine figures representing “Agriculture” and “Industry” by Hubert Lavigne (1818-1882).¹⁵⁰ They are no longer preserved, but an identical theme was used for the decoration of **Paris Gare d’Austerlitz** (1862-70).

Two statues by Elias Robert are situated before the framing pilasters on both corners of the vestibule’s façade.¹⁵¹ Although placed high up on the cornice dividing the two levels of the façade, they are just visible for the pedestrian from below. To the left, Lady Agriculture stands very erect on a low pedestal, a wreath of grain like a crown on her locks, the left hand on her hip holding a sickle and her right hand a bushel of wheat. Behind her, there is a bundle of straw, and two wheels and a drawbar hint at a wagon. To bring the message across clearly for everyone, the pedestal bears the inscription “L’AGRICULTURE”. The statue is signed “Elias Robert, 1867” on the lower left hand side. (Figure 1-33)

The right hand figure rests her right arm leisurely against a small locomotive engine, while pressing an urn with her left hand against her body. Several tools, such as anvil, hammer and possibly a cog-wheel are piled up to her feet. She, too, is signed and dated “Elias Robert, 1867”, and identified by the capitalized inscription “L’INDUSTRIE”. (Figure 1-34) Similar statues were erected for instance in **Strasburg Gare Centrale (1878-1883)**. (Figure 1-35)

¹⁴⁸ See Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 207.

¹⁴⁹ Bowie, ““L’eclectisme pittoresque” et l’architecture des gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle” and Bowie, *Les grandes gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle*.

¹⁵⁰ See Bowie, “Les grandes gares parisiennes: historique” 91.

¹⁵¹ See Bowie, “Les grandes gares parisiennes: historique” 73.

II.2 Frankfurt/Main (1879-1888): Female Personifications of the “Athena Type” Elevating Middle-Class Realities into Abstract Concepts

But many stations did not stop at the representation of general economic branches, such as agriculture or trade, but singled out a row of businesses that were considered specific to the city or the region: the central station in **Frankfurt/Main (1888)**, for instance, contained an unusually elaborate décor of sculpted personifications. The program’s message as a whole focused on celebrating the technical innovations of the Industrial Revolution, and the ensuing economic prosperity of the commercial middle-classes.¹⁵²

The main façade of the passenger building echoes a city portal. The three rounded arches of the main entrance are topped by cornice forming the base of a semicircular thermal window and flanked by two small towers topped by copper helmets. On the visible sides of the towers, just above the cornice, are set-in, scalloped niches containing tall statues (approx. 2,60 m) of four women, each seated on a pedestal.¹⁵³ Their antique garb and hairdo already indicates their function as modern personifications. The two sculptures facing the station forecourt were designed by Berlin sculptor Alexander Calandrelli: his “Agriculture” was placed to the right (on the northern tower), and “Trade” to the left (on the southern tower). (Figures 1-36, 1-37) Next to them are Emil Hundrieser’s personifications of “Navigation” (right tower, facing north) and “Iron Industry” (left tower, facing south). (Figures 1-38, 1-39)

Unfortunately, both the design of the sculptures and their placement high above the heads of potential spectators makes their identification difficult: the bundles of wheat ears to the feet of “Agriculture” are hardly visible, and “Trade” is obscuring several

¹⁵² With few exceptions, the station has been neglected by art historians. In 1983, Heinz Schomann succeeded in delivering a comprehensive account of the planning and construction history of the station, complete with compiling many contemporary sources and extensive photographic material, but unfortunately he failed to give his own description of the building, much less any independent analysis of either structure or sculptural program. See Heinz Schomann, *Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof: 150 Jahre Eisenbahngeschichte und Stadtentwicklung (1838-1988)* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1983). In 2002, Birgit Klein sought to remedy the situation in her doctoral thesis. Although she paid more attention than usually allotted in similar architectural treatises to the iconography of the station’s sculptural embellishment, many of her analyses remain superficial. See Birgit Klein, “Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof und seine Rezeption im deutschen Bahnhofsbau des ausgehenden 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts”, (Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde des Fachbereichs Neuere deutsche Literatur und Kunstwissenschaften der Philipps-Universität Marburg, Philipps-Universität, September 2002). For a treatment of the central Atlas-group atop the roof of the Eastern façade, see chapter 2, and for the sculptures treating traveling and tourism, see chapter 4 of this dissertation.

¹⁵³ See Schomann, *Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof*, 143.

tightly corded parcels by sitting on them, a small keg to her feet. Her chin rests pensively on her right arm, the elbow is placed atop a large book – none of these attributes is unambiguous at first sight. Similarly mysterious are the attributes of the other two figures. Even contemporary journalists saw the need to give an extensive explanation of the program. In numerous articles, the involved artists were introduced and the meaning of the sculptures was identified to the wondering masses visiting the station after its opening.¹⁵⁴

The program continued on the corners of the exit portals with two sculptures by Max Wiese representing “Civil Engineering” (Ingenieurskunst) and “Mechanical Engineering” (Maschinenbau). In comparison to a traditional depiction of “Science” in general, usually in the shape of Minerva, the focus is here shifted to two modern disciplines only recently established in the German system of higher education. After the example of the French *École Polytechnique* (founded 1794), which was the first college whose teachings explicitly aimed to apply theoretical scientific knowledge to its manifold practical uses, the German speaking countries had slowly begun to establish similar schools, usually for the tertiary education of state-employed civil engineers (for instance in Berlin 1821, Karlsruhe 1825, München 1827, Hannover 1831). When after the tumultuous years of 1848 industrialization finally established itself in Germany’s commercial landscape, the growing industries’ demand for engineers could be met with the alumni of the Polytechnicals. Soon, many of the academies drew level with the traditional universities in the quality of their teaching, and in the 1870s changed their names, accordingly, to Technical College (Technische Hochschule) or even Technical University (Technische Universität), from 1899 on even gaining the right to award doctoral degrees.¹⁵⁵ Studying Engineering thus quickly evolved into a means of upward social mobility, especially for students from lower middle class and even working class background, and has remained so ever since. Even today, studying engineering remains the first academic choice for first-generation academicians – that is, for students

¹⁵⁴ See Karl Emil Otto Fritsch and F. W. Büsing, “Der neue Haupt-Personen-Bahnhof in Frankfurt a. M.: (Fortsetzung aus No. 68 u. 72)”, *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, 92, November 17, 1888, 554–55, and the sources collected by Schomann in Schomann, *Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof*.

¹⁵⁵ For more information see Karl-Heinz Manegold, “Geschichte der Technischen Hochschulen”, in *Technik und Bildung*, ed. Laetitia Boehm, and Charlotte Schönbeck, Technik und Kultur (Düsseldorf: VDI-Verlag, 1989); Wolfgang König, “Vom Staatsdiener zum Industrieangestellten: Die Ingenieure in Frankreich und Deutschland: 1750-1945”, in *Geschichte des Ingenieurs: Ein Beruf in sechs Jahrtausenden*, ed. Walter Kaiser, and Wolfgang König (München: Hanser Verlag, 2006).

actively pursuing upward social mobility.¹⁵⁶ Thus, it comes as no surprise that these are the disciplines specifying the traditional role of “Scientia” within the embellishment of Frankfurt Station.

The statues of these thoroughly bourgeois academic disciplines were supplemented by further female personifications of “Fruit Trade” (Obsthandel) and “Arts & Crafts/Industrial Design” (Kunstindustrie), both by Adolf Brütt, as well as “Retail” (Kleinhandel) and “Art” (Kunst) by Hermann Becker.¹⁵⁷ All of these trades, especially in their narrow specifications, can be assumed to profit from Frankfurt’s urban setting and were thus somewhat specific to their locale, even the fruit trade is alluding to the apple orchards that the Frankfurt region is still famous for. It is clear that technological progress and social progress were considered one. Unfortunately, all six last named statues were destroyed when the lateral wings were demolished during the station’s extension and partial reconstruction in 1912.¹⁵⁸ Since no photographs remain, no further insight can be won from a deeper examination of their form and chosen attributes.

Although many of these sculptures, like the bulk of new allegories in use at the time, represented trades, concepts, and phenomena that were usually gendered as intrinsically male, most of them nevertheless employed female personifications.¹⁵⁹ The reasons for this are not altogether clear. Traditional answers were usually content to refer to the grammatical gender of the personified concept/noun in French, German, Italian or Latin.¹⁶⁰ But in the late twentieth century, feminist art historians, like Cäcilia Rentmeister in an influential paper in 1976,¹⁶¹ started to wonder why a disproportional number of allegories were female, considering the actual, socially impotent role of women in the patriarchy. Although Rentmeister’s ideological answer (patriarchy tries to

¹⁵⁶ See Oliver Koppel, *Fachkräfteengpässe trotz Bildungsaufstieg: Ingenieursarbeitsmarkt 2010/11* (Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft Köln; Verein Deutscher Ingenieure e. V., 2011); available from <http://www.think-ing.de/index.php?media=7444>; Internet; accessed March 06, 2012.

¹⁵⁷ See Karl Emil Otto Fritsch and F. W. Büsing, “Der neue Haupt-Personen-Bahnhof in Frankfurt a. M.: (Fortsetzung aus No. 68 u. 72)”, 555 and Schomann, *Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof*, 145–146.

¹⁵⁸ See Klein, “Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof und seine Rezeption im deutschen Bahnhofsbau des ausgehenden 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts”, 47.

¹⁵⁹ For “War” being personified as female see Silke Wenk, “Warum ist die (Kriegs-)Kunst weiblich?”, *Kunst und Unterricht*, no. 101 (1986).

¹⁶⁰ See Julius Held, “Allegorie”, in *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, ed. Otto Schmidt (Stuttgart: 1937), 1: 348. For an examination of the underlying linguistics see Marina Warner, *In weiblicher Gestalt: Die Verkörperung des Wahren, Guten und Schönen* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989).

¹⁶¹ Cäcilia Rentmeister, “Berufsverbot für die Musen”.

appease women by giving them more influence in art than in real life)¹⁶² remained unconvincing and was often criticized¹⁶³ (why should patriarchy even feel the need for justification?), the question remained. In 1999, Ulrike Gall published a study of female personifications in allegories of the Industrial Age as her doctoral dissertation.¹⁶⁴ She summarized the state of the art:

“The tradition of allegoric representation in female form is based on the exclusion of women as historical subject. The condition for the inscription of meanings is the empty shell of the female body. Because ‘real women’ were not granted independent meaning and presence in public life, female figures, emptied of individual meaning, could serve quasi as ‘hollow molds’, embodying and therefore signifying invisible abstract terms. [...] Female personifications are only carriers of meaning, they can be filled with male ideals and projections that are embodied by the Other, the woman.”¹⁶⁵

Gall seems to derive this “emptiness” of the female form, and the invisibility of actual, historical women from public conscience and discourse, from two sources: first, a sociological examination of the formation of bourgeois female virtues and the increasing restriction of women to the domestic sphere.¹⁶⁶ And second, the concurrent cultural imaginations of femininity by men as exemplified in topoi like “femme fatale”, “beautiful corpses” or “mermaids and undines”.¹⁶⁷

Accordingly, art historians who, like Mary Sheriff, still examine why “women’s bodies have long been used as allegorical representations for qualities they in theory did not have”,¹⁶⁸ are increasingly drawing on the work of social historians, who in the past forty

¹⁶² Rentmeister draws on the theories of Ernest Bornemann. Ernest Bornemann, *Das Patriarchat: Ursprung und Zukunft unseres Gesellschaftssystems* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1975), 367. Quoted in Cäcilia Rentmeister, “Berufsverbot für die Musen”, 94.

¹⁶³ For instance in Brigitte Wartmann, “Warum ist Amerika eine Frau? Zur Kolonialisierung eines Wunsch(t)raums”, in *Ökologie und alternative Wissenschaft: Vortragszyklus*, ed. Antonia Dinnebier, and Berthold Pechan, *Landschaftsentwicklung und Umweltforschung* (Berlin (West): Technische Universität Berlin, 1985); Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, 20–21.

¹⁶⁴ Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*.

¹⁶⁵ Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 102–103. My translation.

¹⁶⁶ See Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 46–53.

¹⁶⁷ See Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 54–69.

¹⁶⁸ Mary D. Sheriff, “The Naked Truth? The Allegorical Frontispiece and Woman’s Ambition in Eighteenth-Century France”, in *Early modern visual allegory: Embodying meaning*, ed. Cristelle Baskins,

years have been at pains to shed more light on the situation of women of all classes in order to render possible a more nuanced portrait of women's social position.¹⁶⁹

Intersectional studies have moreover shown that concepts of class and gender are closely intertwined.¹⁷⁰ If the first part of this chapter argued that station embellishment was designed by and for the industrial middle classes, thus quenching their thirst for representation, it seems reasonable to assume that said artwork would also mirror the binary gender notions of the nineteenth century middle-classes, which confined women to the domestic sphere where they were left to gently “civilizing” the rough masculine nature. Therefore, the feminization of allegedly male activities (like industrial or agricultural work, or the study of sciences or engineering) would lead to an especially effective abstraction from its underlying manual labor: as a *female* personification, the resulting symbol could not (under the social rules of the nineteenth century middle-classes) be suspected of depicting any actual reality. By transferring the (masculine) manual labor on a feminine figure, the work was effectively cleansed of its working class associations with sweat, toil and dirt – and the resulting female personifications were elevated into a sanitized, aesthetized concept of labor suitable for representation.

Iconographically, Gall categorized female personifications into two main types depending on their roots: *Athena* (Minerva) and *Natura*.¹⁷¹ The Athena-type is described as masculinized female body without sexual presence.¹⁷² It is not only the source of all city personifications – just like the Greek goddess personified not only the civic virtues necessary for successful government, but the city of Athens herself – but also the mould in which most new allegories were formed: severe, erect, of inapproachable beauty and dignified hauteur, clad in Graecized drapery, sometimes even retaining Athena's armor.

Most of the Frankfurt personifications follow this pattern – most, but not all of them. Amongst the statues not destroyed during the station's numerous renovations, reconstructions, and extensions are two personifications of “Mining” (Bergbau) and

and Lisa Rosenthal (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 253. Similar Esther-Beatrice von Bruchhausen, *Das Zeichen im Kostümball: Marianne und Germania in der politischen Ikonographie*, (Halle: Online-Hochschulschriften, 2000).

¹⁶⁹ Very influential was the work of Joan W. Scott, amongst others. See also chapter 2: The Cincinnati Worker Murals.

¹⁷⁰ For an overview and introduction to intersectional studies see Andersen, Margaret L., and Patricia Hill Collins, eds., *Race, class, and gender: An anthology*, 3rd edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1998).

¹⁷¹ See Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 10.

¹⁷² See Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 68.

“Military” (Heerwesen) by Josef Keller, which were placed on the interior façade (in a position mirroring “Agriculture” and “Trade” on the outside): they are seated in the niches of the pylons that frame the portal leading from the platforms to the vestibule.

“Military” takes the form of a seated and heavily bearded Germanic warrior, scarcely clad in a fur covering his loins, his winged helmet placed to his feet. His left arm rests on a round shield, while his right balances a short sword on his knee. (Figure 1-40)

“Mining”, with his short hair and thick moustache, looks more contemporary, although he seems to wear a sort of medieval tunic, open at the chest. He leans proudly on his pickaxe, and other instruments of his trade are scattered at his feet. (Figure 1-41)

These two are unusual as they are the only modern allegories in Frankfurt station that do not employ female figures – obviously, mining and war were considered too intrinsically masculine to be associated with allusions to femininity. Yet, the deviation underlines the power that the imaginaries of gender held over the form it took – in this case, the public image of women as the meek, gentle, and weak sex could not be reconciled with the notions of military and industrial power that formed the roots of the Prusso-German Empire. The military reforms of Hardenberg and Scharnhorst in the wake of the Napoleonic wars had led to a pervasive influence of the military on Prussian society.¹⁷³ After that, and most certainly after 1872, officers were no longer exclusively recruited from the ranks of aristocracy. With only higher education and financial independency as prerequisites, a military career stood open to, and was deemed very prestigious for the sons of the bourgeoisie (while women were of course excluded from military service), thus not only forbidding the idea of representing “the Military” as feminine, but making it unnecessary – after all, its ideals stood for an already accepted, even main-stream bourgeois lifestyle.

II.3 Paris Gare de Lyon (1895-1902): Female Personifications of the “Natura Type” Eroticizing the New Technologies

The second iconographic source for new allegories, according to Gall, goes back to the concept of *Natura*, a personification of nature as a beautiful young woman, her fertility often openly sexualized. Although the *Natura*-type originated already in late Roman and mediaeval literature, nudity as attribute for Nature – *nuda naturalis* – was only

¹⁷³ See Otto Büsch, *Moderne preußische Geschichte: 1648 - 1947: Eine Anthologie*, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin, vol. 52, 3 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1981), 52, 3: 749–871.

introduced late in the Renaissance.¹⁷⁴ In the nineteenth century, eventually, superficial mythological or allegoric titles sufficed to justify the prevalence of the popular female nude in official academic art. Their appeal to the “pictorial memory”, codified in the humanistic education of the bourgeoisie, was but a weak attempt at glossing over the sexually-stimulating content of the images.¹⁷⁵

Several examples for the curiously eroticized allegories formed in the *Natura*-type are displayed along the façade of the second **Gare de Lyon (1895-1902)** in Paris: In the pendentives of the arcade on boulevard Diderot, four bas-reliefs show the figures of nude young women insufficiently veiled with flimsy drapery, each personifying one of the new technologies. Louis Baralis¹⁷⁶ carved “The Mechanic Arts” as a voluptuous girl with her hair swept up in a voluminous bun. She is depicted from the side facing to the right, although her actual position remains unclear, halfway between standing and sitting she seems to be glued to the wall, sensuously intertwining her limbs with a billowing fabric that flows around a cog-wheel, an iron chain and similar symbols of the trade. These attributes are also shown above her, in a crest-like conglomerate of cog-wheel, hammer, chain and flaming torch. (Figure 1-42 a and b)

To her right, Félix Charpentier is responsible for both “Navigation” and “Steam”. “Navigation”, with a similar hairdo, sits on some fabric, which covers ropes and southern fruits. She is facing “Mechanics”, but looks back towards “Steam” over her shoulder. In the background, a steamboat’s chimney puffs out billowing clouds of smoke. For easier identification, the bow of a ship fills the wall above her. (Figure 1-43 a and b)

“Navigation’s” pose is mirrored by “Steam”, who also sits looking back at her over her shoulder, although her body faces to the right. Her pubes are just covered by the drapery crumpled around her shapely legs. Her outstretched right arm touches a steam valve whence clouds of steam soften the background and mix with her long, open hair. She is further characterized in the field above her head by the frontal depiction of a railway engine. (Figure 1-44 a and b)

The last figure to the right is “Electricity” by Paul Gasq, who depicted her as a young girl with open hair melting into the background. She, too, is half seated, a sheet

¹⁷⁴ See Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 112–115.

¹⁷⁵ See Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 128.

¹⁷⁶ All sculptors are identified by Bowie in Bowie, “Les grandes gares parisiennes: historique”, 137.

drooping limply from her raised right thigh, and turns back towards the right in an elegant movement. Her right hand grasps what seems to be a telegraph wire connected to an electromagnetic spindle, while her left hand touches a length of telegraph paper. (Figure 1-45 a and b)

Within the iconography of these reliefs, the thin veils could be regarded as just a clever means to superficially cover the figures' nakedness while actually drawing attention to it. Yet, as Gall has shown, the veil had become an important attribute of Nature. After the French Revolution, the act of "unveiling nature" symbolized the victory of rational man whose prowess in science – literally – reveals the mysteries of Nature.¹⁷⁷ It is this motive of "mysteries of nature unveiled", that is expressed on the façade of the Gare de Lyon – a building, whose construction was aimed to be completed just in time for the Parisian Exposition Universelle in 1900: All the secrets of mechanics, electricity, or steampower lay open before the spectators' eyes, no mystery left to solve.

Nevertheless, the singular sensuality that all the figures exude is unusual in station decoration. It can partly be explained with the undulating forms of the station's art nouveau style, but there seems to be also an element of half serious, half mocking acknowledgement that, then as now, technology is –literally – perceived as sexy, and is suitably advertised with the help of nude girls. Indeed, Gall reports how fin-de-siècle advertising companies had begun to use with preference allegories of new technologies in the marketing of electric and technical products, at the same time deliberately seizing on the eroticized conventions of the traditional, academic art establishment¹⁷⁸ – an influence that obviously oscillated back and forth between the art forms.

So nineteenth century representative art was adapting to the changing times: New subject matter (in the shape of new technologies, trades, and professions) had to be depicted for a new clientele. The growing industrial middle-classes both wanted to draw upon the traditions of former elites and at the same time celebrate their own achievements. Artists served their need for representation by replenishing the ranks of mythological personifications with newly invented, rather more specific modern allegories representing the distinct achievements of the bourgeoisie. These new allegories were usually cast in two shapes. Named after their iconographic roots, these

¹⁷⁷ See Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 124–128.

¹⁷⁸ See Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 13. Gall refers especially to a paper by Hans-Ernst Mittag, see Hans-Ernst Mittag, "Zur Funktion erotischer Motive im Denkmal des 19. Jahrhunderts", *Kritische Berichte* 9, no. 1/2 (1981).

were the traditional, severe, and somewhat androgynous “Athena type”, and the more sensual, sexualized, and often nude “Natura type”. Both types were ubiquitous in public art. Becoming increasingly popularized through their diffusion into the commercial arts, especially advertisement, they soon made their way into architectural embellishment.

III Hybrids and Alternative Forms of Allegory

Thus, as we have seen, the use of allegory to represent abstract concepts and ideas as well as personify crafts and industries, continued far into the twentieth century, even though they appeared openly outdated in many modern architectural environments. Often, they were embedded in the context of a larger decoration program. Sometimes they consisted of well-established mythological figures. Sometimes they used new personifications – usually female, as they served the double purpose of a) offering no danger of being mistaken for real, historical figures and b) made it possible to gloss over the often gritty, working-class roots of the messages. These personifications would also be more clearly specified by attributes of sometimes embarrassing literalness.

Naturally, there are still several other ways of visualizing abstractions, which will be introduced in the following section. Most common is probably a combination of the two classic concepts, as exemplified in **Limoges-Bénédictins (1924-1929)**. **Amsterdam Centraal station (1882-1889)** will serve as an example of the scenic allegory. These are often playfully anecdotal images whose universality is claimed either by the form or framework or display, or by the inclusion of chubby little *putti*. **Washington Union Terminal (1901-07)** will serve as an example for the attempt to use historical personages metonymically for the field in which they worked, leading to a concept of personification founded on sometimes surprising literal-mindedness.

III.1 Limoges-Bénédictins (1924-29): Combining Old and New Allegories to Advertise Regional Industries

The station **Limoges-Bénédictins (1924-29)** was a very modern structure made of armed concrete, yet its limestone revetment was quite lavishly adorned with sculptural décor. In their history of the station, authors René Brissauds and Pascal Plas¹⁷⁹ recount the long and complex planning history of the station, whose predecessor had been

¹⁷⁹ René Brissaud and Pascal Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins: histoire d'une gare* (Limoges: Lucien Souny, 2008).

deemed inefficient as early as 1891.¹⁸⁰ It took 17 years of lobbying until, in 1908, the French ministry of Transport agreed that the current structure was “unworthy of a great commercial center like Limoges”.¹⁸¹ This was the start for further sixteen years of preparation and five years of construction, until the new station could be opened May 18, 1929.¹⁸² The long planning history is explained by a regular tug-of-war between the municipality of Limoges, who wanted a representative, monumental “embellishment of the city”¹⁸³ (but, naturally, at little cost), and the Compagnie des Chemins de Fer de Paris à Orléans (PO), the railway company responsible for the French south-west.¹⁸⁴ In the end, the ministry put their foot down and decided the matter. Thus, in late 1918, the railway company finally commissioned their architect Roger Gonthier (1884-1978) with the design of the new station.¹⁸⁵ Gonthier worked five months on his first design which he presented to the city council in May 1919.

His station design –of which is here given only the description of the last, eventually built version of 1922 – consisted of a row of four distinct building blocks. Viewed from the southern, main façade, the entrance building is dominated by a large basket arch window that is divided horizontally in two parts: the lower half is 22,65 m wide and 4,25 m high and structured by an architrave supported by eight pilasters forming the doors.¹⁸⁶ The upper part consists of a window which finds its zenith another 5,35 m above the dividing horizontal of the architrave, and which is decorated with depictions of stylized regional chestnuts and chestnut leaves in stained glass by art-déco artist Francis Chigot.¹⁸⁷ Above the window, a large inscription announces “LIMOGES-BENEDICTINS”. The central pavilion is framed by two pylons spanning the entire height of the building which are topped two turrets with dormer windows, their additional 6 m bringing them to a total of 17 m. The whole building block is covered by a large copper-clad dome with a dormer window. (Figure 1-13)

This main building block is flanked by two low pavilions which mirror the structure of the central façade, if on a much smaller scale. Their three-bay windows, again divided horizontally into two halves with the architrave running the same height as in the center,

¹⁸⁰ See Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 50.

¹⁸¹ Quoted after Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 50. No source given.

¹⁸² See Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 50.

¹⁸³ Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 55.

¹⁸⁴ See Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 51–55.

¹⁸⁵ See Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 55.

¹⁸⁶ All measurements from Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 75.

¹⁸⁷ See Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 84.

are lower in the top half and crowned by base-less tympani decorated with garlands and the inscriptions “DEPART” (departure, left) and “ARRIVE” (arrival, right). The pavilions are covered by a mansard roof. To the very left, a 57 m high clock tower rises high above the structure. Altogether, due to the tower and the distinctive dome, the station is vaguely reminiscent of a mosque with a single minaret.

Gonthier’s design of 1918 had been accepted subject to some minor changes: most importantly, the city council had specifically asked for the “decoration of the tympanum above the grand arc of the main façade, on the passenger side”.¹⁸⁸ For modern spectators, who are used to plain facades whose only ornament is the use of material and a sense of proportion, this comes as a surprise. Originally, Gonthier had designed a building with little contemporary ornament. Yet, the city imposed on him the inclusion of a sculptural décor that the architect himself allegedly considered too classical, even old-fashioned – according to Brissaud, Gonthier’s own, more modern taste can be deduced from the large wooden structures furnishing and structuring the interior spaces (ticket stalls, entry to the platforms, waiting rooms).¹⁸⁹ (Figure 1-46)

The inclusion of sculptural ornament was therefore more a political decision than an artistic one, and quite obviously grounded in the city’s outspoken wish that the station “should contribute to the city’s embellishment” – even though this wish for representation should cost the city additional money to the extent of 150 000 Francs in their share of construction costs.¹⁹⁰ The subject matter of the décor was to celebrate the city’s economic importance as a regional metropolis – Limoges serves as capital of the region Limousin and the Département Haute-Vienne. To this aim, the executed artwork combined old, mythological allegories with new personifications of regional crafts.

The triangular pendentives framing the arch of the window measure 3,50 m at the legs and 5m at the hypotenuse. They are adorned with limestone bas-reliefs of two classical deities, Ceres (figure 1-47) and Mercury (figure 1-48). To the left of the arch, Ceres is shown half sitting, half reclining in girlish nudity, and turning her shawl-covered head towards the neighboring Mercury. Although her legs are crossed in a relaxed way, and

¹⁸⁸ Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 56. My translation. Presumably the council meant the pendentives formed between pylon and basket arch, as there is no tympanum in the strict sense of the word.

¹⁸⁹ See Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 56; 86. Brissaud makes this claim twice without giving any sources to corroborate it. Yet, the modern construction methods and the furniture mentioned are a point in case, as is the fact that Brissaud had worked as head of architecture at Limoges station for a long time and possibly knew Gonthier’s views from working with him.

¹⁹⁰ See Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 55.

she lies back on her left elbow, pointing to the ground with her index finger, she leans on the scythe in her right hand as if she was about to rise. The background is densely filled with sheaves of ears, and the chestnuts typical for the region. There is also the head of an ox. To the right, Mercury, also nude except for the winged helmet on his head, is reclining in a similar position, but – possibly being more prudish than fertile Ceres – with his back to the public. Propped up on his left elbow he gazes thoughtfully over his right shoulder. His right arm with the snake-coiled staff rests lightly on his muscular thigh. The background is filled with cogwheels, various tools, and heavy iron chains. Both bas-reliefs are signed in the lower corners: H. Varenne 1926. Henri Varenne (1860-1933) was an obvious choice for the sculptural décor: Not only had he worked in station embellishment before (in Tours), but he had also designed figurines for the porcelaine manufactures at Sèvres.¹⁹¹

In their history of the station, authors René Brissauds and Pascal Plas inform their readers that the depicted deities of Ceres and Mercury had been originally devised as “two feminine figures with their hair in a 1900-style bun carrying the crests of a province”,¹⁹² although, unfortunately, this claim is not corroborated by illustrations or other sources. On the other hand, they are accompanied by two further statues, enormous seated female figures measuring 4,50 m in height, that indeed answer to that non-classical description. They are said to symbolize “La Porcelain” (porcelain) (figure 1-49), and “L’Émail” (enamel)¹⁹³ (figure 1-50), and thus the two foremost industries of Limoges and the surrounding Limousin region. The fabrication of enamel on copper has been typical for the region since the middle-ages,¹⁹⁴ and the manufacture of porcelain had become an important industry since the discovery of kaolin in the eighteenth century.¹⁹⁵

In front of the colossal pylon to the left of the arch, near Ceres, a semi-nude “Lady Porcelain” sits on a circular base, 3,80 m above the ground, gazing pensively at an amphora-shaped vase in her left. She holds a spatula in her outstretched right, seemingly

¹⁹¹ Unfortunately, there is very little literature on Varenne apart from the short entry in the AKL. See N. N., "Varenne, Henri", in *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künste von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker, and Hans Vollmer (Leipzig: Engelmann,), 34 (1940).

¹⁹² Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 75. My translation.

¹⁹³ See Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 75; 77. See also Elisabeth Walter, "Le Décor", 43–44.

¹⁹⁴ For more information see Véronique Notin, *L'art de l'émail à Limoges* (Limoges: Culture & Patrimoine en Limousin, 2005); Blanc, Monique, ed., *Émaux peints de Limoges, XVe-XVIIIe siècles: La collection du musée des arts décoratifs* (Paris: les Arts décoratifs, 2011).

¹⁹⁵ For a detailed history of porcelain fabrication in Limoges, see Chantal Meslin-Perrier and Marie Segonds-Perrier, *Limoges: Deux siècle de porcelaine* (Paris: Les Éditions de l'Amateur, 2002).

considering the necessary finishing touches. At her side, a putto kneels in admiration of her fine work. Opposite, near Mercury, sits a slightly more dressed “Lady Enamel”. She studies the square enamel tablet on her lap and ignores the putto-helper sitting to her left, who tries to hand her a bowl. In the left background stands an already smoking kiln. Both figures wear their hair in a style popular around 1900,¹⁹⁶ which lends them the peculiar air of two respectable ladies engaged in a masquerade – making the immodesty of their flimsy dresses rather more shocking than the deliberate nakedness of the Greek deities near them.

Inside the station, the central hall is covered by the large cupola, whose pendentives are decorated with the personifications of the four provinces served by the Paris-Orléans railway line: Bretagne, Gascogne, Touraine and Limousin.¹⁹⁷ (Figures 1-51, 1-52, 1-53, 1-54) The female figures follow the “Natura type” and wear little clothes besides their regional attributes. They are identified by a clear inscription. Unsurprisingly, Lady Limousin holds a porcelain vase.

The decoration program of Limoges-Bénédictins station is therefore giving a truthful account of the important regional industries, using a combination of old/mythological and new personifications of the Athena and Natura types to convey its message. The form and message of the embellishment had been explicitly requested by the city council, as the architect had not included any sculpted décor in his original designs. The new station was supposed to stand out within the urban architecture, and it was felt that plain, unadorned walls were not sufficient to represent a city of Limoges’ eminence in the field of the porcelain and enamel industries. Using the station embellishment, Limoges aimed at expressing its importance as regional capital – possibly even trying to make a point in the notorious rivalry between Paris *la métropole* and every other, by definition: provincial, French city.¹⁹⁸

Yet, as so often happened, the choice of Henri Varenne as executing artist was rather less innovative than the state-of-the-art architectural design by Roger Gonthier. Certainly, Varenne was well established in the region, he was experienced in architectural sculpture, and well connected in the porcelain industry, even though his artwork was academic, even a little old-fashioned. But quite obviously, the city did not

¹⁹⁶ See Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 77.

¹⁹⁷ See Brissaud and Plas, *Limoges-Bénédictins*, 85–86.

¹⁹⁸ For more on the hierarchic relationship of French cities see chapter 3.

want to take any risks: rather, Varenne's sculptures hark back to several rather older examples from Tours or Paris, instead of trying to complement the station's modern structure and architecture with a similarly modern décor (or renouncement thereof).¹⁹⁹

As we have already seen, this lack of courage is quite typical for the insecure behavior of the industrial middle-classes trying to conform to the standards set by the perceived cultural elites (in this case presumably living in Paris). Obviously, the pattern applies also to political entities: It seems as if there were not only similar anxieties concerning provincial towns versus the metropolis, but also similar strategies in solving them. This comes as no surprise – after all, a city council does only consist of a cross-section of those who stand up for election. As these are probably for the most part from the middle-classes, there is no reason why their collective vote should in any way differ from their private choices.

III.2 Amsterdam Centraal Station (1882-1889): The Origins of Dutch Prosperity Depicted in Scenic Allegories

In 1889, the architect P. J. H. Cuypers finished the construction of the Netherlands's largest railway station: Amsterdam Centraal is situated on three artificial islands.²⁰⁰ The brick façade with details in chalkstone runs 307 m along the bank of the IJ, and is organized in the sequential arrangement of clearly distinguished, receding and projecting building parts of different heights, typical of the Dutch renaissance: a central pavilion is flanked on both sides by two towers and two recessed lateral wings with a smaller corner tower each, ending with two non-symmetrical corner pavilions. The façade is decorated by an extensive program of coat-of-arms, as well as a mixture of old, new, and scenic allegories.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Certainly, the program does not harm the station's overall impact, but neither is it architecturally necessary – unlike the sculpture group at New York Grand Central, which forms an integrative focal point for the façade, and whose omission would have left a gap.

²⁰⁰ For a short overview of the construction history as well as helpful sketches and almost complete identification of the decoration program see Romers, *Spoorwegarchitectuur in Nederland 1841-1938*, 99–110. For more information, including a detailed analysis of the embellishment see Wilfred R. F. van Leeuwen and H. Romers, *Een spoor van verbeelding: 150 jaar monumentale kunst en decoratie aan Nederlandse stationsgebouwen* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1988), 18–24; and Aart Oxenaar, *Centraal Station Amsterdam: Het paleis voor de reiziger* ('s-Gravenhage: SDU uitgeverij, 1989).

²⁰¹ According to Oxenaar, the architect P. J. H. Cuypers was responsible for the decoration program, assisted by Victor De Stuers and Alberdingk van Thijm. See Oxenaar, *Centraal Station Amsterdam*, 71. See also chapters 3 and 4.

The subject matter of the main pavilion's decoration is similar to the almost contemporary Rijksmuseum,²⁰² and focuses on the importance of Amsterdam as international trade market. The central façade is structured by five bays, of which the central three are highlighted by large triforium windows bound together by a larger arch filled with a sandstone relief designed by Ludwig Jünger.²⁰³ In the middle, the personification of the City of Amsterdam sits frontally, her arms outstretched, between a male and a female water deity representing IJ and Amstel rivers respectively. (Figure 1-55) To her sides, natives of all parts of the world bring her products to offer for trade. To the left, an Egyptian and a Black African, accompanied by a lion, represent the African continent. (Figure 1-56) They seem to carry tobacco, ivory and similar typical products. In front of them walks a woman in Greek dress carrying an amphora, as well as a boy and a toddler with a basket full of fruit – possibly they represent the Mediterranean. To the right, the figures are even more exotic: an oriental-looking man in a long beard, who seems to trade in silk, stands next to an American Indian woman carrying an unidentifiable package. (Figure 1-57) They are framed to the left by another woman with an upturned amphora and a kneeling Asian with high cheekbones and slanting eyes, wearing the typical hat commonly associated with the Chinese, as well as to the right by a half-naked European man with the helmet of a miner and a small boy with a hammer in his belt and wheeling a large cog-wheel. This last group seems to represent the goods of European industrialization.

The subject of international trade is further taken up by the inclusion of European city crests under the roofline, dominated by the Dutch national coat of arms, and medallions representing different “types of European peoples”.²⁰⁴ The program is complemented by two rather complex allegories set into the square plane of two blind triforium windows in the first floor of the framing towers, sculpted by Jean François Vermeylen.²⁰⁵ On the Eastern tower, the window-plane is divided into nine fields of roughly the same shape: horizontally, the bottom tier shows three round medallions with the inscriptions ELECTRICITEIT (electricity), NIJVERHEID (crafts), and STOOM (steam) above

²⁰² See Oxenaar, *Centraal Station Amsterdam*, 71–72.

²⁰³ See Oxenaar, *Centraal Station Amsterdam*, 83.

²⁰⁴ See Romers, *Spoorwegarchitectuur in Nederland 1841-1938*, 102–104. My translation.

²⁰⁵ Oxenaar names Prof. Jean François Vermeylen, a Belgian sculptor from Leuven, in his text – yet, the illustrations showing the plaster models on pages 82-84 are labeled “Auguste Vermeylen”. See Oxenaar, *Centraal Station Amsterdam*, 82–84. The execution after plaster models obviously by Martin van Langendonk. See Oxenaar, *Centraal Station Amsterdam*, 85.

them. (Figure 1-58) “Electricity” is depicted as a scarcely clad female figure with wings, flying to the left out of her circle together with a winged putto. Due to the slim column dividing the window plane vertically, she is connected with the bust of Apollo, Greek god of the arts but also of the Sun,²⁰⁶ placed in the arch of the top tier. In the middle, *nijverheid* – which can roughly be translated as “Craft” or “Artisanry” – takes the shape of a standing woman with attributes such as a beehive (symbolizing industriousness), yet, two blacksmiths in the background seem to allude to the iron industry as well. She is vertically connected to the bust of Ceres, goddess of agriculture, while Vulcan’s bust, to the right, is brought together with the personification of *stoom*, which is “Steam”, depicted as a semi-nude woman riding on the winged wheel generally symbolizing the railway. The middle tier consists of one single field with a deep-set, fully rounded relief representing an agricultural scene of mixed farming: men and women in antique garb with a horse-drawn plow and carrying wheat ears and scythes walk behind a man driving oxen towards a man holding a scroll – presumably a cattle-dealer.

On the Western tower, the architectural structure of the composition is similar: this time, the busts in the top tier represent Mercury, Minerva, and Neptune, tied vertically to the personifications of WELVAART (prosperity), VERBROUDERING (fraternity), and BESCHAVING (civilization). (Figure 1-59) “Prosperity” is shown at the left as a woman with a cornucopia standing in front of a large wheel that maybe hints at the railway, maybe hints at progress in general. Next to her, “Fraternity” is symbolized by a man and a woman greeting each other, and “Civilization” is represented by a bare-chested woman holding a burning torch. The scene in the middle tier shows a nautical scene of fishing and maritime trading: a ship has just landed and is unloaded by men and women, clad again in antique drapery, carrying large parcels ashore, another man is hauling an empty fishing net, a women with a boy carries away a basket full of fish on her head.

Both these relief fields consist of an awkward mixture of allegoric styles: classic, mythological personifications in the top tier, new personifications in the bottom, and a scenic personification in the center.²⁰⁷ The horizontal levels match up well enough, but the iconography of the vertical rows is somewhat inconclusive – for instance, one would

²⁰⁶ See Burkert, *Greek religion*, 143–149.

²⁰⁷ For another detailed analysis of one of Amsterdam Centraal’s scenic allegories, see chapter 4.

have expected to see Minerva combined with the “Crafts”, instead of Ceres, or Apollo with “Civilization”. Yet, Ceres naturally relates to the agricultural scene, just as Neptune with the maritime scenario. To Romers and van Leeuwen, who published a book on Dutch station embellishment in 1988,²⁰⁸ the meaning is nevertheless clear:

“The two nine-partite reliefs depict generally the sources of our prosperity in relation to the new traffic hub. [...] The two monumental friezes refer with their classicist form, composition, and their progressive movement to the reliefs on Roman triumphal gates, especially the Arch of Titus, and their placement in the towers on either side of the entrance to the platforms, where the new technology and modern transportation celebrate their triumphs, seems to want to suggest such a link.

Under the watchful eye of the old Olympians offer agriculture and animal husbandry (left) and the shipping and fishing (right) their products to merchant. The strips mirror each other: the procession moves in both representations from the outside inwards. Thus trade (and indirectly Amsterdam) is assigned its central position.”²⁰⁹

Romers/van Leeuwen go on to note that industry is only hinted at in the lowest zone, between “Steam” and “Electricity”, possibly illustrating the low degree of industrialization in the Netherlands of the 1880s. Yet, while not forming the main narrative, the lower zone is dedicated to the future, a new era where steam, electricity and industry (left) would lead to prosperity, brotherhood, and civilization (right).²¹⁰

III.3 Washington Union Station (1901-1907): The Progress of Railroading Embodied by Metonymic Personages

Daniel Burnham and Peirce Anderson’s design for **Washington Union Station (1905-1907)** is counted amongst the four most influential railway terminals in the US.²¹¹ The removal of several older and smaller terminals and the erection of a new, combined,

²⁰⁸ van Leeuwen and Romers, *Een spoor van verbeelding*.

²⁰⁹ van Leeuwen and Romers, *Een spoor van verbeelding*, 22. My translation.

²¹⁰ See van Leeuwen and Romers, *Een spoor van verbeelding*, 22.

²¹¹ See Sally A. Kitt Chappell, "Urban Ideals and the Design of Railway Stations".

Union Terminal five blocks north of the Capitol was part of an urban development plan in the fashion of the City Beautiful movement, “designed to outfit [the city] in a colossal manner befitting a stripling world capital”.²¹² The United States Senate Park Commission, under the leadership of Daniel Burnham, agreed that the new station had to match the nation’s capital in splendor without rivaling the existing political architecture – thus, the train station was to have no train shed, because Burnham believed it “would dwarf the dome of the most notable building and mar the beauty of the city.”²¹³ Instead, the central concourse was covered by a spacious barrel vault, 220 ft long and 90 ft high (67 x 27,5 meter) and forming one of the nation’s largest halls.²¹⁴ According to Highsmith/Landphair,

“the effect was properly pompous: Constantinian arches, egg-and-dart molding and sun-streaked gilt leafing, coffered ceilings and majestic skylights, delicate Pompeian traceries, towering statues inside and out by Louis Saint-Gaudens, the less-famous brother of Augustus Saint-Gaudens.”²¹⁵

These sculptures consist on the inside of forty-six soldiers resembling Roman legionnaires, or rather “second-century warriors from Gaul, who served as mercenaries in the Roman army”.²¹⁶ Yet, in reality there are but three different figures which are repeated over and over again. The first type stands erect; his feet are placed firmly apart, his muscular left arm holding a tall shield which stands to his feet, covering his legs. He is clad in a sort of thigh-long tunic, covered by chain mail, and a long cloak falling from his right shoulder over his back to the floor; his armor is completed by leg plates or shin guards, and a winged helmet. (Figure1-60) The second type is a mirrored version of the first, this time it is the right hand upholding the shield, and the cloak falls from his left shoulder. There are also superficial differences in the treatment of the breastplate (vs. the first type’s light chain mail). (Figure1-61) The third type rests both hands on the shield in front of him and appears, apart from the long cloak tied with a thin strip of leather like a sash across his chest, quite naked. (Figure1-62) The forty-six sculptures

²¹² Carol M. Highsmith and Ted Landphair, *Union Station: A History of Washington's Great Terminal* (Washington, D. C.: Union Station Venture, 1998), 44.

²¹³ Quoted after Sally A. Kitt Chappell, "Urban Ideals and the Design of Railway Stations", 361.

²¹⁴ See Highsmith and Landphair, *Union Station*, 47–48.

²¹⁵ Highsmith and Landphair, *Union Station*, 48.

²¹⁶ Highsmith and Landphair, *Union Station*, 28.

were placed 18 ft (5,50 meter) high above the visitor's heads atop the architraves running along the long sides of the vaulted Concourse and dividing it on the short sides from East and West Hall. Obviously, the scarce attire led to some objections amongst the board of directors who, out of concern for the feelings of their female passengers, insisted that Saint-Gaudens add the shields to cover the soldiers' modesty.²¹⁷

The placement of soldiers not connected to a war memorial is very unusual within a train station, and their meaning is rather unclear. A clue lies in their very number, for at the time of the station's opening in 1907, the number of states in the Union was exactly forty-six.²¹⁸ In a time where the US actively worked on constructing a national identity, one that would overcome the chasm of the Civil War and unite all states of the federation regardless of their respective differences in cultural heritage, the number is hardly coincidental. Moreover, the choice to use soldiers as "ambassadors" for the federal states and bring them together within the capital's new station would reflect the nation's policy to use military campaigns to help in their forming of said national identity. Yet, if a similar program had existed in Europe, there is no doubt that the soldiers – despite their external resemblance – would have been clearly distinguishable from one another, because their shields would have been decorated with different crests, most likely the flags or coat-of-arms of the respective states. Instead, the pseudo-roman legionnaires all bear the nation's seal (an eagle, and the motto "E PLURIBUS UNUM") (Figure 1-63) on their shield, possibly to appear even more united.

But it is the sculptural program outside the building that draws the most attention. The station's façade is dominated by a central projection modeled on the Arch of Constantine in Rome. Three arches of the same height are flanked by six Ionic columns – two on each side – forming a portico. Above a cornice, a plain attic zone hides the low roof. Here, on low pediments right above the columns, six granite statues represent "Fire", "Electricity", "Freedom", "Imagination", "Agriculture", and "Mechanics" – according to Highsmith/Landphair: "pursuits that built America."²¹⁹ (Figure 1-64)

"Fire" is shown wrapped in a sheet that leaves the left breast free, what – together with the thick braids of hair – gives the impression of a woman who holds a flaming torch

²¹⁷ See Highsmith and Landphair, *Union Station*, 50.

²¹⁸ The 46th state, Oklahoma, was admitted November 16, 1907; the next two states (New Mexico and Arizona) were to follow only in 1912. For more information on the development of the United States see Mark Stein, *How the states got their shapes* (New York, NY: Smithsonian Books/Collins, 2008). See also chapter 5.

²¹⁹ Highsmith and Landphair, *Union Station*, 21.

with both hands on her right side. Next to her left foot, an open fire burns in an ornamental brazier. “Electricity” is represented by a young man in a short tunic and sandals that are tied up to his shins, he holds a bundle of lightning bolts (in a similar gesture as “Fire”) on his right side and is crowned with a wreath of smaller bolts - still more bolts wriggling at his feet. (Figure 1-65)

“Freedom”, a woman with her right breast exposed and capped with the Phrygian cap popular during the French Revolution, holds a long sword in her left and a bundle of olive branches in her right arm. An eagle sits to her feet, partly hidden in the folds of her long cloak. “Imagination” is depicted as a bearded man in a toga, crowned with laurel, holding a rather massive roll of parchment in his left arm and a very thick stylus in his right, leaning on a fluted column as if to write. (Figure 1-66)

“Agriculture” is female; clad in a loose fitting long dress and a cloak she balances a bushel of wheat and a sickle in the elbow of her left arm. A ram looks around her right leg, and next to her left, more grain is growing. The bearded man representing “Mechanics”, in a short tunic, sandals and cloak, hides a cog-wheel behind his legs. In his hands, he holds a compass and he leans on a hammer placed above an anvil. (Figure 1-67)

The sculptures are further explained by inscriptions in the three wand field above the arches, chosen and partly written by Harvard president Charles W. Eliot.²²⁰ On the western panel, between “Electricity” and “Freedom”, it says:

FIRE – GREATEST OF DISCOVERIES

ENABLING MAN TO LIVE IN VARIOUS CLIMATES

USE MANY FOODS – AND COMPEL THE

FORCES OF NATURE TO DO HIS WORK

ELECTRICITY – CARRIER OF LIGHT AND POWER

DEVOURER OF TIME AND SPACE – BEARER

²²⁰ See Highsmith and Landphair, *Union Station*, 21; 49. The inscriptions and a short identification of the sculptures have also been published shortly after the station’s opening in form of a small booklet. See The Washington Terminal Company, *Inscriptions over Pavilion: Union Station Washington D. C.*; available from <http://www.thejoekorner.com/unionstations/index.html>; Internet; accessed February 16, 2012.

OF HUMAN SPEECH OVER LAND AND SEA

GREATEST SERVANT OF MAN – ITSELF UNKNOWN

THOU HAST PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET

Thus, the verse end with a quote from the Bible (Hebrews 2,8).

On the next field, between Freedom and Imagination, is inscribed:

SWEETENER OF HUT AND OF HALL

BRINGER OF LIFE OUT OF NAUGHT

FREEDOM O FAIREST OF ALL

THE DAUGHTERS OF TIME AND THOUGHT

MAN'S IMAGINATION HAS CONCEIVED ALL

NUMBERS AND LETTERS – ALL TOOLS AND VESSELS

AND SHELTERS – EVERY ART AND TRADE – ALL

PHILOSOPHY AND POETRY – AND ALL POLITIES

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

The last line, of course, comes from the New Testament (John 8, 32).

And the last field, between Imagination and Agriculture, announces

THE FARM – BEST HOME OF THE FAMILY – MAIN

SOURCE OF NATIONAL WEALTH – FOUNDATION OF

CIVILIZED SOCIETY – THE NATURAL PROVIDENCE

THE OLD MECHANIC ARTS – CONTROLLING NEW
FORCES – BUILD NEW HIGHWAYS FOR GOODS
AND MEN – OVERRIDE THE OCEAN – AND MAKE
THE VERY ETHER CARRY HUMAN THOUGHT

THE DESERT SHALL REJOICE AND BLOSSOM AS THE ROSE

Again, this last line is a quote from Scripture (Isaia 35, 1).

Although the verse were written or selected by Eliot, it seems clear that it was Burnham himself who had devised the program of the decoration, keeping full control over the meaning that would be instilled into his building. Possibly it was also Burnham who had advised Louis Saint-Gaudens on the treatment of the abstract ideas as personifications. These are, after all, rather unusual: “Fire” is –surprisingly, considering the rather effeminate form – identified with Prometheus, the Greek titan who stole the fire from the gods. “Electricity” is represented by Thales, natural philosopher, mathematician and first among the Seven Sages, who allegedly was the first person to dabble with electricity.²²¹ “Agriculture” is typified as Ceres, and Archimedes, Greek philosopher and physicist, represents “Mechanics”. The central figures of “Freedom” and “Imagination” are usually identified as taking the form of Themis (the Greek titaness representing divine law in the shape of Custom and Order) and Apollo.²²²

Several things are unusual about this allegoric program. First of all, the identification of the figures with what they are supposed to represent is somewhat doubtful in at least two cases: Although the first figure, with his long sheet and bare chest, looks like a woman, he is nevertheless identified as Prometheus in the official publication and definitely has all the attributes alluding to the theme of fire. Themis, on the other hand, more commonly represents an idea of law that is based on common customs, on “what is done or not done”, which is consistent with the long sword reminding of the common iconography of Lady Justice. The only attribute hinting at the idea of freedom does not

²²¹ See Carl B. Boyer and Uta C. Merzbach, *A history of mathematics*, 2nd edition (New York, NY: Wiley, 1991), 41.

²²² Identification according to The Washington Terminal Company, *Inscriptions over Pavilion: Union Station Washington D. C.*; available from <http://www.thejoekorner.com/unionstations/index.html>; Internet; accessed February 16, 2012. The last two figures are a. o. identified by Highsmith and Landphair, *Union Station*, 21.

come from her as mythological person, but from the Phrygian cap worn by the French Jacobins during the Revolution.

It seems as if the program was hatched with the abstract concepts in mind, and then either ideologue or artist had to struggle finding a shape for them. They obviously hesitated using the standard mythological deities outside of their attributed fields. Thus matching “Agriculture” with Ceres was easy, as their meaning is completely congruent, and even using Apollo, the artist-musician-poet, as “Imagination” is comprehensible. Yet, for “Freedom”, “Mechanics”, or “Electricity” there did not exist any pagan deities, so that other solutions had to be found.

European artists would have probably either interpreted a classic deity more widely – for instance, Jove is often attributed with a lightning bolt and could thus have taken the meaning of natural electricity – or they would have fallen back on the already customary tradition of the new allegories – female figure with distinct attributes. Burnham and Saint-Gaudens, on the other hand, chose a different approach: They portrayed Archimedes and Thales, known for their groundbreaking mechanical and electric studies, and universalized the specific historical person into the general idea or concept of “Mechanics” and “Electricity”. Although this approach worked, at least in these two cases, it is far from convincing as a whole – the arbitrary collation of antique deities, mythological heroes/titans, and ancient philosophers feels inorganic and rather labored. Admittedly, the formal execution of the statues is not of the highest quality either: all of Saint-Gaudens’s fifty-two statues seem lifeless, stiff, and unconvincingly stone like; their identical frontal posture does not take any risks in trying to allude to the shifting weights of a real body beneath them, and the treatment of costumes and attributes suggests little experience with the convincing rendering of different textures. Fortunately, because of the high placement of the statues, these defects are not damning, rather the overall effect of the statues probably gains some force by their reduced, and – in the case of the soldiers – even repetitive postures.

Unlike Whitney Warren, Daniel Burnham had not been educated in Europe, and Louis Saint-Gaudens had only for a very short time studied in Paris. For better or worse, they do not seem to have enjoyed the kind of classical, humanistic education that allowed them to easily draw on the near unlimited repertoire of European allegorical invention. Their sculptural embellishment made the so called “French” Beaux-Arts style of Washington Union’s architecture quite American in its form. There is little doubt that

European artists would have come up with quite different solutions for a convincing invention. Of course, one example, especially by a less-than-first-rate artist, does not allow for much inference of a general nature. Yet, the literal-mindedness of the invention, the rather compulsive effort of one-to-one translation, seems to represent a rather American mindset, which honors directness and simplicity over their European counterparts' more imaginative ambiguity in invention and poetic license in realization. Certainly the American concept is – while sometimes very learned – less intellectual.²²³

Apart from the formal expression, the very message underlying the station's embellishment differs from European examples. A contemporary publication, issued by the Washington Terminal Company, explained:

“Those on the west side [i.e. “Fire” and “Electricity”] represent two of the great forces connected with the operation of railroads, those on the east [“Agriculture” and “Mechanics”] owe much of their development and wealth to the railroads. The central figures typify the atmosphere of freedom in which the inventive imagination has been able to accomplish such great results.”²²⁴

In Europe, “Electricity” would have much rather be paired with “Steam” than with “Fire”, “Industry” – not “Mechanics” - would be the natural counterpart to “Agriculture” (or “Science” or “Engineering” would be paired with “Mechanics”), and the inclusion of “Imagination” and “Freedom” are generally unheard of.²²⁵ The focus on agriculture as the dominating economic branch is even more celebrated by the accompanying text (“best home of the family – main source of national wealth”) smacks of an almost nostalgic, idealistic conception of US-America as an agrarian society which completely belies the fact that large areas of the East Coast and even the Mid-West, were in fact already at the time of the station's construction urbanized as well as heavily industrialized.

²²³ When Austrian-born sculptor Karl Bitter came to work in the United States he mocked his American colleagues as too literal and “prosaic” in their expression. Quoted in James M. Dennis, *Karl Bitter: Architectural Sculptor 1867-1915* (Madison, Milwaukee, & London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 58–61. See also chapter 2.

²²⁴ The Washington Terminal Company, *Inscriptions over Pavilion: Union Station Washington D. C.*; available from <http://www.thejoekorner.com/unionstations/index.html>; Internet; accessed February 16, 2012.

²²⁵ At least, during the course of her research the author has not found any example in Europe.

Yet, through the naming of the very basic, down-to-earth techniques and faculties as the pillars which support the US-American nation the program receives a political significance which is rather fitting, even convincing in a railway terminal serving the capital of the Union, and makes it a prime example of the American Renaissance.²²⁶

IV Employing Allegories as Codified System to Achieve Representative Goals and Social Acceptance

This chapter aimed at introducing both one of the most important topics of station embellishment – namely, the close and mutual relationship between railway companies and the supplementing industries – and the most prevalent form in which decoration programs materialized: Allegory. These allegories may appear in different media, although architectural sculpture seems to be most common, and take on different forms. Next to classic mythological deities, whose field of “expertise” was easily adapted to the needs of the industrialized nineteenth century, soon appeared new allegories, predominantly female personifications displaying realistic tools or gadgets for easy identification. These new personifications had their iconographic roots in either of two traditions: 1) images of the goddess and city patron Athena (formidable, severe-looking, somewhat androgynous, and wrapped in drapery and/or pieces of armor) or 2) images of the personification of nature, Natura (sensuous, nude or semi-nude with but a flimsy veil and clearly eroticized). Another tradition resulted in anecdotic scenes aiming at universal validity by either putting it in a de-historicized setting – usually achieved through the implementation of “timeless”, vaguely antique garments, tunics or drapery – or by replacing all acting figures with chubby little putti. All of these allegoric types can be reduced to mere symbols, for instance by depicting Mercury’s attributes (caduceus-staff or winged helmet) instead of a full-bodied figure of the god; and all of them can be further explained by accompanying inscriptions. Also, the types can be found alone or in any combination with each other.

In the one, rare example of Washington Union station, it has been attempted to elevate historical personages into personifications by equating them with their field of expertise (for instance: Archimedes = Mechanics). The sample is too small to infer from it a

²²⁶ For an introduction to the term “American Renaissance” see Richard Guy Wilson, “The great civilization”, in *The American Renaissance 1876–1917: Exhibition catalogue, Oct. - Dec. 1979*, ed. The Brooklyn Museum (New York, NY: Brooklyn Museum; distributed by Pantheon Books, 1979)

general thesis from this, but it seems possible, that the American artist and architect involved knew about the formal requirements of European architectural sculpture, but put their own, very American twist to its execution.

Researchers have unanimously agreed that the reason why railway companies employed both historicist architectural styles for their railway architecture, and the associated embellishment, was their need for representation. Nevertheless, this left open the question of why the railway companies in question felt that their representative needs could and should be fulfilled by employing styles and formats that were even by contemporaries described as “retrograde”.²²⁷

This chapter has argued that railway companies (and, in one case, a city council) acts after the values of the individuals that stand behind them. That is, their actions are in accordance with the values of nineteenth century industrial middle-classes, who behave like any individual aspiring to climb the social ladder is expected to behave. In the words of Bourdieu, the *nouveau-riches* (railway companies) possess any amount of *economic* capital, and aspire to be accepted by the social arbiters by buying themselves into *cultural* capital. The safe option is, of course, to imitate or even emulate the architectural and artistic choices of the social establishment (aristocracy, high bourgeoisie), who had set the tone – sometimes decades or even centuries earlier – by shaping the appearance of public architecture (museums and galleries, opera and concert houses, universities and city halls) in the image of styles employed by royalty and church princes. This would not only explain, why the most modern technology and infrastructure was wrapped in architecture using quite old-fashioned vocabulary, but also why this was perceived as desirable and even reassuring.

Nevertheless, many art historians and art critics have been disturbed by this, and often wondered over a bygone epoch’s *horror vacui*, when factual realism or clean functionality would have seemed much more in accordance with the railway’s innovative and transformative powers. Fact is, on the way from design to execution, station embellishment (especially murals) was often in danger of getting cut down or even cut out because expenditure was considered too high. This is slightly less true for sculptural decoration on the façade, which was generally installed at the same time as

²²⁷ In the case of the paintings for the restaurant at Paris Gare de Lyon. See P. Fortuny, "Nouvelles gares, à propos de l'inauguration de la gare de Lyon", *Revue des Arts décoratifs*, no. 5 (mai 1901), here 159, and chapter 4.

the actual construction of the walls, and (unlike murals) often was an integral part of the architectural design – at least in shape or silhouette, if not content.²²⁸ Thus, more often than not, the artists hired to execute the sculptures (or, less frequently, paint the pictures) came from the ranks of well trained professional artists who had been educated at the academies and were well established in their respective fields. Usually, their names are not associated with the sort of avant-garde that art historians of the past century have been successfully pushing forward as the most innovative, most interesting, and only deserving form of artistic expression – so much so, that the adjective “academic” has become a sort of pejorative. And while it is true, from an aesthetic point of view, that it is much more rewarding to analyze the work of a first-class artist, it is equally true that even the work of second-and-third-rate artists can be very illuminating in matters of cultural history, and deserve a close look.

Yet, the question remains: is allegory – that is the attempt at conveying rather more meaning than a first view reveals – really that reactionary? Come to it, is architectural embellishment or figurative décor reactionary? Even today, many art critics still associate “modernism” with the naked white walls of Bauhaus architecture and International Style – yet, can it not be reasonably assumed that this concentration goes back to art history’s fixation on an avant-garde that was quite arbitrarily chosen and then upheld as a role-model, with little regard for other, contemporary developments? In effect, architectural embellishment and allegoric expression have persisted over centuries. Their gentle but consistent adaptation to new forms and styles kept them a staple of artistic practice and in common use even in the twentieth century, the age of “classic modernity”. Especially the 1930s saw an increased demand in (often politically motivated) murals in fresco or mosaic technique on both sides of the Atlantic.²²⁹ Recently, even media artists have shown a renewed interest in allegories.²³⁰

²²⁸ For example, several early drafts for Berlin Anhalter Bahnhof sport a shapeless winged figure atop the roof, only the ultimate design committing the form as “Allegory of World Traffic” (as opposed to diverse nameless winged geniuses or even a plain winged wheel). See Maier, *Berlin Anhalter Bahnhof*, 105ff; 211-212. See also chapter 2.

²²⁹ See for instance Greta Berman, “Amerika als Epos: Wandmalerei im Regierungsauftrag”, in *Amerika: Traum und Depression 1920/40*, ed. Grant E. Mouser (Hamburg: Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, 1980); Peter Alma, “Enkele gezichtspunten over de wandschildering”, *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura* 62, no. 24 (June 14, 1941);

²³⁰ See Lippert, Wenzel, ed., *Video II: Allegorie* (Düsseldorf: NRW-Forum Kultur und Wirtschaft, 2005).

As for the dominating subject matter: It is very tempting to draw certain further conclusions from embellishment focusing on a range of economic topics – could it be possible that the depicted branches of economy allowed to infer on the status quo of regional industrialization of each station's environment? After all, industrialization spread at a very different pace, depending on natural resources, political circumstances, ready capital, and available entrepreneurship. The choice of economic sectors depicted in station embellishment surely would offer an insight into the historical, political, and socio-economic circumstances during their creation. The analyses in the following chapter shall attempt to validate or falsify this hypothesis.

Chapter 2 Railway Technology

I The Railway – a Force of Industrialization

There is no doubt about the strong correlation of nineteenth century industrialization and the spread of the railway network. Usually, the railway would even enforce that correlation, as the railway industry relied on exactly the same resources (coal, wood, steel) as the heavy iron industry, thus self-sustainingly reinforcing the growing market: the railway transported the very raw materials to the factories that formed the material base for the network's infrastructure. But freight trains did not stop at heavy industries – they delivered all kinds of raw materials to factories and distributed the manufactured products to their markets. Usually, the possibilities of the new infrastructure were readily welcomed by captains of industry, who after all were used to settling along traditional routes of mass transport, such as ports, canals, and rivers.²³¹ And of course, also agricultural products could travel faster and further than ever before. It was the “railway milk”, meat wagons, and vegetable trains that enabled the feeding of nineteenth century rapidly growing cities.²³²

Rarely was the railway companies' interest in the trade with agricultural goods as obvious as in Southern France: in her Master's Thesis, Sandra Moretin has shown how in the second half of the nineteenth century the Compagnie du Midi and the Compagnie de Paris-Orléans (PO) coped with the fact that neither company had any industrial costumers to speak of in their designated region of operation.²³³ Because of this lack of potential clients for freight transport, more lucrative than passenger travel, the two railway companies actively facilitated a structural change in Southern French agriculture: from producing solely for the local market to a more commercial approach,

²³¹ See Richards and MacKenzie, *The railway station*, 185–191.

²³² See Richards and MacKenzie, *The railway station*, 191–205.

²³³ See Sandra Moretin, "Les chemins de fer et le développement de l'agriculture en Lot-en-Garonne du milieu du XIX. siècle au second conflit mondial", (Mémoire de maîtrise 1998-99), 110–11. After initial slow development, an 1842 law instituted a national railway network centered on Paris after the model of national turnpikes. Smaller companies merged with more successful ones, and by 1860, six regionally operating private companies served the entire country: Compagnie des Chemins de Fer du Nord, Compagnie des Chemins de Fer de l'Est, Compagnie des Chemins de fer de Paris à Lyon et à la Méditerranée (PLM), Compagnie des Chemins de Fer de Paris à Orléans (PO), Compagnie des Chemins de Fer de l'Ouest and Compagnie de Chemins de Fer du Midi. Additionally, a small network in the South-West was operated by the state. In 1875, the network had reached a dimension that would not change until 1939. See Lartilleux, *Géographie des Chemins de fer français*, 1–5.

exporting comestibles nationally and internationally. If there was no industry based on mineral resources like coal or iron, it would be agriculture that would have to be industrialized. Special rates for fresh produce helped to tap new markets as far away as Paris. Wine was exported internationally to Great Britain and Germany. Additionally, the railway companies started to directly and indirectly educate local farmers. They organized lecture series, spreading the knowledge of modern fertilizers, or modern preservation techniques (such as canning) thus actively participating in the industrialization of agriculture in order to acquire an important new customer.²³⁴

Still, the aforementioned example proves an exception. Usually, the advent of the railway was but one of many factors necessary for the successful industrialization of a region. The railway was important, but on its own it was usually not sufficient to induce a structural transformation. Richards/MacKenzie have put it short:

“Clearly, then, the provision of railways does not lead inevitably to industrialization. There is an interlocking complex of reasons for industrial take-off. But the presence of railways is one of them and when industrialization occurs, the railway speeds the process.”²³⁵

For instance, high hopes for the development of a mainly agrarian region had been connected to the first railway line in East Prussia, as can be seen by the ceiling frescoes installed in Königsberg’s first Main Station in 1853. Alas, it became clear very soon that the prophecies of those paintings would not be self fulfilling.

I.1 Königsberg (1853): Hope for Prosperity

Monika Wagner has examined the ceiling paintings in the Royal Waiting Rooms at Königsberg Station, which opened to the public in 1853, as an early example for the invocation of agricultural and economical sectors within railway station embellishment.²³⁶ From Königsberg (since 1946: Kaliningrad), the newly founded

²³⁴ See Morettin, "Les chemins de fer et le développement de l'agriculture en Lot-en-Garonne du milieu du XIX. siècle au second conflit mondial", esp. 114-161.

²³⁵ Richards and MacKenzie, *The railway station*, 186.

²³⁶ In her 1989 book on the decoration of public buildings in 19th century Germany, Monika Wagner was trying to show what sources led to the inventions of new technical allegories found for example at Polytechnic Universities like Munich. It is in this context that she turned to early railway stations, thus

Königliche Ostbahn (Royal East Railway) connected the province East Prussia first with Braunsberg, and from 1857 onwards directly with Berlin.²³⁷ Unfortunately, the station and the ceiling paintings were destroyed,²³⁸ so that we have to rely on the contemporary description by Franz Kugler, published in the magazine *Deutsches Kunstblatt* in December 1853.²³⁹

According to Kugler, the oblong ceiling was divided into two rhombic squares, each containing a round centerpiece framed by garlands and arabesques. The first painting upon entering the room was designed by Ludwig Rosenfelder, the director of the Königsberg Academy of Fine Arts which had been founded only recently, in 1849.²⁴⁰ It showed the personified Lady Railway, seated on a winged wagon. Led by Royal Power, she is welcomed by the personification of Königsberg. The painting thus is a laudation of the Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm IV, and justly so, as it had been the monarch who had personally advanced the construction of the Ostbahn, both for military purposes, facilitating the route to Russia, and in order to develop the economy of the eastern provinces.²⁴¹ Naturally, it is especially this latter objective that was celebrated in the royal waiting room.

The second painting, closer to the window side of the room, was designed by Maksymilian Antoni Pietrowski, also a painter at the Königsberg Academy. It obviously depicted “Lady Railway” holding a cornucopia, in the act of waking up the sleeping Industry. Further figures represented the Arts, some of which were already awake and working with their attributes, while others were still drowsily rubbing their eyes or even still fast asleep.

being amongst the first to describe station embellishment in some detail and analyze them using art historical methodology. Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, especially chapter IV: Personifikationen der Technik für die „Kathedralen des Fortschritts“, 165-195.

²³⁷ See v. der Leyen, "Ostbahn, kgl. preußische", in *Enzyklopädie des Eisenbahnwesens*, ed. Viktor Freiherr von Röhl. 2nd, completely revised edition (Berlin, Wien: Urban & Schwarzenberg, 1912-1923), 7 (1915).

²³⁸ See Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, 173.

²³⁹ Franz Kugler, "Die Wandmalereien in dem Bahnhofsgebäude zu Königsberg", *Deutsches Kunstblatt* 4, no. 50 (10. December 1853) (1853).

²⁴⁰ See Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, 172.

²⁴¹ See v. der Leyen, "Ostbahn, kgl. preußische", 7 (1915); v. Wittek, "Eisenbahnpolitik", in *Enzyklopädie des Eisenbahnwesens*, ed. Viktor Freiherr von Röhl. 2nd, completely revised edition (Berlin, Wien: Urban & Schwarzenberg, 1912-1923), 4 (1913); Dr. Born, "Die Entwicklung der kgl. preußischen Ostbahn", *Archiv für Eisenbahnwesen* 34, no. 4, 5, 6 (1911).

The triangles between the two squares seem to have contained four medallions with smaller depictions of the most important regional commodities: Agriculture, Horse Breeding, the Harvest of Amber, and Forestry, again by Rosenfelder.

These figures personified mainly different branches of agriculture typical for the region. Next to classic crop farming, the focus lay on forestry and horse breeding – East Prussia is still famous as the origin of the Trakehner horse – both of which seemed natural in a landscape consisting of meager land, wide grassy plains, and up to 30% of woods.²⁴² Large deposits of amber are also still typical for the Baltic countries, with the area around Königsberg/Kaliningrad supplying 75% of the world market even today.²⁴³

While the smaller medallions clearly depicted the actual pillars of East-Prussian economy, the center piece presents all the hopes connected with the railway for changing the predominantly agricultural economy into a modern, industrialized economy. Politically, the Prussian Reforms, instituted in the time of the Napoleonic wars, had laid certain important foundations: the abolishment of serfdom in combination with free choice of profession set free the necessary labor force; compulsory school attendance and the foundation of several polytechnics allowed – theoretically – for education and thus quick adaptation of the latest trends in industrial technologies.²⁴⁴ The construction of the Ostbahn railway line was expected to be the missing link to tip the post-feudal agrarian scales towards roaring industrialization, as shown in “Lady Railway wakens a sleeping Industry”.

Except that there really was very little industry “asleep”, so that the railway had a hard time “awakening” it.²⁴⁵ East Prussia lacked all of the natural resources that were key elements of nineteenth century industrial centers: coal, iron, other metals were not found in its vast plains. What little industry there was – mainly in the textile sector – was increasingly endangered by international competition, especially products from already

²⁴² See Jan Baldowski and Mariola Malerek, *Ermland und Masuren*, 2nd edition (Dülmen: Laumann, 1997), 16–17.

²⁴³ In 2000, ca. 510 t of amber (succinite) were gathered in the Baltic countries, dropping to 200 t in 2006. Most of it (95,5% in 2000, 90% in 2006) comes from Kaliningrad Oblast (Russia), the former Königsberg. See Wiesław Gierłowski, *Polish Amber Industry in 2007*; available from <http://www.amber.com.pl/en/resources/reports/item/421-polish-amber-industry-in-2007>; Internet; accessed June 22, 2010.

²⁴⁴ See Vogel, Barbara, ed., *Preußische Reformen: 1807 - 1820*, Neue wissenschaftliche Bibliothek Geschichte, vol. 96 (Königstein/Taunus: Verlags-Gruppe Athenäum-Hain-Scriptor-Hanstein, 1980), 96.

²⁴⁵ See E. Winkelmann, *Die Provinz Preußen, deren Bevölkerung, Industrie, Kommunikation und Handel nach den neuesten statistischen Aufnahmen und amtlichen Angaben dargestellt*, In (Königsberg (Pr.): E. J. Dalkowski, 1863).

highly industrialized countries like England or even the West-German Ruhr: high import tariffs on raw materials, intended to protect the domestic markets, made for instance a steel industry (based on imported Swedish or English iron) unprofitable. Due to protective taxes on domestic beet sugar it was no longer lucrative to refine Indian raw sugar, while the high costs of spinning domestic flax by hand could not compete with the cheaper English “machine yarn”, which thus slowly eroded the profitability of the domestic linen fabrication.²⁴⁶

But the image reflected also the passive and expectant attitude of the East Prussian upper classes. After all, landed gentry and hanseatic merchant patricians had thrived for centuries on the present conditions and saw no reason to change their policies.

Therefore, a conservative government did little to improve the changed situation with new policies. Instead of investing into the latest technologies and into its “human resources” to remedy its deficiencies, East-Prussia continued to rely on its ports to the Baltic, which had served for centuries as important links between Russia and Western Europe. While this policy had been fruitful during the times of the Hanseatic League, global trade routes in the nineteenth century had noticeably shifted, and now centered on the North Sea with its connection to the Atlantic route to the Americas, or India.²⁴⁷

Additionally, although the region possessed knowledge, technology, and workforce, there was a lack of capital and entrepreneurship from the middle classes. Rather, East-Prussia’s port cities “confined themselves to exploit their hinterland as a reservoir for agricultural and silvicultural products, and neglected the development of their own industry”,²⁴⁸ much to the profit of the existing industrial centers in the coal rich regions of Berlin/Brandenburg and Ruhr. The existing workforce could not find lucrative jobs on the domestic (East-Prussian) work market, because the abolition of serfdom had coincided with an above-average birth rate. Additionally, a rising use of machines in agriculture led to decreased employment rates. Thus, instead of adding momentum to a budding industry, the new railway line quickly became a direct escape route for

²⁴⁶ See Winkelmann, *Die Provinz Preußen, deren Bevölkerung, Industrie, Kommunikation und Handel nach den neuesten statistischen Aufnahmen und amtlichen Angaben dargestellt*, 13–14.

²⁴⁷ See Thomas M. Bohn, "Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Urbanisierung in Ostpreußen im Zeitalter der Industrialisierung", in *Zwischen Lübeck und Novgorod: Wirtschaft, Politik und Kultur im Ostseeraum vom frühen Mittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert. Norbert Angermann zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Ortwin Pelc, Gertrud Pickhan, and Norbert Angermann (Lüneburg: 1996), 361.

²⁴⁸ Bohn, "Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Urbanisierung in Ostpreußen im Zeitalter der Industrialisierung", 361. My translation.

hundreds of thousands of workers who used it to migrate mainly to the industrial regions in Berlin/Brandenburg and the Rhineland-Westphalian Ruhr.²⁴⁹

The embellishment in Königsberg's new station had announced great ambitions for the local industry – but the railway line alone did not succeed in effecting a structural change from agrarian to industrial economy. The upper classes had passively waited for their king to bring them the railway, but were not interested to give further political or financial support to socially ambitious entrepreneurs from the middle classes. The workforce simply followed the jobs, draining the region of talent and ambition. Elsewhere, the industrial revolutions were advanced by the ever mobile middle classes, who were both educated and ambitious, and could rely on cheap workforce for their success. The semi-feudal conditions in East Prussia were not conducive for their goals. In this situation, not even the railway could help.

On the other hand, the following example will show how several private railway companies tried to connect with the already fully developed economy of the Cincinnati metropolitan area. The complex and elaborate mosaics displaying the most important regional industries offered local companies the opportunity to project an image of prosperity even in the middle of the nation's economic depression. At the same time, the railway gained the potential of being identified with the industries and to be perceived as an integral part of them.

I.2 Cincinnati Union Station (1929-33): The Image of Industry. Race, Class and Gender in Winold Reiss's "Worker Murals"

Cincinnati Union Terminal was opened to the public in 1933 (Figure 2-1). After much lobbying, the seven railroad companies serving the city had finally decided in 1928 to build a new, combined Union Station.²⁵⁰ The architects Fellheimer and Wagner put the French architect Paul Cret in charge of the interior design. Cret soon abandoned a "classical design with its pillars, cornices, pilasters and pedestals. It would have been

²⁴⁹ See Bohn, "Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Urbanisierung in Ostpreußen im Zeitalter der Industrialisierung", 362–363.

²⁵⁰ The companies in question were the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad; the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad; the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railway; the Louisville and Nashville Railroad; the Norfolk and Western Railway; the Pennsylvania Railroad; and the Southern Railway. See Carl W. Condit, *The railroad and the city: A technological and urbanistic history of Cincinnati* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977), esp. 215 ff. See also Linda C. Rose, Patrick Rose and Gibson Yungblut, *Cincinnati Union Terminal: The design and construction of an art deco masterpiece*, Volume I, 2nd edition (Cincinnati, OH: Cincinnati Railroad Club, 1999).

cold and costly.”²⁵¹ Instead, he decided to decorate the building in the modern Art Deco style –

“smooth planes and simple masses, the multiple prismatic and fluted moldings in parallel and concentric lines, the aluminum trim, and above all the rich, warm palette of yellows, tans, oranges, browns and woody tones. The result was a brilliant display of color that proved to be less expensive per square foot of usable area than the classical intricacy it replaced.”²⁵²

He was assisted in this endeavor by his friend Winold Reiss, who had made a name for himself with the first truly modern interior designs for shops and restaurants in New York.²⁵³ Unhappy with the sketches by Pierre Bourdelle, a French born artist who had already worked twice for Fellheimer and Wagner in previous projects,²⁵⁴ Cret had approached Reiss for help. Reiss subsequently created nineteen mosaics for the lavish decoration of the waiting area in the concourse, and the entrance hall.²⁵⁵ In the concourse, Reiss portrayed sixteen²⁵⁶ local industries, as well as railway officials and Cincinnati policy makers. Two images of a train as seen from front and back decorated both the arrival and departure boards, and, finally, a large map of the world, centered on the United States, showed all possibly conceivable destinations along with their time-zones. In the entrance hall, two large mosaics dominated the curved walls above the ticket stalls; they depicted the settlement and local history of Cincinnati.²⁵⁷

²⁵¹ Condit, *The railroad and the city*, 235.

²⁵² Condit, *The railroad and the city*, 234. See also Frances Crotty, "The Cincinnati Union Terminal and the Art Deco Movement", in *Art Deco and the Cincinnati Union Terminal: Exhibition catalogue*, ed. University of Cincinnati, Department of Art History (Cincinnati, OH: 1973), 10–37; Janet Greenstein Potter, "Public Art in Stations", 39–42 and 88–93.

²⁵³ See Stewart, Jeffrey C., ed., *To Color America: Exhibition Catalogue to an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, October 27, 1989, to April 1, 1990* (Washington, D. C., 1989), 96. For Reiss's career in interior design see Ford C. Peatross, "Winold Reiss: A Pioneer of Modern American Design", *Queen City Heritage* 51, no. Summer/Fall (1993).

²⁵⁴ See Janet Greenstein Potter, "Public Art in Stations", 91; S. N. and I. N., "Bourdelle, Pierre", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon: Die bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten und Völker*, ed. Saur (München: Saur), 13 (1996).

²⁵⁵ See Stewart, *To Color America*, 96.

²⁵⁶ Usually the number is given as fourteen, as fourteen mosaics were removed to Cincinnati Airport. Yet, one of these combines impressions from two different companies; and two smaller mosaics dealing with only one and the same company, showing workers from Rockwood Pottery, stayed at the terminal building.

²⁵⁷ For a detailed analysis of the entrance hall mosaics see chapter 5. More about the world map in chapter 3.

Winold Reiss (1886-1953), son of the well-known German landscape painter Fritz Reiss (1857-1915), had been trained in Munich at the Kunstgewerbeschule and at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. When he immigrated to the United States in 1913, he brought his knowledge of modern graphic design to New York. There, he specialized in interior design for restaurants and bars, but also in portraiture of ethnic minorities.

The Cincinnati mosaics are indisputably amongst the highlights of his career. Yet, in 1972, the Southern Railroad demolished the concourse to allow for improvements in its freight transport operations. Fortunately, a public outcry saved the rest of the station from early destruction.²⁵⁸ Money was raised and the fourteen large murals of local industries housed in the concourse were relocated to Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, where they are still on display in the terminals.

Today, the value of Cincinnati's station art and architecture is widely recognized. Nevertheless, academic literature dealing with its treasures is still scarce. Carl Condit's detailed study of Cincinnati Union Terminal remains a standard work, but focuses on the construction history of the station and its relation to issues of urban planning.²⁵⁹ Frances Crotty's master's thesis on the station and its relation to the art deco movement remains unpublished, apart from a paper in an exhibition catalogue.²⁶⁰ In 1985, Linda Stanford described the terminal in the context of the architects' opus.²⁶¹ With the renewed appreciation of Winold Reiss in the 1980s, the station murals have been treated by Jeffrey Stewart in an attempt to survey his oeuvre.²⁶² And three years after moving their offices into the recently established Museum Center at Union Terminal in 1990, the Cincinnati Historical Society dedicated an issue of its magazine to Winold Reiss, including several articles on his work in Cincinnati.²⁶³ Among these, is a paper by Daniel Hurley, then historian at Cincinnati Museum Center: his paper is the most extensive critical appraisal of the Industrial Murals – or, as Hurley prefers: "Worker

²⁵⁸ See Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", *Queen City Heritage* 51, no. Summer/Fall (1993), 81.

²⁵⁹ Condit, *The railroad and the city*.

²⁶⁰ Frances Crotty, "The Cincinnati Union Terminal and the Art Deco Movement", (M. A. thesis, University of Cincinnati, June 1972).

²⁶¹ Linda Oliphant Stanford, "Railway Designs by Fellheimer and Wagner, New York to Cincinnati", *Queen City Heritage* 43 (1985).

²⁶² Stewart, *To Color America*.

²⁶³ Jeffrey C. Stewart, "Winold Reiss as a Portraitist", *Queen City Heritage* 51, no. 2/3 Summer/Fall (1993), 3–19; Ford C. Peatross, "Winold Reiss: A Pioneer of Modern American Design", 38–57; W. Tjark Reiss, "My Father Winold Reiss - Recollections by Tjark Reiss", *Queen City Heritage* 51, no. 2/3, Summer/Fall (1993), 58–80; Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 81–96.

Murals”²⁶⁴ to day, and the only one dealing exclusively with this part of Reiss’s oeuvre. Janet Greenstein Potter included the Cincinnati artwork in a 1998 article in “Vintage Rails”, a magazine catering to railway enthusiasts from 1995-1999.²⁶⁵ Repeating much of the earlier publications, and adding contextual information as well as anecdotic details about the creation process of the mosaics, she offers no further analysis. In 1999, the Cincinnati Railroad Club published a monograph that combined information from a 1933 *Railway Age magazine* booklet and a 1933 booklet by the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, both originally published to celebrate the opening of the terminal station, with material from their own collection, making many original sources and pictures available in a handsome and handy way.²⁶⁶ Another original source is a booklet containing “facts compiled by the Norfolk and Western Railway” that presumably appeared for the inauguration of the terminal in 1933.²⁶⁷

In the waiting area, fourteen mosaics formatted (6 m x 6 m/20 ft by 20 ft depicted the city’s major industries. (Figures 2-2 – 2-15) As you entered from the concourse, they were “Meat Packing (E. Kahn’s & Sons)” (1st left), “The Piano Industry (Baldwin Piano)” (1st right), “Radio Broadcasting (Crosley Broadcasting)” (2nd left), “Medicine and Chemical Manufacturing (William S. Merrell)” (2nd right), “The Printing and Lithography Industry (U. S. Playing Card and Champion Coated Paper)” (3rd left), “Roofing and Shingles (Philip Carey Manufacturing)” (3rd right), “Steel Molding and Casting (American Rolling Mill)”²⁶⁸ (4th left), “Leather and Tanning (American Oak Leather)” (4th right), “Aeroplanes and Parts Mfg. (Aeronautical Corp. of America)” (5th left), “Steel mills (Andrews Rolling Mill)” (5th right), “Inks and Dye Manufacturing (Ault and Weiborg Varnishing Works)” (6th left), “Soap Manufacturing (Procter and Gamble)” (6th right), “Laundry Machine Manufacturing (American Laundry Machinery)” (7th left), and “The Tool and Die Industry (Cincinnati Milling Machine Company)” (7th right).²⁶⁹ Two smaller mosaics, above the stationmaster’s and the

²⁶⁴ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 82.

²⁶⁵ Janet Greenstein Potter, "Public Art in Stations".

²⁶⁶ Rose, Rose and Yungblut, *Cincinnati Union Terminal*.

²⁶⁷ The Norfolk and Western Railway, *The Cincinnati Union Terminal: Facts compiled by the Norfolk and Western Railway*, (o. J.).

²⁶⁸ According to the Norfolk and Western booklet, the depicted company is “American Steel Foundry”.

²⁶⁹ Interior arrangement according to The Norfolk and Western Railway, *The Cincinnati Union Terminal*. This booklet already names specific companies in lieu of the more general titles given here, following Rose, Rose and Yungblut, *Cincinnati Union Terminal*, 89–95. However, at the current location at

passenger agent's offices respectively, both depict "Pottery (Rookwood Pottery Company)": a potter forming a vase, and a kiln worker carrying on his head some earthenware in a firing form.²⁷⁰ (Figures 2-16, 2-17) At the end of the concourse, a large map of the United States, including clocks with 5 time zones, covered almost the entire width of the hall. (Figure 3-51)

I.2.1 Sponsored Artwork as a Kind of Advertisement?

Nowadays, most literature, and especially the airport hosting the murals, titles the mosaics with actual company names, suggesting that a specific company was "meant". Therefore, the suspicious audience wonders whether said companies paid for the artwork as a way to connect art sponsoring and advertisement, similar to efforts in Europe described in chapter 4.

It is therefore important to note that Reiss was neither asked to nor meant to depict any specific company, nor did any of the businesses shown contribute to the costs of the mosaics.²⁷¹ Yet, at least two of the pictured firms had already profited directly from the construction of the station: according to Hurley, the president of Philip Carey Company, George Dent Crabbs, had "personally negotiated the agreement among the seven railroad companies servicing Cincinnati to cooperate on the building of Union Terminal. A mural featuring workers from his company saturating felt with asphalt was a way of thanking the man who made the entire project possible."²⁷² And Rookwood Pottery had sold \$6.000 worth of tiles for the furnishing of the Terminal's game room, a sizable figure, especially in times of the Great Depression.²⁷³ All the other companies simply profited from the ready identification with the murals which was helped along by a brochure issued by the Norfolk and Western Railroad Company.²⁷⁴ It seems that there was a very strong interest to bind local industries to the station, as if the Cincinnati

Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, all mosaics are identified via the associated company name, here in brackets. See Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, *Art on Display* (2008-2011); available from <http://www.cvgairport.com/about/art/index.html>; Internet; accessed October 15, 2011. Janet Greenstein Potter offers similar denotations as the "official" titles, not naming any companies. She also omits "sheet metal manufacturing (Andrews Steel)" but combines two murals under the title "Sheet still foundry and Machine Shop Products", thus giving the impression of only thirteen mosaics. See Janet Greenstein Potter, "Public Art in Stations", 42.

²⁷⁰ See Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 86.

²⁷¹ According to a letter from Winold Reiss to Frank Steward, written in the 1950s, and quoted in Crotty, "The Cincinnati Union Terminal and the Art Deco Movement", 29.

²⁷² Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 90.

²⁷³ See The Norfolk and Western Railway, *The Cincinnati Union Terminal*, n. p. (14).

²⁷⁴ The Norfolk and Western Railway, *The Cincinnati Union Terminal*.

Union Terminal Company wanted to insinuate themselves with their prospective future freight traffic clients. Seeing that due to increasing automobilization passenger rail traffic was already diminishing in the 1930s this was clearly a good move.

Rather than receiving sponsoring for the decoration of their railway terminal, the C.U.T. Company provided said companies – many of which still exist today – with invaluable advertising opportunities.²⁷⁵

1.2.2 A Picture of Reality? The “Authenticity Effect” in the Worker Murals and Visual Construction Along the Categories of Race, Class and Gender

Both Hurley and Potter have extensively described how Reiss created his mosaics. They relate how “he personally visited at least seventeen Cincinnati factories to photograph real workers performing actual tasks.”²⁷⁶ He then set out to “carefully craft the scenes he photographed”²⁷⁷, went back to his studio in New York, and, using the gridded and enlarged photographs like sketches for the backgrounds, “he developed charcoal and crayon studies of each of the human figures in the photographs.”²⁷⁸ The artist’s son, Tjark Reiss, recalls that at this stage of the work, any person who happened to pass the studio, could possibly be drafted to model for the paintings, and was handed worker’s clothes that Reiss had brought back with him from Cincinnati.²⁷⁹ Water color sketches added color, and finally the images were transferred into oil sketches, “about a third the size of the final murals.”²⁸⁰ By gridding and numbering the oil-sketches, executed in flat

²⁷⁵ It is quite possible that some or several of these firms “adopted” and financially supported the rescue of the mosaics in 1972. Unfortunately, according to the Cincinnati History Library and Archives, all donor information is restricted until December 31, 2027.

²⁷⁶ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 81. In a paper delivered at the 2011 Winold Reiss symposium in Berlin, Caroline Goeser of the Cleveland Museum of Arts showed that Reiss employed these meticulous research practices as early as 1916 for the advertising brochure “The making of a Steinway”. Winold Reiss. For information on the conference see Frank Mehring, *Cultural Mobility and Transcultural Confrontations. Winold Reiss as a Paradigm of Transnational Studies. International Symposium in Commemoration of the 125th anniversary of the birth of Winold Reiss.* (John F. Kennedy -Institute for North American Studies/ FU Berlin1.-3. December 2011); available from <http://www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/en/v/winold-reiss/index.html>; Internet; accessed December 08, 2011. I am grateful for the chance to test out some of the ideas delivered in this chapter during that conference. All delivered papers, as well as the ensuing intensive debates, comments, and questions of all participants, helped improving and clarifying my argument. A publication of the conference proceedings is planned for 2013.

²⁷⁷ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 81. Using staged photographs as a shortcut to detailed preliminary drawings and sketching seems to have been a common practice at the time. See for instance the methods used by Norman Rockwell described in Ron Schick, *Norman Rockwell: Behind the camera* (New York, NY: Little Brown and Co., 2009).

²⁷⁸ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 82.

²⁷⁹ See W. Tjark Reiss, "My Father Winold Reiss - Recollections by Tjark Reiss", 73–74.

²⁸⁰ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 82.

color planes with little detail, Reiss could keep control over the color distribution in the final mosaics. The Ravenna Tile Company enlarged photographs of these oil sketches to their final, twice-lifetime size, then cut them into smaller squares which were handled by individual craftsmen, supervised by Reiss and Paul Heudeck, owner of the company.²⁸¹ The proof of their extraordinary craftsmanship lies in the stunning detail and texture achieved by a variety of size, shape and orientation of the tesserae. (Figure 2-18)

In what was to be named “silhouette technique”, human figures and important tools and machinery in the foreground were executed in full mosaic, while shadows, background images and less important details just received a mosaic outline. The planes in between were to be filled with variously colored concrete, similar to classic fresco techniques. The glass tesserae were arranged in reverse on sticky brown paper, then pressed into a thin veneer of fresh stucco, and left to dry. After several hours, the backing paper could be peeled from the tiles, and in a last step the pigmented concrete was applied to the open planes of the image.²⁸² (Figures 2-19, 2-20)

Reiss’s well researched approach won over the idealized “young, muscular males working in settings that vaguely suggested soap making and machine tool manufacture” submitted by his competitor for the commission, Pierre Bourdelle.²⁸³ The resulting mosaics transform identifiable individuals into representatives of labor: Reiss depicts archetypes of the white, male, industrial worker.²⁸⁴

Given the detailed knowledge about Reiss’s design process, it is somewhat surprising how little Hurley reflects the artificiality of the Worker Murals. Instead, Reiss’s intensive preparations, the diversity of his figure typology, and the social realism of his topics –as opposed to the more historically-narrative or even symbolic approach of contemporaries like Thomas Hart Benton or Diego Rivera (figures 2-21, 2-22) – seem to have lent enough semblance of authenticity to postulate a documentary value for the

²⁸¹ See Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 82.

²⁸² See Janet Greenstein Potter, "Public Art in Stations", 88–90.

²⁸³ See Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 81; Janet Greenstein Potter, "Public Art in Stations", 92.

²⁸⁴ One of the recurrent themes at the 2011 Winold Reiss symposium in Berlin was Reiss’s interest in types (or representatives) and typologies. See the forthcoming papers by Patricia Hill, Martha Nadell, Sydelle Rubin-Dienstfrey, and Jeffrey Stewart. Frank Mehring, *Cultural Mobility and Transcultural Confrontations. Winold Reiss as a Paradigm of Transnational Studies. International Symposium in Commemoration of the 125th anniversary of the birth of Winold Reiss*. (John F. Kennedy -Institute for North American Studies/ FU Berlin 1.-3. December 2011); available from <http://www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/en/v/winold-reiss/index.html>; Internet; accessed December 08, 2011.

mural. Thus, Hurley states: “The reality Reiss perceived and recorded with his camera on the factory floor was the truth he worked to depict in the completed mural”²⁸⁵ and later “... , Reiss presented the workers and the factory processes as they existed in his day.”²⁸⁶

Possibly, as a trained historian, Hurley’s approach to images is too trusting, especially as the Cincinnati mosaics have all the appearances of authenticity. Although the value of images, even photographs, as historical source is limited, non-art-historian researchers seem regularly to be deceived by what more fittingly should be described as “authenticity effect”.²⁸⁷ The German sociologist Klaus Türk has done extensive research on images of labor in the past two decades and compiled a capacious online database of art reproductions, publications and artists’ biographies.²⁸⁸ Commenting on the increasing interest in pictures of labor by historians and sociologists looking for new source material, he, too, felt the necessity to caution them strongly against a naïve belief in direct representation:

“Pictures do not reproduce but represent, they orchestrate something; they present a very special construction of reality – constructions, whose principles are themselves more or less typical elements of exactly the same reality that they comment in the picture. The picture’s authors do not stand outside of society, their pictures are elements of the ‘iconosphere’, that is the picture-worlds and world-pictures of their respective societies, whose characteristics they help shaping. Therefore, artistic observation of society is always observation of society from a certain perspective of that selfsame society.”²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 81.

²⁸⁶ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 83.

²⁸⁷ The term was introduced by Winfried Fluck during the 2011 Reiss symposium in Berlin. See Frank Mehring, *Cultural Mobility and Transcultural Confrontations. Winold Reiss as a Paradigm of Transnational Studies. International Symposium in Commemoration of the 125th anniversary of the birth of Winold Reiss.* (John F. Kennedy -Institute for North American Studies/ FU Berlin1.-3. December 2011); available from <http://www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/en/v/winold-reiss/index.html>; Internet; accessed December 08, 2011.

²⁸⁸ Klaus Türk, *Archiv Bilder der Arbeit: Arbeit in der bildenden Kunst*; available from <http://www.bilder-der-arbeit.de/>; Internet; accessed November 25, 2011. See also Klaus Türk, *Bilder der Arbeit: Eine ikonografische Anthologie* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2000).

²⁸⁹ Türk, *Bilder der Arbeit*, 9. My translation.

Türk proceeds to underline the artists' freedom of design, and especially their potential for abstraction. He stresses that artists can force a deliberate concept of reality by omitting, condensing, emphasizing, or reducing to a few main forms, thus activating in the viewer a context of associations, semantics, sentiments, shapes, and figures that either confirm or contradict the viewer's experience. In order to transport an intended message, the activation of such possible conceptions can be partial or selective.

Moreover, they do not even have to be planned on a conscious level, but can be part of mainstream culture.²⁹⁰ Thus, it becomes clear that authenticity is a cultural construct – authenticity is faked all the time.²⁹¹ Fortunately, a thorough iconographic analysis and some effort in contextualization can help to expose the layers of conscious or unconscious visual manipulation. The following comparison of the different stages in Winold Reiss's image construction –source photographs, watercolors, oil sketches and finished mosaics – will reveal in which ways Reiss shaped his concept of reality.

The most striking change is the image section. Often, Reiss crops his source photos and his sketches considerably in order to bring the viewer closer and onto the same image plane as the picture's protagonist. The viewer stands right next to the worker, literally looking over his shoulder and watching him closely. (Figure 2-23, 2-24)

Connected with this feature is his chosen viewpoint: by placing the viewer on eye level with the figures, we become part of the crew, part of the team. Even though the figures are actually larger-than-life and were installed above head-level at CUT, this device draws the viewers into the picture, transforming them – in the era of the Great Depression into proud (if imaginary) members the work force. Although the glass tesserae of the mosaics practically glow with color, Reiss's reduces his colors until the choice of hues binds together large image planes while at the same time accentuating important details – often the human figure. For example, "Steel mills" (Figure 2-11) features a variety of dull greys and blues that help to highlight the bright orange and hot red of the glowing steel. In front of the monochromatic background of industrial machinery, the sudden chromatic outburst of yellow-green and brown trousers, purple shadows, and pinkish-tanned skin tones lend a strong and convincing corporeality to the

²⁹⁰ See Türk, *Bilder der Arbeit*, 10.

²⁹¹ Both statements gleaned from the debate at the aforementioned conference. Frank Mehring, *Cultural Mobility and Transcultural Confrontations. Winold Reiss as a Paradigm of Transnational Studies. International Symposium in Commemoration of the 125th anniversary of the birth of Winold Reiss*. (John F. Kennedy -Institute for North American Studies/ FU Berlin 1.-3. December 2011); available from <http://www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/en/v/winold-reiss/index.html>; Internet; accessed December 08, 2011.

figures, and effect that is additionally assisted by the interplay of full mosaic and planes of stucco.

Several times, Reiss changes the background to include symbols that underline or clarify the image's message. In "Aeroplanes and Parts" (figure 2-10), he moves the engineer and mechanic out of the workshop seemingly on top of the hangar in order to show both an aerial view of the airfield and two airplanes circling unrealistically and dangerously close above – using the same dreamlike hues of blue and silver that he had applied in his rotunda mosaics, where the bluish background symbolizes both the imaginaries of transport history and idealized future.²⁹² In "Printing and Lithography" (figure 2-6), gigantic playing cards help identifying the printing mill as that of the U. S. Playing Card Company rather than for instance a local newspaper press.

Lastly, the two mosaics depicting the iron industry, "Steel Molding and Casting" (figure 2-8) as well as "Steel Mills" (figure 2-11), exemplify how deeply Reiss is embedded in the European iconographic tradition of industrial pictures. Türk defines the proper era of self-contained labor images as the time between 1870 and 1945 (1989 for the socialist countries of East Europe). While the genre develops and artists begin to specialize on industrial topics, traditions evolve to iconographic patterns, repeated over and over again.²⁹³ Many of the pictures were commissioned by industrialists, and so the first exhibition in Germany specializing in labor art was organized for the centennial anniversary of the Friedrich Krupp steel company in 1912,²⁹⁴ one year before Reiss left for New York. Due to the important role of the iron industry in the Industrial Revolution, smithies, furnaces and steel mills became a paradigm of industrial labor. Türk's collection encompasses depictions of smithies from the Middle Ages till the twentieth century.²⁹⁵ Based on mythology – Vulcan in the smithy with the Cyclopes – the subject evolves with increasing naturalism to depictions of real smithies and then industrial foundries. They have in common a fascination with the representation of fire, often the only light source within the picture, and a celebration of virile strength, energy, and productivity, thus making the Smith the archetypical worker. (Figure 2-25, 2-26) While surely creating independent and very strong images, Reiss complies with

²⁹² See chapter 5.

²⁹³ See Türk, *Bilder der Arbeit*, 21.

²⁹⁴ See Kunstmuseum der Stadt Essen, ed., *Die Industrie in der bildenden Kunst: Ausstellung vom 23. Juni bis 18. August 1912* (Essen: Fredebeul & Koenen, 1912). Mentioned in Türk, *Bilder der Arbeit*, 21.

²⁹⁵ For the following see Türk, *Bilder der Arbeit*, 73–81.

these topoi, for instance by eliminating the lamp from the picture and having his worker pose bare chested in a shower of sparks. (Figure 2-27, 2-8)

Reiss was obviously aware of such famous examples as Menzel's "Steel Mill – Modern Cyclopes" (1872-75) (figure 2-28) or Arthur von Kampf's various treatments of the topic (figure 2-28, 2-29). The iconography often contains visitors (figure 2-25) amongst others allowing for a confrontation of *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*,²⁹⁶ a tradition that continues in the guise of visiting wives bringing lunch (figure 2-30) or inspecting factory owners (figure 2-31), and that Reiss alludes to in his "Steel Molding and Casting" (figure 2-8) by adding a figure on the gallery. Reiss also considerably cleaned up the worker's immediate environment, which appears sanitized, almost sterile in the absence of dirt, debris, or even unused tools. Neither are the workers themselves shown as sweaty, grubby, oil-stained or otherwise affected by their work or physical surroundings.²⁹⁷

Thus, Reiss's murals only represent a carefully selected view of reality full of "authenticity effect". By no means did they show "the truth", in the shape of a complete image of the local workers' situation. Yet, the very fact of selection is apt to prove very revealing for the viewer who is willing and ready to read between the lines. Türk has pointed out that many pictures do explicitly leave out certain issues, issues that any expert would expect to see:

"In these cases, images 'desymbolize' something; they blank out certain elements or aspects of social reality. Because it is difficult to depict everything, it is interesting to ask after the systematic omissions ..."²⁹⁸

Because these omissions can offer an interesting insight into the character of the artist, we wonder, what is it Reiss left out? Interestingly, Hurley has already indicated the route, but did not follow up his implications: Somewhat grudgingly, Hurley had have to admit that Reiss not only carefully staged the composition of the scenes, but that he also omitted several facets of the "truth", namely industrial leadership,²⁹⁹ artists (decorators

²⁹⁶ See Türk, *Bilder der Arbeit*, 77.

²⁹⁷ I am grateful to Frank Mehring for adding this point in a comment during the 2011 Winold Reiss symposium.

²⁹⁸ Türk, *Bilder der Arbeit*, 11. My translation.

²⁹⁹ See Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 82.

at Rookwood Pottery),³⁰⁰ people of color (with the exception of one Afro-American worker in “Medicine and Chemical Manufacturing”, figure 2-5),³⁰¹ and working women.³⁰² In order to explain these omissions, an intersectional analysis helps to evaluate Reiss’s potential biases concerning the classic issues already named: race, class and gender.

Looking at Reiss’s work it is obvious that he was very aware of the stereotyped and caricature-like images of Afro-Americans that were still common in the 1930s. Usually, these showed Afro-Americans with mask-like features of coal-black skin and thick red lips, images that came straight from a “blackface” minstrel show. In his “Drawing in two colors – Interpretation of Harlem Jazz I” (Figure 2-33), Reiss used elements of this tradition himself, yet he playfully subverted the jungle-associations (African mask in the background) to lend cultural roots to the two urbanite dancers in their dandy suits. The rhythm of the music, the self-confidence and liberated, fluid movements of the two dancers result in an image that transports positively the essence of Harlem’s new-found racial pride, elevating the drawing far above its pejorative iconographic roots.

Nevertheless, this rather cartoonish approach to ethnic portraiture is the exception in his work. Much better known, and more typical for him, is his series of portraits of Afro-Americans for the Survey Graphic’s special issue “Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro” of 1925 (Figure 2-34) and the following anthology “The New Negro. An Interpretation”, for which he also created the graphic design.³⁰³ (Figure 2-35). It is in these portraits where Reiss’s (for his times) rather unusual open-mindedness and supportive interest in US ethnic diversity shows.³⁰⁴

Jeffrey Stewart, a historian of Black studies who can be credited with the rediscovery of Reiss when he curated an exhibition of the Harlem Renaissance portraits at the National

³⁰⁰ See Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 86.

³⁰¹ See Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 88.

³⁰² See Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 94.

³⁰³ Locke, Alain, ed., *Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1980); Alain Leroy Locke, ed., *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (New York, NY: Atheneum, 1925 [1970]).

³⁰⁴ See Stewart, *To Color America*; Jeffrey C. Stewart, "Winold Reiss as a Portraitist"; W. Tjark Reiss, "My Father Winold Reiss - Recollections by Tjark Reiss"; Frank Mehring, "'The Unfinished Business of Democracy': Transcultural Confrontations in the Portraits of the German-American Artist Winold Reiss", in *American Artists in Munich: Artistic Migration and Cultural Exchange Processes*, ed. Christian Fuhrmeister, Hubertus Kohle, and Veerle Thielemans (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009)

Portrait Gallery in Washington D. C. in 1989,³⁰⁵ has established early on that Reiss's only possible bias was a positive one, a view that was often based on the German's romantic traditions of "noble savages". He concludes that Reiss's

"European tradition was nevertheless as stereotypic as the American. [...]. But in the America of the 1920s, images of the noble African American were an improvement over the prevailing comic and caricatured images of Black plantation mammies and minstrel coons. [...] [Reiss's] images of African Americans [...] thus made a powerful cultural statement: here were Black men and women who were proud of their color, their race, and their heritage."³⁰⁶

Therefore, Hurley explains the inclusion of just one, lone Afro-American worker as a "relatively accurate portrayal of the marginal place black workers occupied in Cincinnati factories" where "less than three percent of the black workforce found employment as skilled or semi-skilled industrial workers, and those usually had to take the least desirable jobs."³⁰⁷ Hurley is seconded by Jeffrey Stewart, who in the same magazine benevolently viewed Reiss's approach as "subtle critique of the conditions of employment for Blacks during the 1930s".³⁰⁸ He writes:

"As a Depression era city trying to reserve the better jobs for its White working class, Cincinnati relegated Black construction workers to unskilled, labor-intensive jobs such as ditch diggers. And as their absence from all but one of Reiss's industrial mosaics attests, Blacks were the 'last hired and first fired' in Cincinnati's industries during the Great Depression."³⁰⁹

There is no reason to divert from this assumption in the context of the Cincinnati worker murals. Reiss's more complex, sometimes stereotypical visualization of other

³⁰⁵ Stewart, *To Color America*.

³⁰⁶ Stewart, *To Color America*, 50.

³⁰⁷ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 88.

³⁰⁸ Jeffrey C. Stewart, "Winold Reiss as a Portraitist", 14.

³⁰⁹ Jeffrey C. Stewart, "Winold Reiss as a Portraitist", 13–14.

ethnicities, especially the Native Americans, which borders on positive discrimination, will be treated elsewhere in this dissertation.³¹⁰

Reiss's predilection for the working class has been accepted without further questions.

Without even attempting to give any reproducible reasons Hurley states simply that

“Reiss's bias for ordinary people is consistent throughout the Union Terminal murals. [...] Clearly, Reiss placed his priorities with ordinary people performing everyday tasks. He strove to present them sympathetically, as strong, dignified contributors to society. These workers were responsible for the contemporary strength of Cincinnati.”³¹¹

But were they? What about the many white-collar jobs in administration or education, and what about the crafts? Does not form the middle-class the backbone of society? What about the entrepreneurs who owned Cincinnati's factories that put the industrial workers into jobs? Reiss did not completely ignore them: the engineers and mechanics of Aeronca (figure 2-10) can hardly be called “industrial workers”, nor the engineer and pianist of Crosley Radio Broadcasting (figure 2-4). And aren't there also the portraits of Cincinnati's political leaders? (Figure 2-36, 2-37) These images might lack the drama of the industrial scenes, but then again, how do you yield a pen in a dramatic fashion? Moreover, in the need to bring these men out of their separate offices together in one locality makes the elaborately staged dramaturgy of the scene much more obvious than in the –equally staged – industrial scenes. Even if we acknowledge a preference for blue collar workers, Reiss's (and for that matter: Hurley's) admiration for the working class seems to be more influenced by political ideology than by an objective socio-political outlook.

Stewart tries to explain Reiss's identification with working class liberty with his personal process of assimilation:

“As a German immigrant, Reiss occupied a social position between native-born White Americans and the peoples of

³¹⁰ See chapter 5.

³¹¹ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 82.

color he depicted in his artwork. [...] By the 1930s, Reiss was ready to take another step, and that came in his marvelous renderings of White working class Americans in the Cincinnati Terminal.”³¹²

There is an interesting note of underlying national chauvinism in this statement. Yet, while it is true that many native-born White Americans looked down on first-generation immigrants and openly mistrusted “hyphenated” Americans, and even though Reiss had experienced anti-German harassment during the period of World War I,³¹³ I doubt that Reiss tried to overcome an assumed inferiority by identifying with the American working class. He might have known social exclusion and even open mistrust, but to him this surely was not attributable to inferior social status but to the open xenophobia of war-time propaganda. Socially, he must have placed himself solidly amongst the educated middle-classes.

After all, the German artist was an educated man; he was raised in a middle-class household, had received a sound education at a German Art Academy, worked incessantly and quite successfully as teacher, interior designer, illustrator and portraitist. As successful artist, he felt sure enough of his social position to lead a rather bohemian lifestyle – Reiss was simply not inhibited by class insecurity in mingling with all social (and ethnic) facets of American society. Thus, even though money was often scarce, he worked with all his wealthy clients at eye level. If anything, he looked down on them by producing –possibly deliberately – unflattering portraits.³¹⁴ As once-publisher of a magazine, the “Modern Art Collector” Reiss even was an opinion leader in the American art scene, and he knew it. Thus, while in the sense of Bourdieu he often lacked *economic* and – especially in the early years, as an immigrant – also some *social* capital, Reiss as an artist was quite successfully defining *cultural* capital.³¹⁵

Nevertheless, even an avant-garde artist does not act completely outside of the values of his time and his class. Many members of the middle-classes put considerable and quite honorably serious effort into the “betterment” of the social questions of their times. Reiss, too, had been educated in this vein: his father Fritz often commented in his

³¹² Jeffrey C. Stewart, "Winold Reiss as a Portraitist", 16–17.

³¹³ For Reiss transcultural struggles see Mehring, ""The Unfinished Business of Democracy": Transcultural Confrontations in the Portraits of the German-American Artist Winold Reiss".

³¹⁴ See Jeffrey C. Stewart, "Winold Reiss as a Portraitist" 14.

³¹⁵ See Bourdieu, "The forms of capital".

paintings on the socio-economical problems of peasant life in Germany.³¹⁶ Winold Reiss kept following his father's lead even after leaving Germany.³¹⁷ His interest in the "social question" was instilled at an early age, and it explains why he felt closer to the industrial workers than to his fellow artists or the leading politicians or industrialists of Cincinnati. Thus, the image of Cincinnati industries constructed in his mosaics is just that: an image. And it is an image that resonates of a certain romantic perception concerning the hard-working industrial laborers that was cultivated by large parts of the European middle-classes.

In the late nineteenth century, increasing industrialization led to growing urbanization, which in turn led to a higher visibility of the working classes in the cities. In the US, industrial capitalism developed late, and there was but little evidence for a culture of socialist labor, the Communist Manifesto appearing only in 1882. Nevertheless, the 1870s and 1880s saw several bloody strikes by rudimentary organized workers fighting for better working conditions.³¹⁸

The rise of socialism gave voice to the problems of the industrial proletariat. The "social question" was dealt with differently in the various industrialized nations, yet all over the world middle-class philanthropists and intellectuals supported the fight for equal opportunities, equal access to education, and political participation, sometimes spurning the revolutionary spirits, like the intelligentsia in the Russian Revolution,³¹⁹ and sometimes calming and canalizing it, like in Germany, where Bismarck's pro-active social laws (unsuccessfully) aimed at taking wind out of the socialist's sails.³²⁰ Thus, internationally, the rising political acknowledgement of the working classes was greatly

³¹⁶ See Mehring, "The Unfinished Business of Democracy": Transcultural Confrontations in the Portraits of the German-American Artist Winold Reiss", 198–199.

³¹⁷ For instance, during a several-month-long trip to Mexico in 1920, he came in close contact to *Zapatista* soldiers, painting many of them. It can be assumed that he silently supported their fight for land reforms, just as he sympathised with his many of his subjects and their causes, be they fighting for ethnic or economic equality. See Stewart, *To Color America*, 41–44; Mehring, "The Unfinished Business of Democracy": Transcultural Confrontations in the Portraits of the German-American Artist Winold Reiss", 199–200. For information on the Mexican Revolution and the *Zapatista* movement see John Womack, *Zapata and the Mexican revolution* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1970).

³¹⁸ See Türk, *Bilder der Arbeit*, 304.

³¹⁹ For the role of the intelligentsia during the Russian Revolution see the seminal article by Robert V. Daniels. Robert V. Daniels, "Intellectuals and the Russian Revolution", *American Slavic and East European Review* 20, no. 2 (April 1961).

³²⁰ See Hermann Beck, *The origins of the authoritarian welfare state in Prussia: Conservatives, bureaucracy, and the social question, 1815 - 70*, 2nd printing, Social history, popular culture, and politics in Germany (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Ernest P. Hennock, *The Origin of the Welfare State in England and Germany, 1850 - 1914: Social Policies Compared* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

expedited by the educated middle classes. Some used the worker's plight in order to follow their own (political and social) goals, and, while speaking for the working classes, often continued their incapacitation with different means. But most just romanticized, idealized, and glorified the working classes – as long as they lived by middle class values and work ethic. Drinking, gambling, and other signs of idle activities remained reserved for the upper classes – who could “afford” such contemptible behavior, both financially and, moreover, because they could not as easily be reprimanded.

In the United States especially, strict coherence to a protestant work ethic was deeply ingrained into the American Dream, which promised a (financially) successful life to anybody who was willing to work hard and believe into their dreams. The social rise from humble origins through hard work, from “rags-to-riches”, was a staple of the National Mythology. Winold Reiss was very susceptible to the American Dream and its promises of success through hard work, both as a German immigrant, and because, as a member of the middle-classes, believing in the possibility of upward social mobility was already part of his social make-up.

During the onset of the Great Depression, which matches exactly the creation period of the Worker Murals, the working classes once more became the centre of popular attention. As industries weakened and unemployment rates rose, the glorification of factory workers became also a mantra of hope. After all, in public opinion as in politics, a successful company is measured in the number of jobs offered; only share-holders are interested in the company's net revenue.³²¹ From this point of view, the service sectors, and other white-collar jobs, can be neglected, as their profits are closely linked to a prosperous industry. Falling out of the picture are also the industrial leaders who own the factories. This mirrors a shift in public attention that correlates with the rising importance of the working classes. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, large industries were closely connected with the name of the inventor, entrepreneur or factory founder who, often in semi-feudal patriarchal structures, built up the companies which were so often named after them.³²² Thus, it was possible to celebrate Cornelius Vanderbilt at Grand Central Terminal as the founding father of the United States largest

³²¹ Our current economic crisis after the crash of Lehman Brothers in 2007 was met with similar reactions: all hopes and all fears of public and politicians were aligned with the hopes and fears of the industries (in Germany, mostly automobile industry), and the threat of mass unemployment coaxed governments to support otherwise non-profitable companies (as in the case of General Motors/Opel).

³²² Thyssen, Krupp, Siemens, Bosch, Ford, and many more immediately spring to mind.

railroad network, personally responsible for industrial development, trade connections and rising living standards.

By the beginning twentieth century the excesses of the Gilded Age had sobered the view of the now vilified “robber barons”. The public attention shifted from “them up there” to “us down here”. This was helped along by structural changes in many companies which changed from family owned businesses to large share-holder corporations led by an exchangeable committee of managers. As fewer and fewer companies could be associated with an actual person, and charismatic industrial leaders disappeared in favor of corporate anonymity, it simply became easier to identify with the faces of “real” working people – especially, if the largest part of the public counts themselves amongst them.³²³

This also explains why Reiss’s images, after so many years, still resonate with their audience. Hurley, writing during the recession of the early 1990s, identifies so strongly that he even ends his article with a pathos-laden eulogy to the American worker:

“If we are to understand the multi-voiced story that is Cincinnati, we must understand and remember more than the experiences of business leaders who occupy the board rooms of Fourth Street, or the political leaders who deliberate in government offices on Plum and Court streets. We must pursue the path Winold Reiss set upon in the early 1930s. We must carefully observe the experiences, and listen to the wisdom, of the ordinary men **and women** who work on the factory floors from Newport to Middletown to build a greater Cincinnati.”³²⁴

Apart from the theatrical phrasing worthy of a politician aiming for reelection, this paragraph shows clearly that we see what we want to see, and celebrate what is consistent with our views. Because it is obvious that Winold Reiss most emphatically did *not* include the “wisdom of the ordinary women” in his station artwork. Rather, he deliberately eliminated every trace of the scores of working women whom he had encountered during his research.

³²³ Compare, for instance, the “Occupy Wall Street” movement of 2011, campaigning under the slogan „We are the 99%“.

³²⁴ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 95. My emphasis.

Yet, naturally, “women were there” – and both the title of a 1983 article by Lynn Estomin and Andrea Kornbluh³²⁵ and the photos published within (figure 2-38, 2-39, 2-40) show that Reiss knew this, but consciously decided to omit this detail within his art. Although both Hurley and Stewart noticed the exclusion, both failed to give a convincing explanation for Reiss’s reasons.

Hurley, at least, apologetically pointed out two “hurdles” in recognizing the women: One of these was the lower prestige and lower payment of women’s jobs. Yet, Reiss had included an unskilled Afro-American worker in “Medicine and Chemical Manufacturing” –surely he did not value a worker only by the prestige of their tasks or their wages. Moreover, the images published by Estomin/Kornbluh show that women’s tasks were not restricted to “outgrowths of domestic tasks”³²⁶, but that they were often doing the same jobs as their male co-workers.

Hurley’s second guess is “a certain cultural assumption [...] that women in manufacturing jobs worked only until they found a husband, got married, and then quit their jobs to assume their proper roles as wives, mothers, homemakers, and consumers”.³²⁷ But why should the women’s marital status have been any reason to ignore them? After all, there was no law against the painting of unmarried girls at work. Besides, Hurley continues in the next paragraph: “But thousands of women did work their entire adult lives in factories, often performing unpleasant and hard labor”³²⁸, thus contradicting himself. It follows that the realistic, authentic, “truthful” depiction of industrial working conditions that Hurley postulates would have had to include the women. Yet, it did not.

Obviously, the “cultural assumptions” mentioned above were not consistent with reality of the working classes, especially in times of the Great Depression, but rather mirrored the dominating values of the middle classes who could afford to rely on a single breadwinner to sustain their families. The differences were thus not so much “cultural” as class-induced, as Sayers pointed out already in 1938:

“The boast, ‘My wife doesn’t need to soil her hands with work’, first became general when the commercial middle

³²⁵ Lynn Estomin and Andrea Kornbluh, "Cincinnati Industry: Women Were There", *Queen City Heritage* 41, no. Winter (1983).

³²⁶ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 94.

³²⁷ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 95.

³²⁸ Daniel Hurley, "A Vision of Cincinnati: The Worker Murals of Winold Reiss", 95.

classes acquired the plutocratic and aristocratic notion that the keeping of an idle woman was a badge of superior social status.”³²⁹

As a marker of social success the idea soon became attractive for the lower classes, too, especially since the public discourse on “work” focused for the longest time on paid employment and ignored “the social and economic value of women’s unpaid labor within the home.”³³⁰ As Hurley’s helpless argument shows, the idea lingers on. It is quite possible that Hurley does not notice his own inconsistency, because he himself shares these values and projects them on the rest of society. The mistake is common enough; and it is one of the reasons why Joan Scott and Louise Tilly decided in their classic study of 1975 to examine female labor conditions more closely.³³¹ In their introduction they criticize the then existing research and its “inaccurate conception”, because:

“It stems above all from a model that projects middle-class experience and middle-class values as representative of all experience and all values. It generalizes a particular class experience into one which represents ‘western civilization’. And it projects backwards in linear fashion, twentieth-century values and experiences.”³³²

Yet, these values do not automatically hold true for the lower classes, and never did. Sayers again:

“There has never been any question but that the women of the poor should toil alongside their men. No angry, and no compassionate, voice has been raised to say that women should not break their backs with harvest work, or soil their hands with blacking grates and peeling potatoes.”³³³

³²⁹ Dorothy Leigh Sayers, "The Human-Not-Quite-Human", in *Are Women Human? Astute and witty essays on the role of women in society* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U. K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 62–63.

³³⁰ Kristina Hunneault, *Difficult subjects: Working women and visual culture, Britain 1880-1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 6.

³³¹ Joan W. Scott and Louise A. Tilly, "Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth Century Europe", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17, no. 1 (1975).

³³² Joan W. Scott and Louise A. Tilly, "Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth Century Europe", 37–38.

³³³ Sayers, "The Human-Not-Quite-Human", 62.

Scott and Tilly lend data and facts to this observation: In the family centered economy of the working and peasant classes, each member of the family had to contribute their share to the family income. Thus, if a girl or unmarried woman could earn more money outside of the home, for instance by going into service or work in a factory, her family would hire her out and profit from the surplus income.³³⁴ These practices still prevailed in the beginning twentieth century. “Whether in the cities or towns of Europe, or in America, the patterns of work of married women resembled older, pre-industrial practices.”³³⁵

The fact that most of the jobs available to women were “segregated – that is, they were held almost exclusively by women”³³⁶, naturally contributed to the near invisibility of female labor in the public discourse. In a study of paintings of working women in Victorian Britain, Kristina Hunneault has shown that indeed there was little place for female workers in visual culture outside the middle-class stereotypes of servant girl, flower girl, or seamstress.³³⁷ Building on the work of feminist historians such as Sonya O. Rose, Joan Scott and Sally Alexander, Hunneault argues that

“the cultural references that fashioned the public identity of the nineteenth-century worker were persistently established through a ‘construction of class that equated productivity with masculinity’. [...] For most Victorians, ‘worker’ remained a masculine identity. Indeed, despite the efforts of nineteenth-century feminists to refashion gender codes, the gap between ‘woman’ and ‘worker’ appears to have widened during the second half of the nineteenth century, as the ideology of the male breadwinner and the concept of the family wage were entrenched.”³³⁸

The difficulty ran in the strict binary gender codes that constructed “femininity as passive, reproductive and dependent” while “by contrast, the gendered positionality of

³³⁴ See Joan W. Scott and Louise A. Tilly, "Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth Century Europe", 40–43.

³³⁵ Joan W. Scott and Louise A. Tilly, "Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth Century Europe", 59.

³³⁶ Joan W. Scott and Louise A. Tilly, "Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth Century Europe", 39.

³³⁷ See Hunneault, *Difficult subjects*.

³³⁸ Hunneault, *Difficult subjects*, 7.

the worker was entrenched in a discourse of masculinity characterized as active, productive and independent.”³³⁹ This was especially true for industrial labor, “the form of work most resolutely associated with masculinity.”³⁴⁰ Thus, in they public eye, women were *either* feminine *or* workers; they could never be both without transgressing “mainstream conceptions of labor”.³⁴¹

Clearly, Reiss omitted the working women from his murals because they did quite literally not fit the picture. Guided by his own middle-class values, assumptions and discourses, women did not play any role in the discourse of industrial labor, they did not conform to the cultural construct of the diligent, productive, and most of all: male factory worker. We have already seen how, since the late nineteenth century, successive political acts had led to the political empowerment of working-class men, how “workers were more and more frequently ennobled and celebrated, in words if not in deed, as the backbone of the nation, stanchions of the economic might”³⁴² – and how Reiss’s own middle-class upbringing had led to his appropriation and support for this specific, male, construction of “industrial labor”. But within this framework, there was simply no room for women. Consequently, women also had no place in a picture that evoked the local industries and their promise of stable employment. Actual, existing working women were not shown, because they did not appear in a discourse confining females strictly to the domestic sphere.

That Reiss really adhered to a binary gender code with strict gender roles can be easily cross-checked by looking at his other murals at Cincinnati Union Terminal. He designed nineteen mosaics portraying 56 large scale human figures, only two of which are women. Both women appear in the epic scenes decorating the half-rotund entrance hall, and both women are shown in their role as mothers. In the northern scene depicting the “History of Cincinnati”, a blond woman in a pink dress is carrying a sickle and lunch in a cloth-covered basket while dragging a somewhat reluctant little boy with her. (Figure 5-20) In the southern scene, customarily called “The advance of civilization”, a three-generation family of settlers encounters a group of Native Americans. Grandfather, with his long grey beard, and father are armed with rifles and a revolver and take mother, carrying a baby and a small boy, protectively in their middle. (Figure 5-2) Thus, both

³³⁹ Hunneault, *Difficult subjects*, 6.

³⁴⁰ Hunneault, *Difficult subjects*, 15.

³⁴¹ Hunneault, *Difficult subjects*, 8.

³⁴² Hunneault, *Difficult subjects*, 7.

scenes show the women strictly in their role as mothers, taking care of the children, but otherwise passive, dependent, and even in need of protection. Neither do they toil alongside their husbands in the field, nor do they carry out any other work. Only the lunch-basket implies some house-work in the kitchen. Their main, if not sole duty seems to lie in the supervision of young children. Winold Reiss chose to depict women in the role allotted to them by middle-class society, and not to depict them in situations not confirming to gender stereotypes.³⁴³

That this choice was not necessarily the only possible way to deal with women workers shows a monument to William Cooper Procter (1862-1934) sponsored by employees of Procter & Gamble, also in Cincinnati, and commissioned shortly after the completion of the railway terminal. (Figure 2-41) According to Estomin/Kornbluh, the workers

“collected the money, planned the marble memorial, and hired the artist Ernest Bruce Haswell, to execute it in the late 1930's. The memorial depicts the employees of Procter & Gamble and memorializes the contributions of women workers as well as men to the building of Procter & Gamble.”³⁴⁴

Here, the agency lay with the workers themselves, and naturally they drew a different picture, less influenced by middle-class gender notions, and more true to their own every-day experience at their workplace.

Thus, Winold Reiss's gendered view of Cincinnati industries is as much rooted in middle-class class perception as the symbolic statues of “Industry” and “Agriculture” described earlier in this chapter: physically strenuous, dirty work in a factory was labeled intrinsically male, no matter how many women really worked there. Reiss's images are selective, abstract, stylized, and highly codified by the common values of their surrounding society. But then, Reiss not interested in depicting the reality of industrial working conditions. Rather, he was interested in creating a typology of labor, and he could not help but view it through a middle-class lens.

³⁴³ My assumptions of Winold Reiss gender views were confirmed by his grandson Peter Reiss who attended the 2011 Winold Reiss symposium in Berlin.

³⁴⁴ Lynn Estomin and Andrea Kornbluh, "Cincinnati Industry: Women Were There", 33.

There is a certain amount of irony in the fact that the same unwillingness of bourgeois society to associate “women/femininity” with “industrial labor” since the nineteenth century led both to ignoring actual women workers in visual culture and to elevating the abstract idea of crafts and industries by casting it in the form of female personification.³⁴⁵ Even though Winold Reiss chose a different style than his nineteenth century predecessors, the message of his images is not so different from the mythological or otherwise symbolic personifications so widely used in public art in- and outside of railway stations.

In his worker murals at Cincinnati Union Terminal, he gave both a carefully selected and optimistic overview of the local economy. His murals expressed the hope that a strong industry would soon overcome the effects of the Great Depression through the hard work of their employees. They embodied a trust in the American Dream that was even more strongly felt, because the artist, an immigrant from Germany, was living this dream himself.

The subject matter was designed to both imbed the railway lines and their terminal securely into the texture of the city and, even more so, to tie them up with the local industries, which formed their prospective clientele in freight traffic. To achieve this, there seems to have been quite open consent to let unspecific industrial branches be openly identified with specific local companies, thus offering them valuable advertising opportunities at no risk or cost. Yet, while the mosaics still have a strong place in the city’s public consciousness, they defend this position nowadays from the airport. After the descent of the railway it seems quite natural that they should have moved to the region’s new transport nodal point.

II The Railway – a Force of Globalization

Artwork in railway stations makes many statements about a wide range of fields. Next to topics of mercantile interest, one of the most common themes comprises the status quo of railway and transport technology. Such embellishments showed how the then-modern transportation systems relying on steam technology – the railway and the steam-boat – were redefining the distances between stations, connecting the world (via

³⁴⁵ See chapter 1.

their metropolises) and making it smaller.³⁴⁶ At the same time it was also more or less covertly implied that the success of the new industries depended on the international exchange of technologies and a wide dispersal of knowledge.

Memorials to engineers, especially George and Robert Stephenson, in form of statues, busts, or plaques, are frequently found in or near railway stations, for instance in **Würzburg Hauptbahnhof (1856), London Euston Station (1871), Berlin Anhalter Bahnhof (1880), Turin Porta Nuova (1880), or Amsterdam Centraal (1889).**

(Figures 2-42, 2-43, 2-44, 2-45, 2-46) By commemorating the Stephensons even outside their home country, engineers all over Europe paid tribute to their groundbreaking work. At the same time they indicate that there was a common technological base to be shared, which – while not untrue – neatly glossed over the fact that in several cases international collaboration within the engineering community was superficial at best. In fact, often they could not agree on certain technological standards even within one country, let alone transnational: amongst the best known examples are the “gauge wars” between Stephenson and Brunel (who worked as engineer for the Great Western Railway), which lasted from 1844 to 1892 and could only be solved by an act of Parliament.³⁴⁷ Nevertheless, real and alleged, national and international collaboration between engineers remained a vision for the future, be it wishful thinking or open propaganda that was time and again referred to in station embellishment.

In choosing topics for station decor, railway officials (and their architects and artists) displayed an immense belief in technology as propagator of sociopolitical progress. In the nineteenth century, hopes were directed at the crucial role that the railway would play in the process of nation-building: The case of nineteenth century Germany had shown how a fragmented region consisting of hundreds of little kingdoms and fiefdoms could grow into a single, politically strong and prosperous nation – and the railway had played a key role in advancing that process.³⁴⁸ Naturally, there were no openly nationalist frescoes in stations *before* a nation was politically founded – private companies would have lost the support of their governments (and possibly their clients), while state companies would not lobby such revolutionary talks.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁶ See chapter 3.

³⁴⁷ See for instance J. B. Snell, *Early Railways* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1964), 65–68.

³⁴⁸ See also Richards and MacKenzie, *The railway station*, 123–136.

³⁴⁹ For embellishment programs advertising nation building after the fact see Chapter 5.

II.1 Munich Central Station (1858-1860): The Railway Demolishing Custom Barriers

But there were strong ambitions to facilitate trade and the traffic of goods by establishing large tariff unions between the German states. In this context it is little surprising that the completed extension of **Munich Central Station (1858-1860)** received a substantial decoration program championing this goal.³⁵⁰

Two long frescoed friezes created in 1862 by Michael Echter depicted scenes of International Trade and Understanding between the Peoples –including some amusing pseudo-ethnographic details and “rather archaic”³⁵¹ symbols of tradable goods. They spoke of national prosperity in all arts, crafts and industries, the origin of which was explained further in the form of two larger frescoes depicting “Steam Power” and “Telegraphy”. In the form of rather mystical allegories, these two filled the semi-circular arches flanking the clock. The depiction of “Steam Power” falls back on the then already common iconography of Minerva chaining and riding a steam-blowing male creature.³⁵² But here, she is shown in the act of violent invasion, running over both a turnpike and the poor customs officer on duty. (Figure 2-47) Juxtaposing this scene, “Telegraphy’s” naked torso breaks from the earth, with bearded dwarfs supporting her flame-licked, outstretched arms. Her gesture directly connects the two seated female figures on both her sides; these seem to play a game of “Chinese Whisper” with the aid of putti flying in an arch above “Telegraphy’s” head. (Figure 2-48)

The message was clear, expressing the hope that the installation and development of new infrastructures –both in form of railway tracks and in form of quick and reliable information via telegraphy – would lead to the abolishment of the fragmented tariff walls, and an ensuing increase in free trade and prosperity. It is an early example of the utopian vision of how the railway’s new and growing infrastructure and its accompanying technologies would connect peoples and nations and bind them together by trade in goods and services. This vision was truly global – albeit Eurocentric – and in its core *transnational* even before nineteenth century nationalism and nation building rose to its political peak.

³⁵⁰ For detailed analyses see Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, 184–190; Gall, *Weibliche Personifikationen in Allegorien des Industriezeitalters*, 192–194.

³⁵¹ Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, 188.

³⁵² See Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, 186.

Ethnologist Wolfgang Kaschuba has shown that in case of the German national movement this vision proved to become true: Unlike France or Belgium which build their railways radiating from their capitals Germany's polycentric railway network was rooted in the manifold independent German states. The growing infrastructure tied their economies subsequently closer together, whereas less industrialized regions, for example in Eastern Europe, were hampered by their feudal structures.

Thus, the railway is “connected with the idea of a new political spatial order, for at the end of the day it advanced the nationalization of societies as intensively as the internationalization of trade and market relations.”³⁵³ Yet, rarely is steam power seen as single actor – steam power went hand in hand with electricity; railway tracks were increasingly and invariably accompanied by telegraph poles ever since the Great Western Railway first introduced a line from Paddington Station to West Drayton in 1839.³⁵⁴ As we can see, this collaboration was also expressed whenever the topic came up in station embellishment.

II.2 Berlin Anhalter Bahnhof (1880): Allegory of Global Traffic

The façade of Berlin Anhalter Bahnhof (1880) was crowned by a sculpture group designed by Emil Hundrieser. It was executed in zinc by Friedrich Peters, a plumber specializing in zinc ornaments.³⁵⁵ Alas, the statue was destroyed during the bombing of Berlin in World War II, all that is left is a photograph of Hundrieser's plaster model. (Figure 2-49)

Hundrieser designed an “Allegory of Global Traffic” in the shape of a seated winged female of the Athena type with two young men lounging at her feet. The lady is crowned with laurels and leans on a tall staff, and her imperative posture indicates that she is either not aware or does not seem to mind that her robe has come undone over her right breast. Both youngsters are looking up at her, yet not meeting her gaze. The one to

³⁵³ Wolfgang Kaschuba, *Die Überwindung der Distanz: Zeit und Raum in der europäischen Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2004), 83–85. My translation. See also Richards and MacKenzie, *The railway station*, 123–126.

³⁵⁴ See Geoffrey Hubbard, *Cooke and Wheatstone and the Invention of the Electric Telegraph* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 78. For more information on the introduction of telegraphy in the 19th century, see Richards and MacKenzie, *The railway station*, 303–306; Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet: The remarkable story of the telegraph and the nineteenth century's on-line pioneers* (New York, NY: Walker and Co., 1998).

³⁵⁵ See Maier, *Berlin Anhalter Bahnhof*, 211–212.

the right is leaning on a model locomotive, while the left one holds on to some mystery objects, one of them resembling the ceramic insulation used atop telegraphy poles.

The composition forms a stable X from the young men's outstretched legs to the lady's widespread wings, yet the group did not excite much favourable comment, neither at the time nor later: architectural critic K.E.O. Fritsch considered it too small in proportion,³⁵⁶ and Maier condemns its composition as incomprehensible, especially in comparison with other examples of Berlin sculpture affixed in great height.³⁵⁷ Yet, the very fact of its existence reveals the great hopes set in the new infrastructure: even atop a railway station which bore its regional affiliation (Berlin-Anhaltische Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft)³⁵⁸ in its very name, the station décor proclaimed a larger goal – global traffic.

II.3 Frankfurt/Main (1888): Atlas supported by Steam and Electricity

Another depiction of the contemporary belief in the globalization of the new technologies is displayed on the roof of the central station in **Frankfurt/Main (1888)**. The nude “genies” of “Steam Power” and “Electricity” support the titan Atlas, who balances on his shoulders a terrestrial globe circumscribed by a band inscribed with the signs of the zodiac.³⁵⁹ (Figure 2-50) According to the dissertational thesis of Birgit Klein³⁶⁰, Gustav Herold's Atlas group “represents the worldview of the Industrial Revolution, based on the natural elements domesticated and controlled by Man: Steam and Light.”³⁶¹ It is interesting that Klein associates electricity foremost with artificial light rather than with wireless telegraphy – yet, surely the latter was the important achievement alluded to in the Frankfurt sculpture.

For one, it was only in 1881 that Edison had presented his light bulb at the Paris Electrical Exhibition, and it would take several more years to build up the sufficient

³⁵⁶ See Karl Emil Otto Fritsch, "Das neue Empfangs-Gebäude der Berlin-Anhaltischen Eisenbahn: Architekt: Franz Schwechten", *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, 99, December 11, 1880, 531.

³⁵⁷ See Maier, *Berlin Anhalter Bahnhof*, 212.

³⁵⁸ See also chapter 3.

³⁵⁹ Information about the artist and a contemporary critique quoted in Schomann, *Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof*, 138–141.

³⁶⁰ Klein, "Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof und seine Rezeption im deutschen Bahnhofsbau des ausgehenden 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts".

³⁶¹ Klein, "Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof und seine Rezeption im deutschen Bahnhofsbau des ausgehenden 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts" 45.

central electricity grid needed to electrify the private homes of the nations.³⁶² Moreover, although Klein points out the close similarity to the group “Giganten” crowning the Berlin Museum for Communication – implying that the Frankfurt sculpture was referring back to Berlin Wilhelminian architecture – she both overlooks that there, too, electricity would symbolize telegraphy rather than electric light and that Ernst Wenck’s Berlin sculpture was in fact younger than the Frankfurt group, dating only from 1895.³⁶³

According to Greek mythology, the titan Atlas’ punishment for his participation in the Titan revolt against the Olympian gods was to carry Uranus – that is the celestial sphere of the Heavens, on his shoulders. Later, the mythological figure was conflated with an ancient king of the same name, allegedly a keen geographer. Due to the works of Gerardus Mercator in the sixteenth century, who famously engraved the frontispiece of a collection of maps with a depiction of Atlas, the name passed on to denote a bound volume of celestial and terrestrial maps or charts.³⁶⁴ Henceforth, the titan became a common iconographic symbol for anything that “brought the world together” – be it global trade or global communications.

The following two examples of station embellishment show in greater detail, how the vision of a global infrastructure and a global technology was propagated all over the world, and until far into the twentieth century: how artwork focused on the concept of a shared technology and economy while ignoring all cultural and overriding all political differences. They implied that the nations would grow ever closer together, until one day, somehow, their tracks would merge into one single big railway network. Thus, thanks to a common infrastructure, all national borders could and would be crossed and eventually annihilated for technology, travel, and trade.

³⁶² See Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Lichtblicke: Zur Geschichte der künstlichen Helligkeit im 19. Jahrhundert*, Fischer, vol. 16180 (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2004), 16180: 63f.

³⁶³ See Georg-Kolbe-Museum, Stiftung für Bildhauerei and Bernhard-Heiliger-Stiftung, *Bildhauerei in Berlin: Katalog A-Z: Gigantengruppe 1895 - Ernst Wenck* (31.12.2010); available from http://www.bildhauerei-in-berlin.de/_html/katalog.html; Internet; accessed February 01, 2012. Unfortunately, the sculpture is not listed in N. N., “Wenck, Ernst”, in *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künste von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker, and Hans Vollmer (Leipzig: Engelmann), 35 (1942).

³⁶⁴ See Encyclopædia Britannica Online, *Atlas*; available from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/41285/atlas>; Internet; accessed March 11, 2012.

II.4 Philadelphia Broad Street (1895): The Progress of Transportation

In 1892, the architect Frank Furness (1839-1912) received the commission to renovate and expand Broad Street Station, Pennsylvania Railroad's main terminal in Philadelphia.³⁶⁵ Furness, who had been trained by Richard Morris Hunt before the outbreak of the Civil War, aimed to create a distinguished American architecture quite different from the European Revival and Beaux-Arts styles that had become increasingly popular during the second half of the nineteenth century. He wanted his Broad Street station not only to serve as a functional traffic building, but to celebrate the importance of railroad in modern life. This goal was to be supported by extensive sculptural embellishment. For this purpose he hired the young Austrian sculptor Karl Bitter (1867-1915), who had immigrated to the USA in 1889 to escape Austrian military service.³⁶⁶ Bitter had based his studio in New York, and immediately embarked on a very successful and highly productive career as an architectural sculptor, often working for Hunt. It is likely that Furness' former mentor played a crucial role in Bitter's appointment to the Philadelphia project.

Furness designed an extremely ornate exterior for the new main building. Next to the arcaded balustrades, cornices and miniature columns, all the triangular gable-ends were to be filled with elaborate sculpture, which were, for all their artistic value, quite conventional in subject matter, at least from a European point of view. James M. Dennis, whose extensive art historical monograph on Bitter³⁶⁷ laid the ground stone for all future scholars, explains that

“in 1895 the application of terra-cotta decoration to the exterior of a large building was still considered somewhat experimental. At the time Bitter also considered his use of allegory to symbolize contemporary commerce and industry as being original, **and in the United States it**

³⁶⁵ For information on Furness, see foremost Steve Conn, "Furness, Frank", in *American National Biography Online*, Feb. 2000.

³⁶⁶ See James M. Dennis, "Bitter, Karl Theodore Francis", in *American National Biography Online*

³⁶⁷ Dennis, *Karl Bitter*.

was. At least he wanted to avoid being too literal or prosaic in his representation...”³⁶⁸

Indeed, Bitter’s inventions stood very much in the European tradition of representing modern technologies as allegories, in the guise of mythical, and to the uninitiated also quite mystical, personae.

For the two gables above the cornice Bitter designed baroque clusters of projecting figures arranged around the central figure of a female torchbearer. The facade on Market Street was adorned with ten terra-cotta panels executed in relief, each representing a major terminal city along the Pennsylvania Line. A big clock at the corner of Broad Street and Market Street was flanked by two winged female figures that Dennis has identified as “Prosperity and Plenty” on the one side and “Transportation and Commerce” on the other.³⁶⁹

Alas, there are no detailed photographs of these available, so we have to take his word for this interpretation. Nevertheless, his description – the closed eyes and drowsy contentment of Prosperity, and the wide-eyed alertness of Transportation – suggest the more conventional reading of Night and Day: allegories of time were usually considered appropriate companions for a clock. Seeing that Bitter had obviously also included a head of Mercury atop of a caduceus, Mercury’s symbol, it seems even less likely that he should have added another personification of Transportation and Commerce to the already existent deity of the same meaning.

Even the largest panel on the Fifteenth Street side was extraordinary rather in its size and modeling than its innovative treatment of subject-matter. It represented the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and Bitter used the complete arsenal of mythological creatures and modern allegories to achieve his ends. In order to show the steam power used for the locomotion engine – situated centrally in the shape of a carriage with Mercury and Minerva – he used two pairs of centaurs standing on railroad tracks. Each of the male centaurs represented Fire and was tied to a female one, representing water. They were held back by a muscular male nude representing Man, harnessing the savage powers for his purposes. A young man with an anvil, some car wheels and tools at his feet, stood for the necessary technology, while a young boy with a shield spelling the initials of the Pennsylvania Railroad and a spray of laurel specified the merits of the

³⁶⁸ Dennis, *Karl Bitter*, 58. My emphasis.

³⁶⁹ See Dennis, *Karl Bitter*, 58.

company in question. A nude woman holding a bust of William Penn, and the city coat of arms tied the railroad station firmly to the city. Dennis summarized:

"[Bitter] made it clear that he intended to glorify the Pennsylvania Railroad as an independent American enterprise, and to idealize its effect on the growth and progress of the United States. 'The European roads', he stated, 'are often planned for strategic reasons, or at the nod of a ruler. The Pennsylvania system stands emphatically for the interest of the people. Following the pioneer, it is an essential auxiliary of trade and commerce, a promoter of intercourse between the sections of country which it crosses. It insures the growth of Art, Industry, and Science, and is at once a promoter and conservator of American civilization.'"³⁷⁰

With the educated invention and ambitious composition of this elaborate relief, at the time the "largest panel of its kind ever fired"³⁷¹, Bitter wanted to distance himself from the more realistic depictions of „arrival or of departure, conveyed by simple figures at rest, or by Negroes engaged in the transportation of bales of merchandise“.³⁷² He considered them prosaic and too literal, but found them widespread in North-America. Having only recently arrived from Europe, Bitter was used to the expectations of the educated European bourgeoisie and their deeply rooted craving for legitimation using modern allegories of some sophistication – in this context, Bitter's Fire-Water-Centaurs were no invention of special distinction.³⁷³

Unfortunately, due to changed tastes in architectural style, neither Furness nor his architecture stood in high regard until Frank Lloyd Wright started to draw attention to the remnants of his opus in the 1950s.³⁷⁴ By then, the lion's share of Furness' buildings had already been demolished. Broad Street Station was torn down in 1952, including most of its excellent sculptural embellishment. There is but one exception: A plaster relief, sketchily worked in 1895 by Karl Bitter for the waiting room, was saved and

³⁷⁰ Dennis, *Karl Bitter*, 61.

³⁷¹ Dennis, *Karl Bitter*, 58.

³⁷² Dennis, *Karl Bitter*, 61.

³⁷³ See for instance Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, esp.: 165-195.

³⁷⁴ See Conn, "Furness, Frank", Feb. 2000.

reinstalled in the newly erected 30th Street Station in 1933, where it is still on display today.³⁷⁵

The Progress of Transportation by Karl Bitter

The panel measures 3, 66 x 9, 15 m (30 x 12 ft) and depicts the “Progress of Transportation” (figure 2-51) in the allegorical form and tradition of a baroque triumphal procession. Again, the multi-figured composition tries to capture an abstract concept by means of allegorical personifications.

The central figure of Transportation is seated beneath a canopy adorned with a winged wheel (the railway’s ubiquitous sign), in a carriage drawn by four horses. As Transportation cannot be stationary, her wagon moves and her horses are guided by a female figure in contemporary clothes who watches over a group of young children. According to Dennis, she symbolizes America, and the children America’s future.³⁷⁶ Of course, it would be equally possible to interpret the women as the personification of Invention, and her offspring as the mechanic arts, and innovative transport technology – by land, sea and even air!

Two boys carry on a pillow each the models of a modern locomotive railway engine and of a steamboat. An even younger boy wears a mechanic’s apron and the tools of his trade. The youngest child is holding a model airship, resembling the pioneer models of Henri Giffard from the 1850s. It is only consistent that this symbol of a transportation technology still in its infancy should be carried by a mere naked toddler. (Figure 2-52)

The figure of Transportation is shown as an international phenomenon, surrounded by oriental and occidental figures: to the left, a farmer’s covered wagon distinctly identifies him as an American pioneer. He is accompanied by a horseman in Spanish dress ostentatiously holding Columbus’s ship, and the figure of a man trading with a Native American. (Figure 2-53) A couple in the foreground, wearing seventeenth-century dress, supposedly represents Central Europe, and a girl with a fruit-basket stands for Southern Europe. (Figure 2-54) The Middle and Far East is depicted to the right, stereotypically portrayed by a hooded Bedouin and three girls with slanted eyes, holding

³⁷⁵ The sculpture’s provenance is related in detail in Janet Greenstein Potter, "Public Art in Stations".

³⁷⁶ See Dennis, *Karl Bitter*, 62. The interpretation is upheld by Potter in Janet Greenstein Potter, "Public Art in Stations" 34.

an umbrella. (Figure 2-55) With a gesture of her outstretched hands, Transportation tries to unite Occident, both old and new world, and Orient.

It is a sign of Bitter's acumen and his strong belief in technological progress that he should include an aircraft in his panel, eight years before the Brothers Wright achieved the breakthrough for modern aviation. Nevertheless it is also a sign of the strong historicity of his artwork: although the mode of depiction as a scenic allegory aimed at timelessness, the specific objects used by Bitter to mark the *progress* of transportation soon proved to be antiquated, even obsolete. When the panel was moved to its new place in 30th Street Station in 1933, it was obvious to any observer that transportation technology had progressed much further: modern airplanes and automobile cars were dominating American lives, but were naturally missing from the scene. Consequentially, the panel was aptly renamed: from "Progress" to "Spirit of Transportation".

Far more timeless is Bitter's notion of Transportation as a means to unify the world. His relief panel is not bound by the realities of the daily commute, or limited by the extent of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company's network, nor even to the United States or the North American continent, which would have more fittingly portrayed the traveler's interest and situation at Broad Street Station. Rather, Bitter hinted on the possibilities, the dream of traveling onwards to more exotic ends of the world. His "Transportation" bridged easily the distances between the most strange and faraway countries and societies. This illusion of proximity carried also the unspoken promise of reconciling their differences.

Alas, looking at the geographical, political and cultural obstacles omitted in this tale, the image was not quite accurate – neither in the United States of 1892, nor, as we shall see, in the Europe of 1939.

II.5 Amsterdam Amstel Station (1938-1939): The History and the Importance of the Railway

Amsterdam Amstel station, a regional depot along the line leading to Utrecht, was opened to the public on October 15, 1939.³⁷⁷ The architect H. G. J. Schelling had designed an unobtrusive modern entrance hall that impressed the traveler by its use of

³⁷⁷ See H. G. J. Schelling, "De in gebruik genomen nieuwe stations te Amsterdam", *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura*, no. 51 (1939a); H. G. J. Schelling, "Iets over de beide nieuwe stations te Amsterdam", in *Gedenkboek uitgeven ter gelegenheid van de opening van het Amstelstation (enz.) Amsterdam* (1939b)

light materials and simple proportions. The layout focuses on easy traffic flow and a flood of natural light through tall window planes on both long sides of the hall.

The gable walls above the exit to the city (East) and the entry to the tunnel leading towards the platforms (West) were adorned with two large murals (each measuring 20 m x 9 m, 13 m above ground) covering the entire wall space. The winner of a small art competition held in December 1938 was the painter Peter Alma (1886-1969), a communist artist with contacts to Diego Rivera.³⁷⁸ After two months, four of the five invited artists had handed in a design, that fulfilled the requirements of being related to “railway operation and its means” or at least “fitting into a setting of travel and traffic”.³⁷⁹

The artists had been given much freedom in their choice of subject, except that their murals were expected to suggest to the onlooker “to use the trains of Nederlands Spoorwegen, or more widely put: to consider traveling.”³⁸⁰ In order to be successful with this suggestion, the commission advised the artists to use strong, clear and light colors that harmonized with the architectural setting of the entrance hall, especially the impression of light and space caused by its light materials and great window planes. Schelling further specified:

“If the artist wants to express this suggestion by figurative or allegoric compositions, through an imaginary or narrative concept, then the meaning should appeal through its facile simplicity, quickly readable and understandable for the onlooker. He is, leaving for or arriving from a journey, at this time and in this place not in a situation to reflect long and deeply about art...”³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ See J. Zumbrink, "Alma, Petrus (Peter)", in *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künste von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker, and Hans Vollmer (Leipzig: Engelmann), 2 (1908).

³⁷⁹ H. G. J. Schelling, "Meervoudige opdracht voor het ontwerpen van twee wandschilderingen in het nieuwe Amstelstation te Amsterdam", *Bouwkundig Weekblad Architectura*, no. 21 (1939c), 225. My translation.

³⁸⁰ H. G. J. Schelling, "Meervoudige opdracht voor het ontwerpen van twee wandschilderingen in het nieuwe Amstelstation te Amsterdam", 225. My translation.

³⁸¹ H. G. J. Schelling, "Meervoudige opdracht voor het ontwerpen van twee wandschilderingen in het nieuwe Amstelstation te Amsterdam", 225. My translation.

The jury consisted of the German artist Heinrich Campendonk (professor at the Royal Academy of Arts, Amsterdam),³⁸² W. F. Gouwe (Director of the Institute of Decorative Arts and Handicraft, s'Gravenhage), with H. J. Driessen (Head of Construction division of Nederlandsche Spoorwegen) presiding.³⁸³ Yet, the tone of the article implies that its author, as architect of Amstel station, was also entitled to an opinion, and was allowed to voice it in front of the jury.

It is obvious that Peter Alma's design was a clear favorite with the jury. Van Leeuwen and Romers imply that despite Alma's communist background he was quite simply but one of few Dutch artists at the time capable of dealing with the design of a mural of such monumental scale.³⁸⁴ In comparison to the designs of his competitors as published by Schelling³⁸⁵, this opinion is not so far fetched – indeed, Alma was not only very skilled at filling the plane of the wall, but also thought about the theory of his trade, publishing several articles featuring some basic rules for approaching mural painting.³⁸⁶ Moreover, while he was surely aware of the opportunities mural paintings offered to his fellow socialist/communist painters all over the world, his design for Amstel station is – aside from a fervent belief in progress and technology typical for his time – quite free of specific political (that is: communist) propaganda.

Alma chose to commemorate the centenary of the first Dutch railway line and depict “the international importance of the railway and its technical prerequisites”.³⁸⁷ Thus, on the East wall, above the exit to the city, Peter Alma painted the “Development of the Locomotive Engine”. (Figure 2-56) In the center stand a group of six pioneering railway engineers in nineteenth century dress. (Figure 2-57) Schelling names “Séguin, Stephenson, and Watt in the middle”.³⁸⁸ To their feet are several schematic depictions of their inventions – steam engines and their applications for industry or shipping – while

³⁸² Campendonk worked at about the same time on a lead-glass window for Schelling's second station project, Muiderport. See chapter 4.

³⁸³ See H. G. J. Schelling, "Meervoudige opdracht voor het ontwerpen van twee wandschilderingen in het nieuwe Amstelstation te Amsterdam", 225.

³⁸⁴ See van Leeuwen and Romers, *Een spoor van verbeelding*, 55.

³⁸⁵ See H. G. J. Schelling, "Meervoudige opdracht voor het ontwerpen van twee wandschilderingen in het nieuwe Amstelstation te Amsterdam".

³⁸⁶ For instance Peter Alma, "De herleving von de wandschildering", *Prisma der Kunsten*, no. 2 (1937); Peter Alma, "Enkele gezichtspunten over de wandschildering".

³⁸⁷ H. G. J. Schelling, "Meervoudige opdracht voor het ontwerpen van twee wandschilderingen in het nieuwe Amstelstation te Amsterdam", 226. My translation.

³⁸⁸ H. G. J. Schelling, "Meervoudige opdracht voor het ontwerpen van twee wandschilderingen in het nieuwe Amstelstation te Amsterdam", 226. My translation.

the background is dedicated to steam locomotives of the past hundred years.³⁸⁹ (Figures 2-58, 2-59, 2-60)

George Stephenson can easily be identified as the engineer to the right, dressed in a blue coat, by the plan in his hand: it shows a titled drawing of Stephenson's 1829 locomotive engine "The Rocket" (depicted as first locomotive in the right background).³⁹⁰ Next to him in the red coat stands the French engineer Marc Séguin, who had in 1827 invented a locomotive similar to the "Rocket", also with a multi-tube boiler.³⁹¹ This invention, shown front right, occurred almost simultaneously, although probably independent from Stephenson's work. In any case, his engine was less successful than the "Rocket" – maybe that is why he is the only one looking straight at Stephenson, his plans rolled up into a tube.

The other men, too, are identifiable by their inventions shown at their feet. Their position within the composition expresses the successive generations of engineers working on steam powered transportation systems: Thus, the cousins Richard Trevithick and Andrew Vivian, who had invented the London Steam Carriage of 1803 shown to the right front, stand directly behind Séguin and Stephenson, because their inventions had at least partly influenced their younger and more successful colleagues. Their contemporary, John Blenkinsop, at the left in the green coat, points at his "Salamanca" of 1812, the first commercially successful steam locomotive, shown in the left foreground.³⁹² His invention was important, but its rack and pinion system was a side-track, expressed by the figure's distance to the tightly composed group of engineers. The last person, in the very center and yet partially covered, is James Watt, inventor of the seminal steam machine (shown front left, next to the "Salamanca"), and thus spiritual "grandfather" of the group.

The crowd of engineers forms the tip of an upside-down pyramid consisting of different railway engines. They drive in five horizontal layers from the centre to the left and right edges, with their steam-clouds billowing behind them back towards the middle. Closest to the men are early models, while on each of the five horizontal layers stretching

³⁸⁹ See also Marcel Kneppers, *De restauratie van de wandschilderingen van Peter Alma in het Amstelstation te Amsterdam*, Ambachtelijke schilderrestauraties (Broek in Waterland, 2007), n. p. (13). For information on the origins of railway technology see Snell, *Early Railways*.

³⁹⁰ See Snell, *Early Railways*, 37-39

³⁹¹ See Snell, *Early Railways*, 30.

³⁹² See Snell, *Early Railways*, 14-15.

further into the background the increasingly modern engines become sleeker, longer, and more aerodynamic.

The development starts in the lower left side with an American locomotive of 1841, a Norris 4-2-0, followed by the first Dutch steam locomotive connecting Amsterdam with Haarlem in 1839, a Winson or possibly Stephenson Patentee. Next is another Dutch engine of 1889, its livery points to the Nederlandse Rijnspoorwegen. A modern French (probably a Nord Orleans freight locomotive), and the Cock o'the North, a cutting-edge streamlined English model of 1939, top it off. The lower right starts with Stephenson's "Rocket" of 1829, followed by a French locomotive of 1850 (or possibly a Dutch Buddicom), and an English (or probably Dutch: Noord Brabant Duitse spoorwegen company), as well as an American model (or rather: a French PLM Mountain). The last and most modern is a streamlined English (or US Hudson) engine of 1938.³⁹³

Where the steam meets in a big cloud in the upper centre of the painting, a globe with a Eurocentric map of the world hangs suspended above the engineers. The landmasses are veined with the red lines of existing transcontinental railway tracks, while leaving out any national borders. The impression is that of a world unified by infrastructure, suggesting quick travel and unimpeded international trade – all this made possible by the collaboration of engineers and common technology.

This, of course, was not quite true, not even for Western Europe. Of course, there had been efforts to establish international railway traffic since the beginning of the railway age, and they had even been, up to a point, quite successful – at least as far as *technical compatibility* was concerned. In its September issue of 2007, the *Journal of Transport History* dedicated a mini-series to the history of European Infrastructure.³⁹⁴ Within, Irene Anastasiadou explains how bilateral and multilateral agreements between governments and private international organizations successfully

“worked to establish regulations that would enable trains
to cross national frontiers. Rules concerning both

³⁹³ See Kneppers, *De restauratie van de wandschilderingen van Peter Alma in het Amstelstation te Amsterdam*, 14–15. I am very grateful to Paul van Heesvelde and the members of the Belgian Railway History workshop, who helped to identify the models to their best abilities in the aftermath of the T2M conference in Helmond, Netherlands, October 2007. Where Paul van Heesvelde's identification differs from the information given in the published literature about Alma's murals – especially the trains to the fresco's right – I've put it in brackets.

³⁹⁴ See Johan Schot, "Introduction: building Europe on transnational infrastructures", *The Journal of Transport History* 28, no. 2 (September 2007); Irene Anastasiadou, "Networks of power: Railway visions in interwar Europe", *The Journal of Transport History* 28, no. 2 (2007).

legislation and the technical conditions governing international railway traffic were codified, for example in the cases of the convention on the Technical Unity of Railway Transport (1882) and on the Transport of Goods by Rail (CIM, 1890)³⁹⁵

leading to the implementation of standard gauge (1,425 m) and agreement on other conventions (braking systems, couplings, signaling etc) in most countries of Western Europe before the outbreak of the First World War.

Johan Schot further explains that many of these organizations, while initiated by nation states, were not fully controlled by governments but rather dependent on non-state-actors, many of them engineers, who “often stressed the technical and non-political nature of the issues involved and developed a technocratic strategy to work as much as possible independently from their respective national governments”.³⁹⁶ The collaboration in technical matters was re-instituted during the phase of reconstruction after World War One, when national railway administrations focused on modernizing measures such as electrification, implementation of diesel engines, or modern signaling.³⁹⁷ So far, Peter Alma’s vision of international engineers collaborating seems to be quite accurate or at least not too far from reality.

On the other hand the process of expanding the network, and improving or creating a truly transnational infrastructure remained fragmented, due to the lack of a central institution which could integrate the different projects.³⁹⁸ Directly after the WW I, the focus lay on reconstructing and modernizing destroyed lines and rolling stock, which was at first impeded politically by insecurities of ownership after post-war annexations and redefined borders, and economically, by the emergence of automobilization and road traffic as a competitor to railway freight and passenger traffic.³⁹⁹ By the 1930s, the League of Nations began to probe the possibilities of constructing new international railway lines, not least because public works of such a large scale promised an immediate solution to the problems of unemployment due to the Depression. The half-hearted effort petered out in various smaller projects within national competencies, the

³⁹⁵ Irene Anastasiadou, "Networks of power: Railway visions in interwar Europe", 173.

³⁹⁶ Johan Schot, "Introduction: building Europe on transnational infrastructures", 168.

³⁹⁷ See Irene Anastasiadou, "Networks of power: Railway visions in interwar Europe", 173.

³⁹⁸ See Johan Schot, "Introduction: building Europe on transnational infrastructures", 169. See also chapter 3.

³⁹⁹ See Irene Anastasiadou, "Networks of power: Railway visions in interwar Europe", 173.

League of Nations taking the view that “the various individual programs of work to be carried out in different countries, if taken as a whole, constituted international action in themselves.”⁴⁰⁰ Anastasiadou shows in her paper that nevertheless there were several individuals with ideas and projects for large-scale transnational railway networks, even though they differed in their definition of which nations were to be at the center and which at the periphery. But inter-war, indeed even post-World War II, railway policies confined themselves to national interests.

Technologically, a trans-European railway network, as Peter Alma seems to suggest in his mural, would have been possible and was even talked about. But according to Anastasiadou such projects were

“utopian in their belief that socio-political circumstances would allow their realisation. As existing historiography has suggested, large-scale technological works were realised in the inter-war years within the context of nation states where there were strong central political authority and clearly defined political goals.”⁴⁰¹

Even today, more than 20 years after the end of the Cold War, the infrastructure of Europe’s nation states is far from compatible. As Thomas Büker, a post-grad researcher at RWTH Aachen’s Institute of Transport Science (VIA) states on his private homepage (sections of which are dedicated to the history of railway interoperability):

“The coexistence of at least four different electrification systems, a dozen signaling systems, various clearance profiles and track gauges represent a substantial hindrance to the requirements of interoperability.”⁴⁰²

Due to the increasing efforts of European integration, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, this situation has been changing, most notably through the guidelines of the European Union’s Trans-European Networks programs (TEN),⁴⁰³

⁴⁰⁰ Irene Anastasiadou, "Networks of power: Railway visions in interwar Europe", 174.

⁴⁰¹ Irene Anastasiadou, "Networks of power: Railway visions in interwar Europe", 187.

⁴⁰² Thorsten Büker, *Interoperability* (Thorsten Büker, 18.07.2010); available from <http://www.bueker.net/trainspotting/voltage.php>; Internet; accessed April 18, 2011.

⁴⁰³ See Johan Schot, "Introduction: building Europe on transnational infrastructures", 169.

which in 2005 listed 30 priority axes and projects to be launched before 2010.⁴⁰⁴ But efficient progress is still dependent on reliable domestic politics of the nation states concerned. For instance, project Number 17, an west-east railway axis via Paris-Strasbourg-Stuttgart-Vienna-Bratislava,⁴⁰⁵ was for a long time endangered (and in any case seriously slowed down) by the ongoing protests against the transformation of Stuttgart Hauptbahnhof from terminal station to modern, subterranean through-station (Stuttgart 21).

On Amstel station's Western wall, above the access to the platforms, the "result of the technical development"⁴⁰⁶ is shown in a similar composition to its counterpart. (Figure 2-61) This time, the tip of the upturned triangle consists of a big wheel with eighteen spokes. It forms the focal point and destination for six trains hurrying towards it from the clouds in both upper corners. The three trains on the left are steam trains, with the two older models further back and each aiming for their own, smaller wheels (eleven and ten spokes respectively). (Figure 2-62) These were rather difficult to identify, yet the green train seems to be a Cab Forward model that could be German (although the German livery seems to have been red), while his blue neighbor wears the colors of the Noord Brabant Duitse Spoorwegen. The third model is partly hidden and not identifiable.⁴⁰⁷

The three trains on the right are marked as electric or diesel-electric both by the two red lightning bolts above them and their streamlined exterior without visible chimneys. (Figure 2-63) At the top, the base of the triangle is formed by the railway's universal symbol, at the same time the sign of Netherlandish Railway: a winged wheel, seen from the front with the stylized wings extended from its hub. As the trains are suspended in the sky, the landscape below them depicts schematic landmarks of important destinations. The oriental and exotic landmarks to the left stand for the Old Worlds of the East, while the more urban and occidental buildings to the right symbolize the

⁴⁰⁴ See TEN-T, *Priority axes and projects* (21.03.2005); available from <http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/maps/doc/axes/pp00.pdf>; Internet; accessed April 18, 2011.

⁴⁰⁵ See TEN Priority Projects No 17, *Railway Axis Paris-Strasbourg-Stuttgart-Wien-Bratislava* (18.03.2005); available from <http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/maps/doc/axes/pp17.pdf>; Internet; accessed April 18, 2011.

⁴⁰⁶ H. G. J. Schelling, "Meervoudige opdracht voor het ontwerpen van twee wandschilderingen in het nieuwe Amstelstation te Amsterdam", 226. My translation.

⁴⁰⁷ Identification according to Paul van Heesvelde, see footnote 393.

Western, New World.⁴⁰⁸ Both worlds are signified by a number of landmarks that partly stylize real monuments and partly mirror an ideal silhouette. (Figures 2-64, 2-65)

The latter is especially true for the Orient/Old World, which is marked, from left to right, by palm trees, the Great Sphinx and the Great Pyramid at Giza, Egypt, as well as the outline of the first pylon wall of the Isis temple at Philae. Further on there is a great mosque, possibly the Blue Mosque (Sultan-Ahmed-Mosque) in Istanbul. The grey silhouette behind the mosque represents a Thai Buddhist temple, resembling Wat Arun in Bangkok. The distant mountains in the background include a volcano, maybe the Indonesian Merapi, and a range resembling the Indian Nanda Devi, part of the Himalaya Mountains.⁴⁰⁹ Up front to the right, closest to the Western world, two Greek temples form the link between these exotics sights and the Western, more urban structures to the right. These landmarks consist of New York's skyscraper skyline including the Empire State Building of 1931, and the Eiffel Tower, flanked on both sides by the cathedrals of St. Peter in Rome and Notre Dame in Paris. In a smaller scale in the foreground, famous Dutch monuments include an unspecified windmill, the Utrecht cathedral steeple Domtoren, the Amsterdam Stock Exchange by the architect Berlage, typical facades of buildings along the Amsterdam canals, and De Munt, a tower which used to be part of one of Amsterdam's city gates. These buildings are completed by the vision of a modern steamship, linking the European with the American sights, and two iron suspension bridges: the Quebec Bridge to the left was built in 1917 as the biggest cantilever bridge of the time.⁴¹⁰

As a whole, the mural suggests that it was possible to reach all the shown sights by train, which is exactly the task that the art commission for Amstel station had set for the competition. Nevertheless, again, Peter Alma was far from depicting reality. Even if Amstel was not a small, rather unimportant regional depot on the outskirts of Amsterdam, most of the destinations were not (easily) accessible by railway: traveling to New York would require crossing the Atlantic, presumably on a steam ship, and the

⁴⁰⁸ See H. G. J. Schelling, "Meervoudige opdracht voor het ontwerpen van twee wandschilderingen in het nieuwe Amstelstation te Amsterdam", 226; Kneppers, *De restauratie van de wandschilderingen van Peter Alma in het Amstelstation te Amsterdam*, 17.

⁴⁰⁹ After it was first climbed by an expedition in 1936, Nanda Devi became the highest peak climbed by man until the 1950 ascent of Annapurna, thus gaining a lot of publicity. See Eric Shipton and H. W. Tilman, *Nanda Devi: Exploration and ascent*. A compilation of the two mountain-exploration books, *Nanda Devi and The ascent of Nanda Devi*, plus Shipton's account of his later explorations (London, Seattle: Baton Wicks; Mountaineers, 2000).

⁴¹⁰ See Kneppers, *De restauratie van de wandschilderingen van Peter Alma in het Amstelstation te Amsterdam*, 18.

Asian destinations would have required similar arrangements. But of course it had been the railway of the nineteenth century which had made possible the re-definition of distance and space⁴¹¹, of safe long-distance travel on a large scale, and thus the emergence of a tourist industry – more about which in chapter 4.

Therefore, Alma not only fulfilled the terms of his contract, but managed to combine the two murals into a monument to national and international railway history while at the same time including the optimistic outlook that progress and international collaboration would continue.

Like Bitter in Philadelphia, Alma depicted a world where modern transport technology and the resulting infrastructure would tie the continents together. At the same time, Alma stressed the architectural achievements of the modern Western world by juxtaposing them with the great marvels of the East – still impressive, but belonging to a different time: antiquity. In this way, the railway reached not only across the world, but also across the times.

Both Karl Bitter and Peter Alma had made the railway-induced globalization – the fact, that the new infrastructure tied the world ever closer together – a topic in their works. At the same time, both artists produced a historical snap-shot of the status quo of transport technology. But while Bitter had wanted to highlight the progress of the technological development, using children to symbolize the younger, more recent vehicles like railway, steamboats and aircrafts, his work was especially prone to become obsolete – not only in style, but also in content. The Pennsylvania Railroad Company dealt with this fact by renaming the tableau and placing it in a new building. As a side effect, the transfer bestowed dignity on the new station on 30th Street, implying for the building a long tradition of railway architecture in Philadelphia, and thereby stressing the role the Philadelphia Railroad Company had played in the development of the city.

Alma on the other hand did not look into the future, but summed up the past – a centenary of railway engineering and railway engines were paraded before the astonished viewer, who reminisces about the unstoppable, continuing progress railway technology had made ever since Stephenson's "Rocket". Thus, by looking back, Alma implied that this development would continue into the future. Of course, more modern developments like high-speed-trains or modern super-speed magnetic levitation systems

⁴¹¹ Much has already been written about this phenomenon, most notably by Schivelbusch in Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*. See also Kaschuba, *Die Überwindung der Distanz*, and chapter 3.

are naturally missing in his murals, too. But because they are less abstract than Bitter's tableau, Alma's murals look today almost as up-to-date as seventy years ago. Freshly cleaned and restored, both artists' works tell a still utopian tale of technological progress that would help to one day unite the world.

III The Railway – Technological Collaboration Allows for Economical Growth and Political Cooperation

Whether the railway was greeted as harbinger for industrialization – as in Königsberg – or tried to win new clients by offering logistics services for already existing economies – as in Cincinnati – there is no doubt that the pace of industrialization was both dependent on and greatly accelerated by the railway. Looking back today, the industrialization as a whole has had several important side-effects, chief amongst them urbanisation, better access to education, and rising prosperity for many.⁴¹² It has also helped to tie the industrialized nations closer together, first economically, then politically. Technological knowledge has spread internationally, increasingly leading to global standards. This process won't be completed any time soon, but progress is made every day. While the railway's steam engines are no longer the power machines driving the process forward, they used to be the most important force to push-start it.

⁴¹² Of course, there are also many negative side-effects, socially and especially ecologically; and much of it has been achieved at the expense of nations outside the industrialized Western World.

Chapter 3 Railway Networks

It has become a commonplace that the swift growth of railway networks destroyed, or rather: rearranged the concept of time and space in the nineteenth century.⁴¹³ Wolfgang Schivelbusch's seminal study on the "Railway Journey"⁴¹⁴ was surely the most influential publication on this topic. Schivelbusch lucidly described how the unfamiliar speed of the first railways allowed covering greater distances in less time, thus producing the notion of a contraction of space. Thus, if the first railways were three times as fast as a post stage, space seemed to shrink by two-thirds. Contemporaries soon equaled this contraction of space with its destruction and permanent loss. To Schivelbusch it seemed clear that the soon established *topos* of "space-destruction" could only be seen in relation to time – "what was experienced as being annihilated was the traditional space-time continuum."⁴¹⁵ Of course, Schivelbusch was not talking about Einstein or non-Euclidean geometry – by linking space and time so closely he aimed for the formula of speed, which is measured by dividing covered distance by the time to do so. Up to date, travelers had been able to perceive speed only within "natural" limits. Due to the mechanization of transport means, the experience of "distance" and "time" drifted apart. The information that someone lived "two hours away" had to be modified by the mode of transport, speed thus wedging the formerly synchronous, organic measurements of space and time apart.

People had to find ways to intellectually deal with the yet unfamiliar velocity of the railway, that is, to grasp it linguistically. Some celebrated the new swiftness by comparing it to flying birds, or other naturally quick animals, especially the horse.⁴¹⁶ Others tried to deal with the effects of speed on a more abstract level. So, when Heinrich Heine wrote about the opening of the first French railway lines to Rouen and Orléans in 1843 that "space is destroyed by the railway, and only time is left for us"⁴¹⁷

⁴¹³ In the nineteenth century, "time" was institutionalized, even nationalized in order to improve logistics and to install reliable timetables for the railways – resulting in the introduction of "railway time" in most countries before the implementation of a national time. See Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 43f. But usually, when people spoke of a "new time", they did not talk about standard methods of chronometry. People were well aware of the social and cultural changes that the nineteenth century brought and used the term consciously to define the arrival of a new era.

⁴¹⁴ Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*.

⁴¹⁵ Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 36.

⁴¹⁶ See chapter 4, dealing with the "Vogeltrek"-window at Amsterdam Muiderpoort station.

⁴¹⁷ Quoted in Kaschuba, *Die Überwindung der Distanz*, 90. My translation.

he picked up the wording of a discussion that went back to older debates about stage-posts and draisines some fifty years earlier.⁴¹⁸

Still, the railway as a destroyer of space soon became a popular topos, and not necessarily a negative one. Schivelbusch quotes the “Quarterly Review” of 1839, where an anonymous author celebrated the fact that the railway mobilizes the entire population, drawing them at the same time closer together and closer to the metropolis London, the “hearth of the nation”: “As distances were thus annihilated, the surface of our country would, as it were, shrivel in size until it became not much bigger than one immense city.”⁴¹⁹ The same notion has been described for France: Constantin Pecquer translocated cities, juggling them until the whole nation appeared to be condensed in Paris or in Ile-de-France.⁴²⁰

While the railway made many hitherto remote regions widely accessible, its speed prevented the correct perception of distance covered; space – that is, the space between two railway stations – was lost to the traveler’s senses. “The railroad knows only points of departure and destination.”⁴²¹ The –mostly urban– destinations were no longer isolated by far and lengthy distances of landscape, but seemed to collide, while the geography separating them was folded away like origami paper.

But the described process of shrinking space was at the same time a process of spatial expansion. Thanks to the railway, a modern commuting system from and to the growing suburbs emerged; formerly rural stations fostered new city centers. Far away cities were not only brought to the metropolis, but the metropolis went also out to them.⁴²² Here lie the roots to twentieth century suburbanization and city sprawl. Yet another, maybe even more immediate effect of the described urbanization was less material. Apart from the abolition of spatial distance, also the classical dichotomy of city and countryside was slowly being eroded – that is, if the country towns were connected to the railway. For the rural population, formerly inaccessible features of urban life became part of their own horizon of experience. The railway tracks became the veins that brought the blood of city life to the extremities of the nation’s provinces.

⁴¹⁸ See Kaschuba, *Die Überwindung der Distanz*, 91f.

⁴¹⁹ Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 34.

⁴²⁰ See Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 34f.

⁴²¹ Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 38.

⁴²² See Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 35f.

City-dwellers on the other hand began to perceive certain remote regions only as an extension of the railway line that took them there. Thus, a metropolitan railway station served not only as entrance gate to the city, but also as an exit - away from the city towards the countryside. Sometimes, posters or landscape paintings within the terminals tried to capture the “lost” space between the stations.⁴²³ But much more often, almost ubiquitous, it was the cities, serving as nodal points in a national or a railway company’s network, that were visualized in station embellishment.

I The Railway Station Within the City

All stations advertise their host city somewhere visibly along their façade at least once: After all, the arriving passengers have to be able to judge even from inside the train where they have just arrived, so that all platforms bear (usually standardized) signs with the station’s official name. But also the façade facing the city, aimed towards the leaving passengers, usually bears that inscription – the station as “modern city gate” offers just as much an exit way as an entry. Often, the inscription was supported by the addition of the city’s crest.

It was not uncommon for railway stations to offer the travelers orientation about the surrounding city. This is especially true for metropolitan railway stations, but also for small stations serving coastal baths or similar tourist spots that considered themselves destinations rather than places of departure. For example, the third class waiting room of **Amsterdam Centraal Station (1882)** featured a large map of the area between IJ and Amstel, neatly marking the cities major churches, buildings and sights.⁴²⁴ (Figure 3-1) The interior of the small station of **Trouville-Deauville (1931)** (Figure 3-2) is decorated with a similar map of the twin cities, neatly indicating buildings in red blocks, parks and recreational areas in green, river and sea in blue. The painter, Louis Houpin, even included a legend.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ See chapter 4 of this dissertation.

⁴²⁴ See Oxenaar, *Centraal Station Amsterdam*, 78.

⁴²⁵ See Catherine Grive, *Gares de France: Un patrimoine remarquable* (Paris: Éditions Déclics, 2011), 74–77.

I.1 Cincinnati Union Terminal (1931-33): An Integral Part of Urban Infrastructure

But few stations try to connect themselves with their city on so many different levels as **Cincinnati Union Terminal (1933)**.⁴²⁶ Its large mosaics representing local history and local industries are described elsewhere in this dissertation.⁴²⁷ Less publicly, artist French-born Pierre Bourdelle⁴²⁸ had painted the ceiling in the former Dining Room with a stylized map of Cincinnati in an innovative airbrush technique.⁴²⁹ (Figure:3-3, 3-4)

Within the rectangular plafond, a white circle was inscribed symbolizing the city's boundary.⁴³⁰ Streets, too, are marked in white, while red paints denotes the building density of the city blocks. The course of the Ohio River and the waters feeding it are indicated with stylized blue waves, white streets crossing it indicating the many bridges. Outside the city ring, the corners of the painting are filled with depictions of different transport vehicles – a car, an airplane, a steam ship and a train, stylishly sketched in black and white. Between them, the façades of important contemporary buildings, kept in white, extend into the circle of the city: the new railway terminal, a group of skyscrapers including the 1913 PNC Tower and the brand-new Carew Tower, and the yet-to-be-built new courthouse (today: Potter Stewart Courthouse) by Louis A. Simon⁴³¹, as well as an unidentified building (possibly the Music Hall) obviously aimed at encompassing all aspects of Cincinnati civil life, underlining the architects' effort to "design a civic centre with a wide range of rooms including a theatre."⁴³²

The impression is that of a compact, centralized city structure, both self-contained and well accessible by different modes of transport. It also insinuates that the terminal is a genuine part of the city's infrastructure, well within the white circle of the imaginary boundary. Yet, the long-lasting and complicated planning process had banned the new

⁴²⁶ For information on the station's building history see the section on the Worker Murals in chapter 2.

⁴²⁷ See chapter 2 and chapter 5 respectively.

⁴²⁸ See S. N. and I. N., "Bourdelle, Pierre", 13 (1996).

⁴²⁹ See Rose, Rose and Yungblut, *Cincinnati Union Terminal*, 67–69.

⁴³⁰ There is a certain temptation to equal that white band with the Interstate 275, a looped expressway circling the entire city, except that the I-275 was constructed considerably later, between 1958 and 1979. See Jake Mecklenborg, *Cincinnati Transit: Interstate 275* (15.02.2008); available from <http://www.cincinnati-transit.net/I-275.html>; Internet; accessed January 28, 2012.

⁴³¹ See US General Services Administration, *Potter Stewart U.S. Courthouse, Cincinnati, OH*; available from

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/ext/html/site/hb/category/25431/actionParameter/exploreByBuilding/buildingId/067#>; Internet; accessed January 28, 2012. The building was constructed from 1936-1938, but preliminary plans must have been published earlier.

⁴³² Richards and MacKenzie, *The railway station*, 49.

station rather far to the periphery of the city. In Europe, where many of the large metropolitan terminals had had to be placed outside the – subsequently razed – city walls, the stations had frequently served as catalysts for the development of the surrounding area. No doubt, the Cincinnati Union Terminal Company, who was in charge of the station's construction, had hoped for a similar effect. Yet, such development had failed, and today the axis of the terminal's impressive driveway still points tangentially just enough past the city center to make the failure quite obvious.

I.2 Milan, Stazione Centrale (1913-31): The Center of National Unification

Several even more stylized maps were aimed at the tourist arriving at Ulisse Stacchini's monumental **Milan, Stazione Centrale (1913-31)**: the walls near the former baggage claims were adorned with three panels showing respectively the silhouettes of the most important churches, those of the presumably interesting monuments, and the theaters and museums, superimposed over the main streets leading to them, in the manner of a mental map. (Figures 3-5, 3-6, 3-7) Both buildings and streets are neatly labeled in capital letters for easy reference, and the inclusion of a wind rose facilitates orientation. The cathedral (EL DOMM) features on two of the maps, and the newly erected station itself is unashamedly included amongst the monuments.

Additionally, arriving passengers, who enter the concourse that connects the platforms and distributes the traffic, are informed about the city they are about to enter. Two large cityscapes are painted above the portals to the far left and the far right. The *vedute* are painted on square tiles framing the lintels above the portals, and which in turn are carved with two of Milan's heraldic animals (the "biscione")⁴³³ and the word "USCITA" (exit). (Figures 3-8, 3-9)

The first of these (figure 3-10) offers a view of the city from a slightly raised position looking North. To the right, there is the Arco della Pace, built 1807-1815 by Luigi Cagnola to commemorate the victories of Napoleon – although, indeed, due to its long construction time it came to celebrate the European peace after Napoleon's defeat

⁴³³ The "biscione" is the heraldic charge of a crowned snake swallowing (or spitting out) a child. Originally the coat-of-arms of the Visconti family, the Sforza acquired it by marriage and included it into their own crest. Since the reign of the Sforza as Dukes of Milan in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the Duchy of Milan's crest included the biscione and a crowned eagle. See "Sforza", in *Meyers Großes Konversations-Lexikon*, 6th edition (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1902-1909 (1905)), 18.

instead.⁴³⁴ In the center, the view shows the massive fortifications and turrets of Castello Sforzesco (Sforza Castle), and in the far background rises the white silhouette of the Duomo (Milan Cathedral) over the urban fabric. On the left, several riders exercise their horses in the Arena Civica. The neo-classical stadium was opened in 1807 and belongs, like the Arco della Pace, to the city's Napoleonic heritage. Yet, the smoking chimney-stacks in the left background indicate that the view is showing a contemporary, or at least already industrialized, Milan.

The second of the two cityscapes (figure 3-11) depicts Milan from the south overlooking the district around Porta Ticinese (shown right). The neoclassical arch was built from 1801-1814 by Luigi Cagnola (the architect of the Arco della Pace named above), and used to be known in Napoleonic times as Porta Marengo. The district was at the time dominated by the trade coming into the city via the Naviglio Grande, a canal that connected Milan with Lago Maggiore in Switzerland since its construction in the thirteenth century. As one of the main trade routes, it supplied the city with livestock, agricultural produce, and building materials for the construction of the cathedral.⁴³⁵ The background shows again the skyline of Milan, dominated by the Duomo.

By offering these two views of the city to the arriving travelers passing through its exits, the station was placed within the grown organism of the North Italian metropolis. Yet, at first sight it seems surprising that none of the two vistas comes from the direction of the station, (which is situated in the North-East), but rather from the North-West and South-West of the city. Besides, both views regard the city from a position on the "Cerchia dei Bastioni", the second, fortified ring following the "Spanish Wall", that had been constructed from 1546 – 1560 during the Spanish rule.⁴³⁶ (Figure 3-12) Yet, the

⁴³⁴ Napoleon had made Milan capital upon the foundation of the Cisalpine Republic in 1797, renamed Italian Republic in 1802. For more information on Napoleon's Italian expeditions see for instance: Volker Ullrich, *Napoleon: Eine Biographie* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2004), 36–43, and Franz Herre, *Napoleon: Eine Biographie*, Focus-Edition (Kreuzlingen: Diederichs, 2006), 45–56.

⁴³⁵ For more information see Cordani, Roberta, ed., *I Navigli, da Milano lungo i canali* (Milan: Edizioni Celip, 2002).

⁴³⁶ The urban layout of Milan still shows distinct traces of its three major defending walls, constructed concentrically and circumscribing the growing city in an almost perfect circular shape. These are the Roman Walls (1st and 3rd century), Medieval Walls (12th century) and Spanish Walls (16th century), all of which were razed upon the construction of a new defence ring. In the 19th century, the walls had finally lost their military purpose and served as a promenade for the citizens, who could see the Cathedral from anywhere along the wall. Porta Sempione (near Arco della Pace) and Porta Ticinese served both as gates in the Spanish Walls. Already under Napoleon, some of the old gates were replaced by new gates which then served as customs duty stations. For more information see Vittore Buzzi and Claudio Buzzi, *Le vie di Milano: Dizionario della toponomastica milanese* (Milan: U. Hoepli, 2004).

station lies outside of the walls in an area developed only after 1884 by the Beruto plan.⁴³⁷

Obviously, the focus lay not so much on the actual view that travelers should expect upon leaving the station, nor on the celebration of more recent accomplishments in urban planning and city development, but rather on reminiscing a city panorama based on the features added under the reign of Napoleon. Remember that it was during the time of the Cisalpine Republic, and the ensuing Italian Republic, (which became in 1805 the Kingdom of Italy with Napoleon as king), that the Milanese got their first taste of an Italian national state – even though it in fact only consisted of Lombardy and Emilia Romagna. Certainly, both republics were completely controlled by post-Revolutionary and Imperial France, yet Napoleon had been celebrated for liberating the region from the Austrian-Hungarian reign. It was during these times that the tricolor-banner of the national flag were first used to represent “Italy”, such that the short-lived period of the Italian Republic and Kingdom under Napoleon can be considered the germ of the nation’s future process of unification, which would made of Milan the intellectual center of the “Risorgimento”.⁴³⁸ The depicted vistas assume in this context a rather political, patriotic connotation that does not surprise within a building teeming with political décor.

I.3 Luneburg East Station (1874/1939): A Regional Center Propelled by Urban Nostalgia

The case of **Luneburg East station** (1874) shows that a city’s urge to advertise its strengths was independent from its hypothetical position in a national urban hierarchy. In **1939**, the local impressionist painter Hugo Friedrich Hartmann received the commission to paint two large murals for the lateral walls of Lunenburg’s East Station entrance hall. Upon entering the building from the platform, travelers see on the northern wall to the right the mediaeval cityscape of Luneburg (Figure 3-13), based on a

⁴³⁷ See Corinna Morandi, "Italian planning in the later 19th century: The Milan example", *Planning Perspectives* 7, no. 4 (1992).

⁴³⁸ See Bernhard Abend and Schliebitz Anja, *Italien: Norden*, 6th edition (Ostfildern: Verlag Karl Baedeker, 2011), 42; 278. “Risorgimento” is the Italian name for the slow process of unification in the 19th century.

copperplate engraving from Matthäus Merian the Elder's series *Topographia Germaniae* of 1654.⁴³⁹ (Figure 3-14).

To the left, there is a nostalgic view of the nature park Lüneburger Heide (Lüneburg Heath), a large, barren moor lying roughly between Hamburg in the North, Hanover in the South-West, and Wolfsburg in the South-East. In the middle ages, Lüneburg's large salt mines had led to prosperity and ensured the accumulation of immense wealth for the burghers, but power and prosperity faded quickly with the decline of the Hanseatic League.⁴⁴⁰ Cynically enough, poverty ensured the almost unchanged preservation of the historic city center, which forms the city's biggest asset for regional tourism today. At the same time, the city serves as a regional metropolis for the inhabitants of the underpopulated and underdeveloped region of the Lüneburg Heath, which nowadays mostly relies on hiking tourists and bird watchers for income. The fact that Lüneburg chose already in 1939 to present itself to arriving travelers with an image of bygone times, showing it at the height of its economic power and prosperity as captured in 1654 by Merian, proves how much the city had already come to rely on its attraction for tourists in search of a nostalgic image of the past – and unlike most places, Lüneburg can and will cater to both urban and rural nostalgia.

Thus, railway station decoration could offer geographical orientation or tourist information via maps, or promote their own infrastructure to enhance a city's eligibility as economic location. It could advertise a city's self-perceived image as tourist location or proclaim its status within the political hierarchy of national metropolises. But most architectural decoration was not content with situating the station within its host city. Although stations were often referred to as "gateways to the city", rather more often they advertised themselves not as entrance portals but as exit gates, a point of departure towards the manifold destinations their company's network offered, both regionally and nationally, sometimes even internationally.

⁴³⁹ See Matthäus Merian and Martin Zeiller, *Topographia und Eigentliche Beschreibung Der Vornembsten Städte, Schlösser auch anderer Plätze und Örter in denen Hertzogthümer[n] Braunschweig und Lüneburg, und denen dazu gehörende[n] Grafschafften Herrschafften und Landen*, 1st edition, *Topographia Germaniae*, vol. 15 (Franckfurt am Mayn 1654/1658,), 15.

⁴⁴⁰ See Elmar Peter, *Lüneburg: Geschichte einer 1000jährigen Stadt. 956 - 1956* (Lüneburg: Museumsverein für das Fürstentum Lüneburg, 1999); Susanne Stäblein, *Die Lüneburger Saline und ihre Bedeutung für das mittelalterliche Lüneburg und den Ostseeraum* (s.l.: GRIN Verlag, 2009).

II Regional and National Networks

Besides situating the railway station within its host city, station embellishment very soon and very commonly alluded to the other destinations within the fast-growing network of cities connected by railway tracks. At its most simple this took the form of inscriptions (for instance carved into the rusticated corner stones of the gate houses at **London Euston Station (1848)** (figure 3-16), but usually they were represented by coats of arms: thus, the cities served by the railway line were visible at one glance, their symbols appearing next to each other on the façade or on the walls of the vestibule or waiting rooms. Coats of arms are of course very decorative. But although they originated in the need to easily identify the bearer who had painted it on his shield, the complex symbolism of heraldry is lost to most modern users. While states, regions, cities and even certain families still persevere in the old custom of bearing an escutcheon, their readability was never very widespread. Today, many passengers would probably not know the arms of their own city, even less those of a strange one, if it was not for an accompanying inscription. Equally cryptic, but even more elaborate, was the use of allegoric city personifications, so that their employ was usually restricted to the most important cities within the network.

II.1 From London Euston Station (1848) to Cincinnati Union Terminal (1931-33): City Crests, Maps, and Personifications

Already the impressive gate of the first plans for a **Gare du Nord in Paris (the not executed “Bourla project” of 1838)**, which was to serve as terminal for the line to Belgium, was to bear not only the arms of the city of Paris but also the names and crests of cities along the railway line. (Figure 1-1) Even the respective distance – in miles and kilometers – from the French capital were to be inscribed. Additionally, two allegoric bas-reliefs representing France and Belgium were to be installed to the sides of the archivolt.⁴⁴¹

In **London Euston Station (1848)** the corners of the Great Hall, right under the ceiling, were equipped with eight rectangular bas-reliefs (figure 3-17) showing personifications of London, Liverpool, Manchester (figure 3-18), Birmingham, Carlisle, Chester,

⁴⁴¹ See Bowie, "Les grandes gares parisiennes: historique", here: 99.

Lancaster and Northampton.⁴⁴² For easy identification, the figures not only held appropriate attributes, but were depicted before a background featuring a city landmark and were accompanied by further adjuncts: Thus, Manchester held a spindle to symbolize its textile industry, and was accompanied by Mercury and a putto with a weaver's shuttle. In the background, a modern factory rivaled the mediaeval cathedral for importance. The reliefs complemented the central sculpture group of Britannia, Mercury and a lion that crowned the door to the conference room (figure 1-2), thus placing them in a context of national trade and economy.

While these last examples no longer exist, many examples of space-related decor have survived in Europe – elsewhere, for instance in the “New World” of the United States, city crests –unlike state flags - were never widely established.⁴⁴³ But in Europe, most urban centers had acquired civic heraldry early on with their city rights, for example in France.

II.1.1 Gare de l'Est (1847-52): Two Waterways Connected by Railway

From the **Gare de l'Est (1847-52)**, the Paris terminal of the Compagnie des Chemins de Fer de l'Est, the metropolis is connected via Strasburg with Luxemburg and Germany. The station is architecturally probably the most influential of all Parisian railway terminals. It was built as “Gare de Strasbourg”⁴⁴⁴ between 1847 and 1852 by the architect François Duquesney for the then Compagnie des Chemins de Fer de Strasbourg.⁴⁴⁵ (Figure 3-19) Duquesney completely enveloped the train shed with a two-story limestone structure punctuated by three-storied pavilions on all four corners. The main façade's ground level, facing Rue de Strasbourg, was structured over its entire width by a colonnaded arcade, which connected flush with the corner pavilions. The pendentives between the arches displayed comprehensively the coat-of-arms of cities served by the network. (Figure 3-20, 3-21)

Because the central building block is set back, the colonnades form an open but roofed vestibule for arriving and departing passengers. Behind that, the central façade consists

⁴⁴² See Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, 167. Wood engravings of the bas-reliefs representing Manchester, London, and Liverpool, as well as a view of the Great Hall and a detail of the Britannia group were published in the Illustrated London News, see N. N., "New Station of the London and North-Western Railway, Euston Square".

⁴⁴³ US-American cities do use “seals”, but those differ both in origin and in function.

⁴⁴⁴ See Ferrarini, *Railway stations*, 17.

⁴⁴⁵ The company only changed their name in 1854, with the acquisition of the Mulhouse line. See Lartilleux, *Géographie des Chemins de fer français*, 114; Ferrarini, *Railway stations*, 17–18.

of a fronton broken up by a large semicircular thermal window, which cleverly hints at the train shed's massive vault and at the same time its steel-and-glass functionality. It was mainly this well published and celebrated feature of the façade that soon served as a model for many subsequently built stations,⁴⁴⁶ such that a large thermal window would be included in designs even when no functional reason, such as the form of a train shed, prompted it. The nine central arches of the arcade are topped by a balustrade, in the middle of which a large clock was adorned with two half-reclining figures by Philippe Joseph Henri Lemaire (1798-1888). (Figure 3-22)

To the left, a semi-nude woman with a swan rests her foot on an amphora. She gazes at the nude bearded man at the right and touches his shoulder in a shy gesture of modest intimacy. Both are holding a rudder, thus making it clear that they are meant to be river deities. These two are usually identified as the river Seine, which runs through Paris, and Strasburg's river Rhine, showing quite literally that the old waterways are peacefully connected by the new railway that bridges the gap between their beds.

Behind them, on the summit of the fronton, the statue of an imperiously seated woman holds a key in her right and a staff in her left. (Figure 3-23) Once again following the established iconography of the Athena-type, she is crowned and in armour and is identified by the inscription to her feet as "Strasbourg". The capital of Lorraine formed the small network's main destination and was at the time eponymous for the company.

The embellishment proudly announces the new infrastructure established by the Compagnie de l'Est: not only connects it the metropolis with the regional capital – and the towns along the line – but it also serves as a complement to the traditional route of transports, by linking the waterways of Seine and Rhine with the new railway line.

City crests are very frequently found in station embellishment, for instance at **Paris Gare d'Austerlitz (1870)** (figure 3-24), **Toulouse-Matabiau (1905)**⁴⁴⁷, or **Lyon-Brotteaux (1908)**.⁴⁴⁸ In the Netherlands, for instance, the entrance hall of **Amsterdam Centraal Station (1882)** was painted with the crests of Dutch cities⁴⁴⁹, much like other

⁴⁴⁶ See Ferrarini, *Railway stations*, 17.

⁴⁴⁷ See Grive, *Gares de France*, 112.

⁴⁴⁸ See Grive, *Gares de France*, 133.

⁴⁴⁹ See Oxenaar, *Centraal Station Amsterdam*, 77. There are also the crests of twelve national provinces on the lateral wings of the main façade. See Romers, *Spoorwegarchitectuur in Nederland 1841-1938*, 102–104.

Dutch cities such as **Den Haag**⁴⁵⁰ (1891), or **Haarlem**⁴⁵¹ (1905). Of course, the enumeration of urban destinations rarely aimed at encyclopedic completeness: Some railway companies were content to refer to the two or three most important destinations of the line, like in **London's Paddington Station (1854)**, which sported the combined city arms of London and Bristol, whence the Great Western Railway originated.⁴⁵² The chosen cities thus represented quite literally the beginning and the end of the line.

II.1.2 Anhalter Bahnhof (1880): Personifications of Places as Patrons

The Berlin **Anhalter Bahnhof (1880)** was celebrated as one of the most beautiful works of engineering of its time, and its demolition in the late 1950s in favor of a never-built city by-pass was highly controversial.⁴⁵³ Today, there is only the partial ruin of the portico left standing. (Figure 3-25) Its corners were originally emphasized by the chalkstone statues of “Berolina” and “Anhaltina”. (Figure 3-26) Both women were carved from white limestone, and measure 2, 50 meters in height. They were depicted seating regally, each holding a small shield with their city or region's crest on their knee (respectively the Berlin Bear and the crest of the duchy of Anhalt-Dessau). Although their form was rather conventional, the statues fulfilled an important role in the design of the façade, because they marked the basis of a triangle that was topped by the monumental clock in the centre of the façade (itself framed by allegories of Day and Night), thus guiding the onlookers gaze.⁴⁵⁴ At the same time, they were looking back over the city, quietly and detached on their thrones above the entrance way. The choice of “Anhaltina” as company for personified Berlin is at first surprising – one would have expected another city, the final destination of the line, rather than the unspecified general region. But, of course, “Berolina” and “Anhaltina” not only personify a city and

⁴⁵⁰ See Romers, *Spoorwegarchitectuur in Nederland 1841-1938*, 156–162.

⁴⁵¹ See Romers, *Spoorwegarchitectuur in Nederland 1841-1938*, 224–231.

⁴⁵² See Betjeman, *London's Historic Railway Stations*, 111.

⁴⁵³ A well researched and encompassing history of the station's construction history is the doctoral thesis of Helmut Maier, see Maier, *Berlin Anhalter Bahnhof*. Maier was the engineer responsible for repairs and measures of safeguard from 1986-1987. See Bezirksamt Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg von Berlin, "Portalruine Anhalter Bahnhof", Erkennen und Erhalten in Berlin, 3; available from http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/denkmal/denkmalpflege_vor_ort/de/erkennen_erhalten/oeffentlich/anhalter_bahnhof_portal.shtml; Internet, accessed January 31, 2012.

⁴⁵⁴ The figures were carved by Gustav Eberlein, although the original, quite different designs came from Otto Geyer. See Thomas Schubert, "Der Savonnières-Kalkstein am Beispiel der Figurenfragmente am Anhalter Bahnhof", in *Erhaltung seltener Denkmalgesteine: Beiträge des 2. Konservierungswissenschaftlichen Kolloquiums in Berlin - Brandenburg am 14. November 2008 in Potsdam*, ed. Bärbel Arnold, Arbeitshefte des Brandenburgischen Landesamtes für Denkmalpflege und Archäologischen Landesmuseums (Berlin: Lukas, 2008), 37; Maier, *Berlin Anhalter Bahnhof*, 216–217.

a region, but also the name of the railway company (Berlin-Anhaltische Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft). It rather seems as if they were fulfilling the double role of representing beginning and end of the line as well as acting rather unusually as the railway company's patron saints.

The central terminal of the Hanseatic City of **Bremen**, whose central station was inaugurated in **1890**, chose to situate itself within the triangle of Cologne, Hanover and Hamburg by placing their escutcheons together with its own on the main façade. (Figures 3-27, 3-28, 3-29, 3-30) By omitting Berlin, which is situated beyond Hanover, Bremen emphasized its position as traffic node in North-West-Germany. Bremen connected the industries of the Ruhr with the North-Sea ports, thus ostentatiously valuing the traditional trade links of the Hanseatic League over any political connections.

In **Tours (1898)**⁴⁵⁵, architect Victor Laloux named the connected destinations in bold capital letters on the façade of the building. (Figure 3-31) The four most important were singled out and represented by allegoric statues representing the cities of Limoges, Nantes, Bordeaux, and Toulouse⁴⁵⁶ and the theme continued inside the building: Here, sixteen picturesque landscapes were protected against the station's polluted air by the glaze of the tiles. Although these pictures were less concerned with the actual urban view of the destination cities than with the scenic charms of the surrounding landscapes, rather like posters advertising tourist package tours,⁴⁵⁷ they were nevertheless titled with the appropriate city names.⁴⁵⁸ Two years later, Laloux repeated the concept for the decoration of **Paris Gare d'Orsay (1900)**, where again inscriptions of the network's cities were carved into the façade, again with personifications of the line's three most important destinations: Orléans, Bordeaux, and Nantes.⁴⁵⁹ (Figures 3-32, 3-33, 3-34)

Marius Toudoire, architect of the **Paris Gare de Lyon (1902)** similarly had the network's city crests attached to the façade, while at the same time highlighting Paris

⁴⁵⁵ See Grive, *Gares de France*, 118.

⁴⁵⁶ Limoges and Nantes were carved by Jean-Baptiste Hugues, Bordeaux and Toulouse by Jean-Antoine Injalbert. See Elisabeth Walter, "Le Décor", 36. It is known that Henri Varenne (see chapter 1) also worked at the Gare de Tours. See N. N., "Varenne, Henri", 34 (1940).

⁴⁵⁷ See also chapter 4.

⁴⁵⁸ See Elisabeth Walter, "Le Décor", 36–37.

⁴⁵⁹ See Grive, *Gares de France*, 59. Bowie names Toulouse instead of Bordeaux, possibly because both names appear just under the statue. See Bowie, "Les grandes gares parisiennes: historique", 190. On the other hand, none of the other inscriptions conforms to the identification of the figures above.

and Marseilles in the form of regally seated female personifications. (Figures 3-35, 3-36)

Sometimes, the enumeration of the network's nodal points was simplified by representing the crests of provinces rather than cities, such as in **Hanover (1872)**, **Amsterdam Centraal (1882)**, **Frankfurt/Main (1888)**, **s'Hertogenbosch (1893)**, **Zandvoort (1908)**, or **Maastricht (1913)**, and sometimes the extent of the connections was represented in a more graphic style, like in London's **Victoria Station (1860/1924)**, where a simplified map painted on white tiles also conveniently highlighted such sights as racecourses, golf links or motor halts. (Figure 3-37) A mosaic in **Dinan (1931)**, complemented by a similar mosaic map of the city, shows the region's main cities, streets, and flowing waters, as well as indicating its main industries by including a cow and a horse.⁴⁶⁰ (Figure 3-38)

II.1.3 Milan Stazione Centrale (1913-31): Tourist Maps and Politicized Cityscapes

Milan's Stazione Centrale (1931) offers six rather coarse, reduced maps of cities of special tourist interest to the gaze of passengers in the waiting room: Assisi, Padua, Pisa, Naples, Bologna and Trieste. (Figures 3-39, 3-40) The stylized maps are created in a technique typical of Italy's artistic heritage: called "pietra dura", it consists of incrustations using stones of different colors, cut out and placed together similar to wooden intarsia in furniture. Like in the maps of Milan, landmarks are included: they are shown in a three-dimensional, frontal view, rather than a simple silhouette, in the two-dimensional map.

Additionally, and analogous to the already described *vedute* of Milan, there are three cityscapes painted on tiles above the three central doors leading from the platforms to the vestibule housing the ticket counters, framing the inscription "bigletteria" (ticket stalls). Their identification as Turin (left), Rome (center), and Florence (right) is supported by the big mosaics of coat-of-arms adorning the floor before each of the doors.

Turin is viewed from the hills beyond the River Po in the East of the city. (Figure 3-41) The distinctive tower of Mole Antonelliana dominates the center of the picture. The high-rise building was conceived in 1863 as a synagogue worthy of the new nation's capital, but soon costs exploded, and in 1876 the Jewish community withdrew from the

⁴⁶⁰ See Grive, *Gares de France*, 79.

project. Yet, it was finished by the city, becoming the world's tallest building constructed solely in brick. From 1908 till 1938, it housed the Museum of the Risorgimento, commemorating the process of Italian unification in the nineteenth century.⁴⁶¹

In front of Mole Antonelliana stretches piazza Vittorio Veneto, with 360 x 111 meters one of the largest city squares in Europe. Its construction had become possible after the razing of the city walls under Napoleon, and was finished in 1825.⁴⁶² It leads directly to a bridge crossing the River Po and connecting the city with Borgo Po across the river. The 150 meter long stone bridge was built under Napoleon and finished 1813, but it was named after Vittorio Emanuele I, Duke of Savoy and from 1802 to 1821 King of Sardinia, who had returned to Turin in 1814, after the French defeat. The bridge leads right up to the neo-classicist church Gran Madre di Dio (shown to the right) which takes up elements of the Pantheon church in Rome. The church was constructed by architect Ferdinando Bonsignore from 1818 till 1831, and dedicated to the return of the Savoy King.

To the left, the statue of a winged Nike bearing a flaming torch high above her head is easily recognizable as the Faro della Vittoria, the Victory Lighthouse, which was sculpted by Edoardo Rubino and placed 1927 on the top of Maddalena Hill in the Parco della Rimembranza (Remembrance Park for World War I).⁴⁶³ (Figure 3-42) Just visible under its wing is the octagonal dome of the church and convent Monte dei Capuccini. The view of Turin thus focuses on the era of the Savoy kings who played a leading role during the Risorgimento and were to become the first kings of a unified Italy, making Turin the first pan-Italian capital (1861-1865). At the same time, national pride on Italy's new found military prowess is displayed by highlighting a War Memorial commemorating Italy's victorious position during World War I.

⁴⁶¹ See Gianfranco Gritella, *La Mole Antonelliana: Storia di un edificio simbolo dal progetto al restauro* (Milan: UTET, 1999).

⁴⁶² For information on the Napoleonic features of Turin's urban design see Cornelia Jöchner, "Bewegung schafft Raum: Die Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, Turin", in *Möglichkeitsräume: Zur Performativität von sensorischer Wahrnehmung*, ed. Christina Lechtermann, Kirsten Wagner, and Horst Wenzel, *Allgemeine Literaturwissenschaft - Wuppertaler Schriften* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2007)

⁴⁶³ See Marco Ausenda, *Piemonte, Valle d'Aosta: Torino, Alpi, Monferrato, Verbano, Langhe, Ossola*, *Guide d'Italia* (Milan: Touring Club Italiano, 1996), 67.

The cityscape of Florence reproduces the most famous view of the historic city center, as seen from Piazzale Michelangelo, a terrace on the left bank of the river Arno.⁴⁶⁴ (Figure 3-43) It was designed in 1869 by Giuseppe Poggi during the urban renewal called “risanamento”, when Florence was for a short time capital of the Italian Kingdom, taking over from Turin (1865-1871).⁴⁶⁵ Bronze copies of Michelangelo’s most famous sculptures were erected on the spot; the famous “David” dominates all of the picture’s left side. Across the river, the view centers on Brunelleschi’s famous dome for Florence’s cathedral Santa Maria del Fiore, but shows also to the left the tower of Palazzo Vecchio, and to the right the basilica of Santa Croce. This last is sometimes nicknamed the “Florentine Pantheon” or “Florentine Hall of Fame”, because it houses the graves and cenotaphs of some of the city’s most famous artists (Michelangelo, Ghiberti), poets (Dante), musicians (Rossini), and politicians (Machiavelli).⁴⁶⁶ The vista thus combines the rich artistic heritage of Florence with its short-lived political importance as second capital of the unified Italian kingdom.

In the middle, Rome is viewed from a position atop the national monument for Vittorio Emanuele II looking northwards. (Figure 3-44) The monument houses both the “Altare della Patria” (altar of the fatherland) and the Museum of the Risorgimento.⁴⁶⁷ It was designed in 1885 to honor the first king of unified Italy. Construction, however, took some time; the monument was inaugurated in 1911 and only completed in 1935. To the left, we see the equestrian statue of Vittorio Emanuele II – under the horse’s head, the domes of St. Peter and Il Gesù are visible, as well as the monastery San Marco. Adjacent to the flag pole with the streaming national flag, the loggia of church San Marco is in plain view next to the raised corner tower of Palazzo Venezia. The Renaissance building served in fascist – contemporary – times as Mussolini’s seat of government.⁴⁶⁸

The two baroque domes in the foreground are the twin churches of Santa Maria di Loreto and Santissimo Nome di Maria, and behind them in piazza Venezia, the Trajan’s Column can be identified as well as the semicircular shape of the antique Trajan’s

⁴⁶⁴ See Klaus Zimmermanns, *Florenz: Kirchen, Paläste und Museen in der Stadt der Medici*, 4th edition, Kunst Reiseführer (Ostfildern: Dumont, 2007), 255.

⁴⁶⁵ See Zimmermanns, *Florenz*, 30, 37.

⁴⁶⁶ See Zimmermanns, *Florenz*, 236.

⁴⁶⁷ See Heinz-Joachim Fischer, *Rom: Zweieinhalb Jahrtausende Geschichte, Kunst und Kultur der Ewigen Stadt*, 6th edition, Kunst-Reiseführer (Ostfildern: Dumont, 2011), 164.

⁴⁶⁸ See Fischer, *Rom*, 163.

Forum. It is just possible to discern – adjacent to the mediaeval looking tower behind it – the Quirinal Palace, serving as residence to the King. The view is slightly distorted in the manner of nineteenth century panorama paintings: the point of view shifts with the position of the surmised viewer, yet, the depiction is – like the other cityscapes – rather accurate.

All in all, the view of Rome is just as politicized as the views of the former capitals Turin and Florence. For each city, the role it played during the Risorgimento is highlighted by the choice of viewpoint and depicted buildings. The focus on Rome's antique Imperial heritage – additionally underlined by the inclusion the inscription "S.P.Q.R." and of two copies of the Roman She-Wolf in the wall next to the painting (figure 3-45) – is consistent with Mussolini's efforts to resuscitate the importance of the Roman Empire.⁴⁶⁹ Accordingly, the mosaic on the floor does not show the crest of the city of Rome, but rather the royal colors of the Savoy kings: their white cross on red ground served between 1870 and 1946 as national coat of arms. (Figure 3-46) Together with the royal motto (although the actual meaning of the acronym "F.E.R.T" remains disputed), they underline once more the political role of the city over its metropolitan importance.

II.1.4 Gare de l'Est (1924-1931): A Station Extension as War Memorial

The original Gare de l'Est, in 1852 quite modestly equipped with only two tracks, very quickly became insufficient. In 1855, in order to accommodate the passengers of the newly acquired Mulhouse line, the company decided to build a completely separate terminus adjacent to the existing structure. Further enlargements in 1877 and 1889 brought the number of tracks first to eight, then to fourteen, only four of which found room in the train shed. For the world exhibition of 1900, the train shed was finally completely abandoned and transformed into a passenger concourse. The former arrivals building was demolished to make room for now sixteen tracks, all of which for the first time served both arriving and departing trains. They could be reached from a head platform running like a comb perpendicular and between them.⁴⁷⁰ The station, which had served 530 000 passengers in 1850, could thus handle 8 million passengers in 1901.

⁴⁶⁹ See Fischer, *Rom*, 163. For more on national imagery in stations see chapter 5.

⁴⁷⁰ See Lartilleux, *Géographie des Chemins de fer français*, 121–122; Ferrarini, *Railway stations*, 18–20.

Yet, connection to the underground metro lines increased passenger numbers even more: 12 millions in 1911.

Plans for the station's further extension to 24 tracks were developed and approved in 1912, but the outbreak of World War I delayed their implementation until after the war, and until the necessary reconstruction of the worst war damages were finished. In 1921, the passenger traffic had more than doubled (to 17 million) since the last enlargement, and definite plans to deal with this situation were put forward in 1924. Because the station was wedged in by streets on three sides, large parts of existing urban structures had to be demolished and relocated elsewhere. Also, fundamental changes in station layout had to be undertaken, in order to make room for new tracks. Additional space was gained in 1927 by re-routing the Rue Faubourg Saint-Martin, which runs on the east side of the station premises: it was pushed 65 meter further to the east, there running over a length of 500 meters parallel to the tracks.⁴⁷¹

The new passenger terminal was to preserve as far as possible the famous design by Duquesney. Construction began in 1927 and was finished by the end of 1931.⁴⁷² The old structure's wings and annexes, and most of the other facilities were demolished, and in the resulting space to the east, side Rue Faubourg Saint-Martin, was erected a copy, almost a mirror-image of Duquesney's original station. (Figure 3-47) Both structures were connected by a slightly recessed building. The ground floor arcade ran the whole length of the new 180 m long façade, visually binding old and new building together. Because of the limited space it had been decided to arrange arrival and departure areas on different floor levels, thus gaining the whole 180 m of the new station building's width for each of the services, which even surpassed the original target of 120 m for departures and 150 m for arrivals. The old building was to handle national and intercity trains, while the new building served the suburban traffic. All departures were handled on ground floor level and all arrivals were directed to a new subterranean level with a direct connection to the Métro underground system.⁴⁷³ This solution doubled the

⁴⁷¹ See M. Bouche-Leclercq, "Transformations et Agrandissement de la Gare de l'Est à Paris", *Revue générale des chemins de fer*, no. Janvier (1931), 34–35. Head architect was since 1924 a certain Bernault, who relied heavily on the work of his predecessor, the engineer Albert Descubes, who had been in charge since 1895. See Patrick Cognasson, *Gare de l'Est: Porte ouverte sur l'Europe* (Paris: Vie du rail & des transports, 1994), 96–107. Ferrarini names Bertaud as architect. See Ferrarini, *Railway stations*, 17.

⁴⁷² See Ferrarini, *Railway stations*, 20.

⁴⁷³ See M. Bouche-Leclercq, "Transformations et Agrandissement de la Gare de l'Est à Paris", 35–36.

station's capacity, bringing the number of platforms up to 30.⁴⁷⁴ The Gare de l'Est was now the biggest and most modern of the Parisian railway stations.⁴⁷⁵

The symmetrical copy of the façade demanded an equally symmetrical sculptural embellishment. Accordingly, the fronton was crowned with the personification of a city – Verdun – and the two river deities reclining around the new clock atop the balustrade embodied the rivers Marne and Meuse. The sculptor Henri Varenne, who had already worked at the station décor in Tours and Limoges, had created the two nude figures.⁴⁷⁶ Their status as river goddesses was denoted by the amphora lying between them, and a clear inscription identified them as “LA MEUSE” (left) and “LA MARNE” (right). (Figure 3-48, 3-49)

Half reclining, they are turned towards each other, although Meuse seems to be slightly taken aback by the hand that Marne lays chummily on her shoulder. Their hairstyles and the soft treatment of their girlish curves are less academic than that of their older counterparts, and betray their later origin.

The seated city allegory on the peak of the fronton wears a thin, dress-like garment, which seems to be a mixture of antique drapery (over her knees), and French infantry uniform: the typical heavy coat with the large, soft collar of the “horizon blue” uniform is draped around her shoulders,⁴⁷⁷ and her head is crowned with the characteristic “M15 Adrian” steel helmet which was introduced in 1915.⁴⁷⁸ Severely gazing down, she holds a large, bi-handed sword with her right hand and a shield propped up to her other side with her left. Both the city crest on the shield and the inscription to her feet identify the figure as “VERDUN”. The statue's attire leaves no doubt that, unlike Strasburg, the city of Verdun was not chosen for its importance as a railway station, but because of the extraordinary and important role Verdun played in the public perception of World War I.

⁴⁷⁴ See Lartilleux, *Géographie des Chemins de fer français*, 122; Ferrarini, *Railway stations*, 20.

⁴⁷⁵ See Lartilleux, *Géographie des Chemins de fer français*, 121.

⁴⁷⁶ See Cognasson, *Gare de l'Est*, 102–103.

⁴⁷⁷ See Laurent Mirouze and Stéphane Dekerle, *Die französische Armee im Ersten Weltkrieg - Uniformierung, Ausrüstung, Bewaffnung* (Wien: Verlag Militaria, 2007), 44–56.

⁴⁷⁸ See Mirouze and Dekerle, *Die französische Armee im Ersten Weltkrieg - Uniformierung, Ausrüstung, Bewaffnung*, 424–428.

The “Battle of Verdun” lasted 300 days, from February 21 until December 18, 1916.⁴⁷⁹ The German general Erich von Falkenhayn targeted the stronghold because of the strong symbolic position it held in Franco-German relations: Already in 843, the Treaty of Verdun had divided the empire of Charlemagne into three parts, thus marking the origin of both France and the Holy Roman Empire. In 1552, Moritz of Saxony conspired against Emperor Charles V. In the Treaty of Chambord, he sold Verdun (along with Cambrai, Metz, and Toul) to the French king Henry II., starting a three year long war (which the Charles V. lost – Verdun remained French). In 1792, the new French republican army fought the first battle of the French Revolution at Verdun – and lost against an alliance of Prussian, Austrian and Hessian troops. Most importantly, and most recently,

“the ring of citadels around Verdun, consisting of ca 40 big forts, was the expression of a French trauma (the defeat of 1870/71 with the loss of Alsace-Lorraine) and of a deep fear: the fear of a German return. [The French] would do anything to stop the Germans here.”⁴⁸⁰

Because of the enormous casualties on both sides – about “750 000 soldiers were wounded, maimed, or dead”⁴⁸¹ – the “bloodmill of Verdun”⁴⁸² became a byword for the cruelties of the modern, industrialized trench warfare. Especially on the French side, Verdun was mythicized already during the war and became a symbol for the French army’s resilience.⁴⁸³ The identification with Verdun was all the stronger, because the French command rotated their troops regularly, not leaving them for more than two

⁴⁷⁹ The literature on World War I is extensive, and in recent years, the nearing centenary of the war has led to a new output of research. My resources include Hirschfeld, Gerhard, Gerd Krumeich, Irina Renz, and Markus Pöhlmann, eds., *Enzyklopädie Erster Weltkrieg* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004); Michael Salewski, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 2nd revised edition (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004); Werner Biermann, “Albtraum Verdun”, in *Der Erste Weltkrieg: Das Buch zur ARD-Fernsehserie* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2004); David Stevenson, *Der Erste Weltkrieg: 1914 - 1918* (Düsseldorf: Artemis & Winkler, 2006).

⁴⁸⁰ Biermann, “Albtraum Verdun”, 137. My translation. See also Salewski, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 191; Stevenson, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 201. For the situation of Alsace-Lorraine after the Franco-Prussian war see chapter 5.

⁴⁸¹ Biermann, “Albtraum Verdun”, 163. My translation.

⁴⁸² Salewski, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 191; Biermann, “Albtraum Verdun”, 143.

⁴⁸³ See Gerd Krumeich, “Verdun”, in *Enzyklopädie Erster Weltkrieg*, ed. Gerhard Hirschfeld, Gerd Krumeich, Irina Renz, and Markus Pöhlmann (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004), 944; Salewski, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 190–191.

weeks on the front line. Thus, seventy of the ninety-six French divisions on the west-front – four out of five soldiers – came to be veterans of Verdun.⁴⁸⁴

The long resistance was made possible through the endless flow of fresh supply. Yet, the railway played maybe a less direct role in the supply routes than the Gare de l'Est statues might suggest. The subsidiary railway route serving Verdun branched off from the trunk line Paris-Nancy-Strasbourg at Lerouville,⁴⁸⁵ but the ongoing hostile action had effectively cut off the line. Instead, supply trains from Paris stopped at Bar-le-Duc, two halts further on the trunk line, and used the only open road for the remaining 75 km/40 miles of the way. Each week, day and night in an uninterrupted flow, 3400 trucks brought 90 000 soldiers and 50 000 tons of material to the front, soon gaining the street the nickname “voie sacrée” – holy street.⁴⁸⁶ (Figure 3-50) In the first three weeks alone, the French sent 832 trains to reinforce Verdun.⁴⁸⁷

From Gare de l'Est, the metropolis was connected with the battle-fields between the Marne and the Meuse. From there, the French battalions embarked for the front, and its platforms received the thousands of wounded soldiers returning from the trenches. It is not surprising that the station in public memory became firmly connected with the horrors of the war. By including the representations of Verdun, Meuse and Marne in the embellishment of the station's extension, the terminal as a whole was re-dedicated into powerful war memorial.

II.1.5 Cincinnati Union Terminal (1931-33): Two Hemispheres and Four Time-Zones

In **Cincinnati Union Terminal (1933)** the decorating artist Winold Reiss was not content to be limited to a single railway network. The back wall of the concourse serving as waiting room was completely covered with a large map of the North American continent. The states are outlined in mosaic and colored in different shades of ochre concrete. (Figure 3-51) Neighboring countries were held in green, while lakes and the oceans were represented in blue. The state capitals were spelled out and marked in red stones, and at the top, four clocks showed the time in the nation's different time

⁴⁸⁴ See Stevenson, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 203. See also Salewski, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 201; Krumeich, "Verdun", 944.

⁴⁸⁵ See Lartilleux, *Géographie des Chemins de fer français*, 129; 135.

⁴⁸⁶ See Krumeich, "Verdun", 943–944; Salewski, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 191–193; Biermann, "Albtraum Verdun", 143–144.

⁴⁸⁷ See Stevenson, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 224.

zones. Smaller circles to the sides showed the hemispheres with the American continents to the left and Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia – all without internal borders – to the right.

The sight is impressive, and yet Reiss kept it simple, relying on the information given by color distribution and adding no details besides the obvious state borders. The map offers no direct information for travelers – it lists neither distances nor connections, and marks neither railway lines, nor streets, nor ports, nor airports. Yet, it quite literally puts Cincinnati on the map, and its placement, highly visible in a waiting area, may have suggested to many passengers that the world, indeed, is large, and that every journey has to begin somewhere.

Depictions of destinations form a common theme in station embellishment. Sometimes they take the shape of city allegories, sometimes, less elaborate, they are represented by inscriptions or city crests. Yet, maps seem to be a more intuitive, wide-spread code, and certainly easier to grasp for the modern passenger, than the buried and obscured mysteries of heraldry. Even more immediate in their appeal, and thus closer to the practice of posters and other forms of advertisement, is the use of landscapes or cityscapes to give the travel-hungry spectators a taste for what they might expect at their potential destinations. A very interesting example can be found in Gare de Lyon, Paris, which shall be examined in great detail.

II.2 Paris Gare de Lyon (1900-1981): A Century of Changes in Marketing Urban Tourism in the P. L. M.'s Network

Within Paris Gare de Lyon, an almost 100 m long panorama shows twenty destinations along the southbound line of the Compagnie P. L. M., starting from Paris. The literature about this mural is scarce; researchers on the stations pictorial embellishment have usually limited themselves to the aesthetically more pleasing paintings in the stations famous restaurant “Le Train bleu”.⁴⁸⁸ Yet, both Karen Bowie and Romuald Chaussivert have treated the mural, at least marginally, in the context of their architectural-historical

⁴⁸⁸ See Elisabeth Walter, "Le Décor"; Pauline Prevost-Marcilhacy, "Le décor du Buffet de la Gare de Lyon", in *Les grandes gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle*, ed. Karen Bowie (Paris: 1987) and chapter 4 of this dissertation.

theses.⁴⁸⁹ Unfortunately, there remain no documents about the commission of the mural, so that the artists remain unidentified.⁴⁹⁰

While these are without doubt of a much higher artistic value, the panorama offers interesting insights concerning the relationship between metropolis and provincial city, cityscapes and landscapes, and the panoramic perception induced by the railway. Due to the long-lasting genesis of the mural, the first parts of which were painted around 1900, extended in the 1920s or 1930s, and only finished in 1981, it is also enlightening the evolution of urban tourism or rather society's changing attitude towards it.

The Northern wing of the Gare de Lyon in Paris forms the station's departure building: here, the ticket stalls are located in a long row along the wall. Above these ticket stalls, structured by 21 metal girders, a mural shows 20 cities, all of them neatly labeled with a little cartouche and following the old "ligne impérial", the route to the South which gave the Compagnie Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée its name. (Figures 3-52, 3-53, 3-54, 3-55, 3-56, 3-57) The mural is often referred to as a fresco, the term being used in French synonymously for any large wall painting, although technically it is a marouflage: the paint is not applied directly to the wet plaster, but to a canvas that had been glued to the wall, a technique which is much easier to handle.⁴⁹¹

In reading order from left to right we see Paris, Fontainebleau, Auxerre, Vézelay, Semur (-en-Auxois), Dijon, Beaune, Autun, Tournus, Cluny, Paray-le-Monial, Lyon, Avignon, Nîmes, Montpellier, Marseille, Toulon, Nice, Monte-Carlo, and Menton. Each city is assigned a panel of 3 x 5 meters, the space between two girders, although in more than half of them, from Paris to Paray-le-Monial, the identifiable city landmark is excentralized and placed right below one of the steel beams. Thus, the cartouche identifying the city is placed to the left of it, above the interjacent landscape. These mostly rural landscapes are cultivated, giving testimony to man's presence. After Lyon, they give way to a more urban setting, depicting instead the red-tiled roofs and light-colored masonry of modern cities.

⁴⁸⁹ See Bowie, "'L'eclectisme pittoresque" et l'architecture des gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle"; Romuald Chaussivert, "Radioscopie d'un monument élevé à la gloire de la "Revolution ferroviaire": la gare de Paris-Lyon", (Dissertation, Université A. et L. Lumière Lyon 2, 1998-99).

⁴⁹⁰ See Bowie, "'L'eclectisme pittoresque" et l'architecture des gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle", 155; Chaussivert, "Radioscopie d'un monument élevé à la gloire de la "Revolution ferroviaire": la gare de Paris-Lyon", 98–99.

⁴⁹¹ See Chaussivert, "Radioscopie d'un monument élevé à la gloire de la "Revolution ferroviaire": la gare de Paris-Lyon", 99–100.

Landscapes and cityscapes are seamlessly linking the different cities together to suggest a panoramic view. But the impression of a sunny, green countryside, spotted evenly with little towns marked by impressive churches is deceptive; for it goes without saying that the serial composition of the wall painting does not refer to any real distances or topographic coordinates. The differences and discrepancies in the composition are easily explained by the mural's serial genesis. There is but very little information about the artist or artists of its early parts, certainly no documents or other written sources. All we seem to know is that two of the fresco's panels, occupying about a third of the wall's length, date from the construction period of Gare de Lyon II (opened to the public in 1900), while others originate from the years 1920-1930.⁴⁹² The remaining eleven pictures, going north from Paray-le-Monial, are even more recent: The atelier Genovesio-Lemercier, originally only hired to clean and restore the wall painting, offered subsequently to expand the panorama all the way to the southern wall, and include destinations up to Paris. In 1979, the SNFC's department of architecture and the Paris office of monument preservation agreed on the proposed sketches, and by March 1981 the extension was finished.⁴⁹³

II.2.1 1900 – The Mediterranean Destinations: Urban Tourism in the 19th century

In taking a closer look at the mural we will therefore reverse the usual reading order and follow its course from the right to the left, the order of its origin. If the source mentioned above is correct, two of the panels were executed around 1900, at the same time as the embellishment of Gare de Lyon's famous buffet. Two panels, measuring about 10 meters in length, with two cities, Menton and Monte-Carlo, would not, however, constitute a third of the wall, which is about 100 m long – but six cities would. Incidentally, the six cityscapes furthestmost to the right (from Montpellier to Menton) all feature regional capitals along the Mediterranean Sea. What is more, in reading order from the left to the right they follow the traveler's route eastward along the coast. Since three of them respectively form a coherent composition it can be assumed that the above mentioned two panels consisted of three cities each, so that the oldest part of the mural

⁴⁹² See Bowie, "'L'eclectisme pittoresque" et l'architecture des gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle", 155. Bowie's source is a SNCF architect.

⁴⁹³ See Chaussivert, "Radioscopie d'un monument élevé à la gloire de la "Revolution ferroviaire": la gare de Paris-Lyon", 100–01.

stands for the final –Mediterranean – destinations of the Route Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée.

Montpellier, Marseille, Toulon

The first of these, Montpellier, is actually not situated directly on the coast but about 10 km inland. (Figure 3-56) Its depiction on the mural is dominated entirely by the Saint-Clément Aqueduct, named after a spring 14 km away whence it draws its water. The Aqueduct, finished in 1768, takes its way from the left middle ground to the right foreground of the panel where it ends in an open cistern basin. This basin is adorned with the Pavillon de Peyrou, whose architectural importance is highlighted through its position below the steel beam marking the panel. The pavilion, which is often confused with a triumphal arch due to its Corinthian columns and four arched openings, can be reached via an enormous stair dominating the foreground of the cityscape. It seems to be a popular spot for Montpellier's citizens, many of whom are depicted taking a stroll there. It is important to notice that the staircase borders exactly within the panel marked by the steel girder of the roof construction in the left foreground. This corroborates the theory that the mural originally started with the view of Montpellier.

Below the Montpellier basin, the view opens on the right towards the rooftops of Marseille, and its famous port. Despite its central position, France's oldest harbor, having been founded by Greek settlers around 600 B. C., is pushed to the background and seems marginalized, while the dominating space under the girder to the right is occupied by Marseille's neo-Byzantine cathedral Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde. It is easily recognizable by its 90 m high bell tower which was crowned in 1870 with an immense gilded statue of St. Mary and Child.

The cathedral's hill drops steeply towards the next panel offering a view of Toulon. Here, rather than highlighting a specific architectural monument, the harbor is taking a lot of the panel's space. There are an unusual number of steamboats and ships in the sea, stressing Toulon's importance as a military port, a position it had since it was founded by the Romans. Under the girder limiting the space for this panel some scrubby plants, stretching from the foreground to the horizon, serve to cover the border between Toulon and Nice.

Thus, the first trio of cities is spread out equally on the wall panels between four steel beams. The outer girders serve as a kind of frame and dictate a rhythm to the mural: cityscape – girder/architectural landmark – cityscape – girder/architectural landmark – cityscape. Although the two highlighted buildings take a central position within the mural's composition, the main part of the panels is occupied by an actual view of the cities, including their dense urban architecture. They are also depicting some of the population – especially in the Montpellier part, where it is nevertheless limited to a rather upper-class audience of ladies and gentlemen promenading in their best dress.

Nice, Monte Carlo, Menton

The panel depicting Nice is framed to the left by the aforementioned scrubs in the foreground and a strip of blue sea with a pier and the Promenade des Anglais stretching into the background. (Figure 3-57) To the right, some palm trees echo the plants, equally marking and covering up the border to the following view of Monte-Carlo. The centre focuses on the red roofs and narrow streets of Nice which stretch out far into the background along the waterfront. The architectural highlight below the steel beam, however, belongs already to Monte-Carlo.

The palm trees serving as a repoussoir obscure the onlookers' point of view at the same time as they guide their gaze towards Charles Garnier's famous Casino building (finished 1878) which dominates the panel's left side. In front of it, well dressed people of both sexes take a stroll on the wide promenade overlooking the little bay. The city is spread out along a bay, a tongue of land spreading in the middle ground from the left into the center, cityscape thus balancing the view of the turquoise sea washing against its shore.

The sea stretches to the right into the next panel, where Menton is overlooked from a wide balcony whose potted plants and balustrade form the painting's foreground. To the right, a broad esplanade and a pier mark the bay and form the border between sea and city, with its picturesque red-tiled houses, white-washed facades and the characteristic spire of St. Michel basilica. Again, it is the urbanized coastline which frames the sea on two sides: to the right, where the end of the wall is marked by the last girder, and in the foreground by means of the balcony.

The rhythm of the second trio of cities is cityscape – girder/architectural landmark – city and seascape – girder/sea – seascape – cityscape. So the juxtaposed landmarks are in this case twofold, the grand architecture of Garnier’s Casino complementing the natural beauty of the Mediterranean Sea.

That these six paintings form the oldest part of the mural follows not only out of their composition or out of the way they responds spatially to the architecture but also out of their coherent theme. This is also confirmed by two further paintings, also dating from the stations re-opening in 1900, on the wall of the lateral wing to the right, above the doorway leading to the baggage lockers. (Figure 3-58, 3-59) Here, Jean-Baptiste Olive, the artist who had already painted the port of Marseille and the view of Saint-Honorat for the Buffet,⁴⁹⁴ continues the theme with two views of Vintimille and of Venice.

Vintimille is the Italian border station, the first stop after Menton on Italian ground, and the final destination of the P. L. M.’s “Imperial Line”. Venice, of course, was the most attractive destination on the Italian Adriatic, thus underlining the P.L.M.’s international ambitions.

All six cityscapes focus on the material presence of the built environment with the onlooker standing either within the city or looking down on the city, so that the little cartouche labeling them is placed correctly above each of these. Also, even though the landmarks are placed below the girder, i.e. on the edge of the actual panel, within the threefold composition they form two focal points like the two centers of an ellipse.

However, the panorama of the six Mediterranean cities is not following the actual geography, but shows the spectator the destinations on the Mediterranean coast in the sequence they can be reached by the trains of the Compagnie Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée. It also balances the man-made, architectural sights of fashionable urbanized areas and the blessings that nature bestowed on them.

Thus the mural promotes the two main assets that the French Riviera had to offer. The region had been opened up for tourism only recently, when the railway had overcome the bad road conditions and made the coastal towns easily accessible for visitors. Most of these were English, and almost all of them belonged to the upper classes: Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales, but also Tsar Alexander II or King Leopold of

⁴⁹⁴ See chapter 4.

Belgium, are amongst the most illustrious guests, English, German and Russian nobility was to follow. Since 1883 some of the most famous luxury trains of the Compagnie International Wagon-Lits (CIWL) served the Riviera directly from Calais, a few years later also from St. Petersburg. Until the First World War, it stayed very exclusive, a playground for the rich, combining all the modern luxury the urbanized European aristocracy demanded with a mild healthy climate and beautiful scenery.⁴⁹⁵ The mural displays this situation accurately by focusing on sumptuous examples of nineteenth century architecture like Marseille's cathedral or Monte-Carlo's casino on the one hand, and the blue sky and turquoise sea on the other. The people depicted are all characterized by their clothing as members of the upper classes. "Picturesque" native fishermen or cultural treasures of the past were not needed for this kind of exclusive urban tourism.

II.2.2 1920s-1930s – The First Extension: Lyon, Avignon, Nîmes Displaying their Longstanding Cultural Heritage

The first extension of the mural, depicting the cities Lyon, Avignon, and Nîmes, is said to be executed in the 1920s or 1930s. (Figure 3-55) At first sight, the artist seems to follow the same rules that apply for the first part, both pictorially by characterizing a city through an architectural landmark, and in the order of the sequence. On second view, however, there are some deviations. In this part of the panorama the rhythm is changed to a more monotonous regularity while at the same time including architectural landmarks that lie without the labeled cities.

The city of Lyon, in the very left panel, is again depicted at the same time from above and from within. The onlooker seems to stand on or hover above a hill scattered with villas and overgrown with trees. From there we enjoy the view over the city with its bridges crossing the river Rhône, which flows from the left foreground to the right and guides our eyes towards the basilica Notre-Dame de Forvière vis-à-vis, constructed between 1872 and 1884 by Pierre Bossan in the neo-Byzantine style. As the landmark of Lyon it is placed below the girder bordering on Avignon.

Avignon, while being in the centre of the panel, is pushed far into the background on the other side of the Rhône. It is characterized as much by the remnants of its famous

⁴⁹⁵ See Lynne Withey, *Grand tours and Cook's tours, A History of Leisure Travel, 1750 to 1915*, 1st edition (London: Aurum Press, 1998), 192–195.

bridge, Pont Saint-Bénézet and the still existent city wall as by the Palais des Papes and the cathedral Notre-Dame-des-Doms overshadowing a sea of red roofs. On its square bell tower we can even distinguish the gilded statue of the Virgin Mary, erected there in 1859, which protects the city with her outstretched arms. But the city seems to be strangely wedged in between Lyon's cathedral to the left and the massive form of Tarascon castle to the right. Tarascon, taking the position of architectural landmark in the middle-ground under the next girder, is actually located some 23 km away from Avignon. From there, the hill drops to give room for a view of the next city.

Nîmes, nicknamed "the French Rome", has a rich gallo-roman heritage, exemplified in the mural by the amphitheatre and the *Maison Carrée* (square house), a very well preserved Roman temple, both shown in the centre of the panel. The dominant place under the girder to the right is taken by the *Tour Magne* (great tower), a 36 m high octagonal structure of dry stone masonry, located just outside the city centre on the nearby Mont Cavalier. The Romans had extended the originally gallo-celtic building and integrated it into the new city walls. Today, of course, urban sprawl has integrated Mont Cavalier into the city proper. The tower is painted above the mural's original frame, the marks being still visible on the plaster. Also the colors bear evidence of the two stages. So shades the green on the tower's hill more into blue than the trees and scrubs on neighboring Montpellier.

The rhythm of the extension is denser as in the older part:– cityscape – architectural landmark/girder– cityscape – architectural landmark/girder – cityscape – architectural landmark/. In the original, two cityscapes could merge without being punctuated by an architectural sight. In the extension however, each city gets assigned a built landmark, and with the case of Avignon and Tarascon, for the first time, a labeled city is pushed to the periphery in order to include and even focus on a sight that lays some way outside of it. The chosen landmarks however mirror the variety and long tradition of the region's cultural heritage: Lyon features a recently built cathedral, Avignon sports the medieval castle of Tarascon, and Nîmes stresses its roman and even pre-roman heritage.

II.2.3 1979-1981 – The Second Extension: Paris, Fontainebleau, Auxerre, Vézelay, Semur(-en-Auxois), Dijon, Beaune, Autun, Tournus, Cluny, Paray-le-Monial as Urban Sights

The second extension, executed in 1981 by the atelier Genovesio-Lemercier, follows in style, iconography and composition a very different concept, so different, in fact, that it is quite surprising that it has not been commented on before. (Figures 3-52, 3-53, 3-54) As it is, Chaussivert maintains that the transition between the old and the new part was so minimal that it was hardly noticeable for the “neophytes that we all are.”⁴⁹⁶ Bowie, however, starts her description with the view of Lyon, totally ignoring the latest extension, finished only a few years previously. Even so, she gave the painting too cursory a glance to comment on more than its interesting continuation of the panoramic motif in the history of railway travel.⁴⁹⁷

The common disregard that the latest part of the mural suffers in particular is understandable, since it is quite disappointing from an aesthetic point of view: in fact, it is not a very good painting. Yet, even a bad painting may offer some interesting insights, so it deserves a closer look.

There is one major difference in the new part of the mural that springs immediately to the eye: Genovesio-Lemercier, in all but one case, depicts not a city focusing on a certain landmark, but an architectural monument only, devoid of its urban setting.⁴⁹⁸ Since no attempt is made to embed the landmark within a tangible urban structure, each city is thus reduced to a single sight, standing singularly detached from its environment. Additionally, Genovesio-Lemercier move the architectural highlights of the chosen cities in all cases to below the right side girder. This is a total misapprehension of the original threefold rhythm, which caused the urban sights of the old mural to be depicted out of center while still showing the actual city in the middle of the wall panel. Where in the old parts the picture centers showed a dense urbanity, the panels are now covered mostly by a naïve agricultural landscape, cultivated but not modern. The old-fashioned

⁴⁹⁶ Chaussivert, "Radioscopie d'un monument élevé à la gloire de la "Revolution ferroviaire": la gare de Paris-Lyon", 100, similar 103.

⁴⁹⁷ See Bowie, ""L'eclectisme pittoresque" et l'architecture des gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle", 156.

⁴⁹⁸ These are the monuments that stand for the cities: Paris (Panthéon, Eiffel Tower, Sacre Coeur, Notre-Dame cathedral); Fontainebleau (castle); Auxerre (St. Etienne cathedral); Vézelay (St. Madeleine cathedral); Semur (city walls and donjon); Dijon (St. Bénigne), Beaune (Hospices de Beaune), Autun (St. Lazare cathedral, Porte d'Arroux); Tournus (St. Philibert abbey); Cluny (Cluny abbey); Paray-le-Monial (Romanesque church Sacre-Coeur).

horse-drawn hay wagon in Tournus is probably supposed to aim at certain timelessness, but actually tells us more about a modern city person's rural nostalgia.

II.2.4 Landscape and City View, Metropolis and Countryside

It is odd how the actual topic of the panel, as announced by the little cartouche bearing the city name, is marginalized and pushed to the side, especially without being replaced by something worth looking at. At any rate, the depicted landscapes are rather stylized, soulless and stereotyped without character or atmosphere. Only twice obtains the landscape a motive with a self-contained meaning equivalent to the cities: in the area between Beaune and Autun, where the Château de Couches – the castle of Marguerite de Bourgogne – stands for the famous castles of the Loire, and between Tournus and Cluny with the rock of Solutré (near Mâcon).

Chaussivert asserts us that this was due to financial reasons: money was scarce, and it was easier and therefore cheaper to paint some plough furrows or meadows than the more complicated urban zones.⁴⁹⁹ In fact, this is not entirely true: even in the panels where city architecture is exhibited (Paris and Paray-le-Monial), it is reduced to such a degree that it would not have been not more complicated to apply the grey cubes of houses to the canvas than the green squares of nature. So there could be suspected at least an additional reason for this. The difference in the depiction of Paris and of all other cities in the mural mirrors the unequal relationship of the French capital with her lesser sisters: The only true city, the metropolis, is Paris – everything else is provincial, even parochial, and must therefore be depicted as the mere village it actually is. If the destination is not interesting as a city, however, it can be upgraded by the scenic beauty of its surrounding landscape.

Nevertheless, Genovesio-Lemercier did include two cityscapes into their painting that deserve the name. Paray-le-Monial marks the transition between the old part of the mural and its new extension. Therefore, the city had to be merged with the streets and houses of neighboring Lyon. (Figure 3-60) This leads to a rather abrupt change in perspective, since Lyon is viewed from above, the onlooker standing on top of the city's hill, while Cluny, the next station to the left, is depicted almost frontally. In order to join the two parts, Paray-le-Monial's famous Romanesque church is moved a bit more to the

⁴⁹⁹ See Chaussivert, "Radioscopie d'un monument élevé à la gloire de la "Revolution ferroviaire": la gare de Paris-Lyon", 102–03.

left, since the traditional space below the steel beam is already occupied by some of Lyon's representative town houses. Because the church is surrounded by several buildings merging into the cityscape of Lyon, this panel focuses less on landscape features, balancing city in the right foreground and countryside in the back.

Nevertheless, even in juxtaposition to the "original" mural, some differences in the treatment of city architecture attract attention. The landmark and its surrounding buildings do not seem to have quite the same scale, a feature that will become even more obvious the closer we get to Paris. The Romanesque church of Sacre-Coeur is depicted slightly bigger than the rest, so that the size equals the importance of the building as an attraction for the addressed viewer. The painting is now clearly selling sights to a potential tourist.

Paris on the other hand, is exceptional in itself, and this is also shown in the mural. (Figure 3-61) The status of the French capital as the nation's one and unrivalled metropolis is made clear by the number of identifiable monuments (Eiffel Tower, Sacre-Coeur, Notre-Dame, the Garnier-Opera, The Louvre and the Tuileries) as well as by the way the whole panel is dominated by blocks and blocks of grey buildings. Here, too, most of the sights are considerably larger than the surrounding architecture, underlining their importance as a landmark and tourist attraction. At the same time, the faceless buildings that make out the urban structure are reminiscent of building blocks and lend the city a model-like character.

The main focus, however, lies on the blown-up looking, very detailed picture of the Panthéon, which was surprisingly chosen as Paris' main landmark. Chaussivert calls this choice incomprehensible but offers several speculations as to the motives: the Panthéon was originally built between 1758 and 1789 as a church for Sainte-Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris. However, the building never served long as a church and was transformed into a national Hall of Fame very soon, in 1791. Chaussivert therefore points out how carefully the painters have reproduced the inscription above the frontispiece ("Aux grands hommes la patrie reconnaissante"). Hence he deduces that the painters wanted to "magnify once more la République, the nourishing mother of the railway in France".⁵⁰⁰ How important the historical role of the second republic really was for the development of the French infrastructure is at least debateable. As for the

⁵⁰⁰ Chaussivert, "Radioscopie d'un monument élevé à la gloire de la "Revolution ferroviaire": la gare de Paris-Lyon", 104. My translation.

development of the Compagnie P. L. M., it was founded in 1858 and reached Vintimille in 1868, thus profiting more from the politics of the Second Empire (1852-1870) than from the republic. This is also expressed in the nickname for its trunk line Paris-Lyon-Marseille: “la ligne impériale”.⁵⁰¹

More important for the choice of the Panthéon seems to be the meaning the building has today. With the graves of its greatest philosophers, and writers, politicians and scientists, the Panthéon contains the pride of the nation; it stands for the best of all of France. Many of the persons interred there were transferred from their original grave quite some time after their death, thereby once more reflecting the strong bipolar relationship the French have with their capital: Paris *is* France; hence the rest of the nation can be neglected. This is, of course, a point of view as seen from the centre, from inside of Paris, and which is hotly contested from the nation’s other big cities, most of all Lyon and Marseille. Both these metropolises rival not only each other for second place, but also the capital itself for importance. Nevertheless, how secondary any other city is judged next to Paris can be seen by the way the remaining cities of the mural are reduced to mere parochial villages, architectural sights with no visible urban structure. This attitude, and also the strong simplification of style, is incidentally highly reminiscent of Saul Steinberg’s famous cover for *The New Yorker* from March 29, 1976: “View of the World from 9th Avenue”.⁵⁰² (Figure 3-62) It depicts a mental map of the world reduced to Manhattan’s 9th and 10th Avenue and the Hudson River in the bottom half, and the rest of the world squeezed in into the top half: China, Japan and Russia compressed to neatly labeled land masses across the Pacific Ocean. This satirical way of showing the New Yorker’s self-centered image of their place in the world was frequently copied and adapted subsequently to several cities, including most of the world’s capitals. It was surely known to the painters of our mural, but even if it had served as an inspiration, its ironic self-mockery has been lost on the way.

⁵⁰¹ See Lartilleux, *Géographie des Chemins de fer français*, 15f.

⁵⁰² See Joel Smith and Saul Steinberg, *Saul Steinberg: Illuminations [on the occasion of the Exhibition Saul Steinberg Illuminations organized at the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York; Exhibition itinerary The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, November 30, 2006 - March 4, 2007; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., April 6 - June 24, 2007; Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio, July 20 - September 20, 2007 ...]* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006).

II.2.5 Advertising the P. L. M.: From a Scenic Route to a Network of Tourist Destinations

We have seen how much the parts of the panorama differ in style, composition and even subject matter. Still, there is one continuity in the long genesis of the mural: all painters involved seem to agree on its general statement. From the beginning it was conceived in the same spirit as the paintings in the stations famous restaurant, “Le Train Bleu”,⁵⁰³ that is to say, it was to serve as a pictorial incentive for the traveler to pick his destination, an arty form of advertisement. Thus, the first six cities to be depicted (Montpellier, Marseille, Toulon, Nice, Monte-Carlo, Menton), and also the two paintings by Olive on the opposite wall (Vintimille, Venice) showed the most attractive destinations along the Mediterranean Sea.⁵⁰⁴

For the first extension, Lyon, Avignon, Tarascon and Nîmes were chosen. Lyon, of course, appeared not only in the company name, but was and is also the second city in France. The other three cities lie directly en route to Montpellier, the main line to Marseille branching of at Tarascon, which is therefore justly depicted between Avignon and Montpellier. Thus, the first extension still shows a rather straightforward, linear route to the South, with only one mental jump to be performed to get from Montpellier to Marseille.

The second extension from 1981 contains a different approach: Starting with Paris, the onlookers are taken to some very small while historically important places which would force them to use several branch lines if they wanted to visit them. Already the third city (Auxerre) can only be reached if we leave the main line from Paris to Dijon at Laroche-Migennes, after only 155 km. The fourth town, Vézelay, should not be included as a destination at all, since it does not even have a railway station. It can only be reached by bus from Avallon, halfway on the line between Auxerre and Autun. Semur, too, cannot be reached by train, but there is an auto bus from Montbard, south of Dijon.

So while the cities on the mural follow geographically a rough north-south direction, their order is not congruent with the actual way the passengers on the train would have to use, since going to Semur would mean to pass Dijon first. Still, with the sixth city

⁵⁰³ See Chapter 4

⁵⁰⁴ Strange but interesting is the inclusion of Venice: the next important city would have been Genoa; the famous “Train Bleu” ended up in Rome. (That is also made evident by its original name “Calais-Nice-Rome Express”, later “Calais-Méditerranée Express”. The nickname “Train bleu” was only acquired after the introduction of blue metal wagons in 1922.)

(Dijon) we are back on the trunk line again, passing Beaune (Nr. 7) and Tournus (Nr. 9). Autun, depicted between the two, lies again on the aforesaid branch line but is nowadays only served by auto bus from Chagny or Montchanin. From the point of view of traffic routing, it therefore would have made sense to include Autun after Semur, so that the viewer could have mentally traveled the branch line to its end.

Much more important a town than Beaune or Tournus, the prefecture Mâcon, whence the side line to Cluny, our tenth city, branches off, is not included.⁵⁰⁵ Paray-le-Monial, the eleventh and last of the “new” cities, can best be reached via Lyon, taking the west route to Paris via Moulin-sur-Allier, Nevers and Moret, although this branch line mostly serves mail and merchandise traffic.⁵⁰⁶

Regarding the content, the older part of the mural concentrated on a rather linear depiction of probably the most scenic route in France, supplemented by the direct connection from Lyon to Montpellier, and including the junction at Tarascon. Compositionally, however, it is arranged in three rather fictitious views of three cities each. The panorama of the new part, on the other hand, shows an uninterrupted view that implies a route in which the depicted towns follow each other consecutively. Thereby it obscures the cities’ actual geographic relationship, because the route that the onlookers try to follow in their minds could never be traveled using the railway. Instead, it depicts a network of destinations, branching off of the main line and including places that are of high tourist value even though some of them cannot even be reached directly by train.

II.2.6 The Panoramic Perception: Immersion and Separation

Bowie was not the first to remark on the panorama as being a continuing motif in railway iconography. It reminded her of the tradition of picturesque views in eighteenth century century travel literature, which traveling gentlemen used to describe not only their own land but also the landscapes that they had experienced during their respective Grand Tours.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁵ See Lartilleux, *Géographie des Chemins de fer français*, 28–50.

⁵⁰⁶ See Lartilleux, *Géographie des Chemins de fer français*, 53.

⁵⁰⁷ See Bowie, “L’eclectisme pittoresque” et l’architecture des gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle”, 155–56.

Schivelbusch, too, had dedicated a whole chapter in his book to the “panoramic travel”⁵⁰⁸, referring amongst others to Dolf Sternberger’s classic book on the same topic. For Sternberger, it was the railway mainly that transformed the world into a panorama. It overcame all hindrances, differences and adventures, all the experiences that the travelers had to overcome in the past, and offered them the display of an ever-changing landscape from its windows instead.⁵⁰⁹ Schivelbusch demonstrates how the intensity of sensual impressions that a traveler using the mail-coach had experienced is lost due to the speed of the railway train. With Erwin Straus he speaks of the transformation of landscape into geographical space: that is, a space which is closed and systematically mapped within a fix coordinate system. It is a space reduced to the experience of Newton’s “mechanic” qualities of Size, Shape, Quantity and Motion. The traditional landscape experience, on the other hand, had also consisted of sensual perceptions like smells or sounds, and of course sight. Most of all senses, vision is affected by velocity, leading to a loss of foreground: only distant objects can still be perceived. Therefore, the traveler had to adapt his perception to the new mode of transport. Many failed, like Ruskin or Flaubert, and were invariably bored by the train ride. Others managed to perceive the view into the distance that the train’s velocity forced upon them as an aesthetic enrichment, since it allowed viewing the Whole without being distracted by details. Therein lays the main difference between traditional travel and railway travel, traditional perception and panoramic perception.

Traditionally,

"the foreground enabled the traveler to relate to the landscape through which he was moving. He saw himself as part of the foreground, and that perception joined him to the landscape, included him in it, regardless of all further distant views that the landscape presented. Now velocity dissolved the foreground, and the traveler lost that aspect. He was removed from that 'total space' which combined proximity and distance. [...] As the traveler stepped out of that space, it became a stage setting, or a

⁵⁰⁸ See Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 52–69.

⁵⁰⁹ See Dolf Sternberger, *Panorama oder Ansichten vom 19. Jahrhundert*, 3rd edition (Hamburg: Claassen, 1955), 50.

series of such pictures or scenes created by the continuously changing perspective. Panoramic perception, in contrast to traditional perception, no longer belonged to the same space as the perceived objects ..."⁵¹⁰

Does this also apply to the mural in question though? Again, we see a clear difference between the older parts of the painting, and the new one. In the modern sequence, there is indeed no real foreground to be seen. Although sometimes the frame cuts off trees (Fontainebleau) or roofs (Vézelay, Semur), these objects do not belong to the same image plane –or space – as the onlookers. As for perspective, the beholders stand on a slightly raised position so as to view the landmarks/cities from a low bird's eye view. This position is nevertheless indefinite and constantly changing, so that each monument is depicted in its own central perspective, the respective vanishing points being obliterated within the interjacent landscapes.

This practice is different, though, from the one applied in the older parts of the mural. There, always three cities are viewed from a position exactly central to the trio. Thus, the beholders stand directly under the cartouche labeling "Avignon", slightly hovering above the road leading to Tarascon. From there, all three cities can be seen from a bird's eye view, while at the same time viewing the geographically raised landmarks straight on. This strange levitating position causes the sensation of being above the foreground, so that, while it is there, we are no part of it. The *Tour Magne* of Nîmes is placed in an awkward position on the border to the mural's oldest part; it has therefore its own central perspective.

As for the Mediterranean cities, they are viewed from a standpoint beneath the cartouche labeling "Marseille" and "Monte-Carlo" respectively, again combining a view of three cities from one point of view. In the first case, this places the onlooker on the edge of Montpellier's water basin at Peyrou and of Marseille's cathedral hill to the right, but without actually reaching the same image plane. This would have been strange, too, since the respective foregrounds differ a lot. At the same time, those foregrounds seem to be pushed away into the distance of the middle-ground, even though they are cut by the frame. The last three cities are seen from a position covered by some plants which are nevertheless placed to the very left of the balcony overlooking

⁵¹⁰ Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 63–64.

Menton. Only here, at the final destination, the viewers really enter the picture, the terrace's railing, plants, and the beholders being in the same image plane.

This sense of immersion into the painting is aided by the use of staffage figures: only in the oldest part of the mural are people depicted. They are donned up in their Sunday dresses and promenade in Montpellier or Monte-Carlo, inviting the beholders to come down and join them. The first extension, however, is totally void of people, and in the new part, they appear but rarely: some monks in front of Cluny abbey, tourists in Fontainebleau Park, a few people in front of the Panthéon. In any case they are very small, too far away to seem real. In analogy to Menton, there is some sort of terrace in the foreground of Fontainebleau, with people leaning on the railing and looking down on the park. But although they are in the foreground, the image plane seems to be some distance away, adding to the strangely wedged-in appearance of Fontainebleau in the course of the mural.

So, with the exception of Menton, the final destination on the Côte d'Azur, there is indeed a loss of foreground. But in the old part of the painting, due to a central viewpoint, the spectators are nevertheless included into the city. In the modern extension however, the loss of foreground is used to separate us from the scenery rather than imbed us within. Michel de Certeau has described this experience as quintessential to railway travel, explaining the phenomenon with two causes: glass and iron.

“The windowpane is what allows us to see, and the rail, what allows us to move through. These are two complementary modes of separation. The first creates the spectator's distance: You shall not touch; the more you see, the less you hold - a dispossession of the hand in favor for a greater trajectory for the eye. The second inscribes, indefinitely, the injunction to pass on; it is its order written in a single but endless line: go, leave, this is not your country, and neither is that - an imperative of separation which obliges one to pay for an abstract ocular

domination of space by leaving behind any proper place,
by losing one's footing.”⁵¹¹

This is because the old and the new part of the mural differ also in their notion of what makes out a panorama. Webster's dictionary of 1913 defines it as

“1. A complete view in every direction. 2. A picture presenting a view of objects in every direction, as from a central point. 3. A picture representing scenes too extended to be beheld at once, and so exhibited a part at a time, by being unrolled, and made to pass continuously before the spectator.”⁵¹²

Historically, the panorama was invented, named and patented in 1789 by the Scottish painter Robert Barker.⁵¹³ Usually the observer stood on a platform in the centre of a circular building whose walls were completely covered all the way round with a bird's eye view of a city, landscape or any other scene, extended laterally to include a full 360° circle so that it could be viewed without interruption of frame or support. (Figures 3-63, 3-64) The elevated viewpoint was traditionally considered a pre-condition for viewing any city appropriately, so that it was only natural that it should be included in Barker's new concept of *veduta*. Later on the panorama's derivatives (Diorama, Cyclorama etc.) were to become the nineteenth century precursor of today's cinema – not only in terms of popularity, but also quite literally in terms of their technique, some of them revolving the canvas slowly around the audience, while others unrolled a moving image in front of the visitors.⁵¹⁴

The old part of our mural with its central viewpoint stands clearly in the tradition of Barker's panoramas, while the new part has its roots in this second type, where the panorama unfolds in an unconnected and often incoherent series of scenes. This serial depiction of cities juxtaposed indifferently one after the other that so commonly is associated with the view out of the train's window, was only undertaken in the modern

⁵¹¹ Michel de Certeau and Steven F. Rendall, *The practice of everyday life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 111-114, here: 112.

⁵¹² Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913), "*Panorama*"; available from <http://machaut.uchicago.edu/?resource=Webster%27s&word=panorama&use1913=on>; Internet; accessed April 29, 2012.

⁵¹³ See Renzo Dubbini, *Geography of the gaze: Urban and rural vision in early modern Europe* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 75–76.

⁵¹⁴ For more details see C. W. Ceram, *Archaeology of the Cinema* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965).

extension. This seems even stranger considering the fact that in this part no attempt was made to show an actual, serial, route.

The mural above the ticket stalls in the Gare de Lyon is not of a very high artistic quality. Its goal, to advertise the range of the P. L. M. Company's railway network and the attractiveness of its Southern destinations, is obvious. Still, not least due to the eighty year long history of its evolution, the panorama tells us much about the change of perceptions within that period.

For one thing, there is a shift in the idea of what makes a destination attractive: At the turn of the century, the Mediterranean pictures underline the beauty, luxury and comfort of a sea-side resort by focusing on their modern urbanity as epitomized in their contemporary architecture. Twenty years later, the inland cities underline their rich cultural history from pre-roman times through the middle ages until today. By 1981, the conceptual shift from a long-term stay at a resort to mere sight-seeing oriented city-hopping seems to be completed.

At the same time, the imagined difference of urban qualities between the nation's capital and the provincial cities is mirrored in the way the latter are reduced to a single landmark and imbedded into a landscape that seems highly virtual – a city-dweller's idealized view of the countryside. Throughout the fresco, the concept of the panorama is used to offer a full appreciation of the destination. But while the older part stands in the tradition of circular panoramas that place the spectators at the centre, thus including them in the picture, the new extension refers to the continuous look out of a train's window which separates them from the arbitrary sequence of scenes rolling by outside.

Thus, there are many ways to use architectural embellishment for situating the station within a network of destinations: inscriptions, crests, allegoric personifications, maps, or citiscapes. Sometimes, the evoked network is purely regional or limited by the extent of the particular railway company's network. But often, the proclaimed network is at least partly imaginary, including places that are not served by the respective railway company – even not served by any railway company at all. It did not matter if you had to change trains, or even mode of transport. The phalanx of destinations along a station's façade, after all, did not serve as a timetable. It served as a reminder of the

other cities out there, the urban areas that had begun growing closer together ever since the first railway line had been constructed.

III International and Transnational Railway Networks

In most cities, the railway companies were content to display a selection of cities of similar significance, adding the national capital only if a direct line connected them. But especially railway companies on the European continent, which were nationalized relatively early, selected early a Europe-wide framework for the stations in their capitals. Especially stations in national capitals were not content to advertise only their own national network – and indeed, both freight and passenger transport had soon begun to cross borders into neighboring countries, advancing the international trade in goods as well as increasing passenger numbers due to increasing middle-class tourism.⁵¹⁵ But irrespective of the interests of potential travelers, the choice of crests reveals the importance that the railway company assigned to the respective cities within the railway network as well as the role they envisioned for themselves.

III.1 Amsterdam (1882-1889): A Mercantile Network

One example is the row of colorful enameled crests framed by the arches of a false arcade that structures the façade of **Amsterdam's Centraal Station (1889)**. The gable of the central pavilion is crowned by the official arms of the Dutch Empire, including the heraldic animals holding the escutcheon, and the crown. Directly underneath are the crests of Amsterdam (center), London (left) and Berlin (right). To the left, but on the same level, we find the city arms of Antwerp, Brussels and Paris, while to the right are depicted Hamburg, Cologne and Frankfurt/Main. Yet a little bit further away from the central national coat-of-arms, and one half-level below, are Marseille, Rome and Madrid to the left, and St. Petersburg, Vienna and Munich to the right.⁵¹⁶ (Figure 3-65)

The arrangement reflects vaguely the geographical relation of the cities to Amsterdam (Eastern cities to the right, Western cities to the left), but their selection seems to have

⁵¹⁵ The pictorial announcement of possible destinations for prospective tourists, and its roots in the travel culture of the middle classes, will be the topic of chapter 4. In the context of this chapter it is enough to note that the ideal of the *Bildungsreise* was often very urban in orientation and focused on visiting the European capitals.

⁵¹⁶ See Romers, *Spoorwegarchitectuur in Nederland 1841-1938*, 102–104; Oxenaar, *Centraal Station Amsterdam*, 72. See also chapter 1.

followed principally according to economic, rather than political relations. Although the focus seems to lie on national capitals (London, Berlin, Brussels, Paris, Rome, Madrid, Vienna, and St. Petersburg⁵¹⁷), the inclusion of Antwerp, Marseille, Hamburg, Cologne, Munich, and Frankfurt suggests economic strength rather than political power⁵¹⁸ – certainly, in the case of the capital cities, these attributes coincided. The program is complemented in the first floor by nine round medallions featuring “types of European peoples”: Romers identified only every other of the types. He counts from left to right: Dutch type, “type of a European people”, French type, “type of a European people”, German type, “type of a European people”, English type, “type of a European people”, Italian type.⁵¹⁹ As the number of countries correlating with the international cities coincides with the number of European peoples, it can be assumed that among the unidentified peoples are the Spanish type, Russian type, Austrian type, and Belgian type.⁵²⁰

One level below the cities, arranged in pairs just below the roofs of the towers structuring the lateral wings, appear twelve coat-of-arms of the Dutch provinces.⁵²¹ As already mentioned above, the city crests of Dutch cities were painted inside on the walls of the entrance hall. Thus, the more intimate aspects of inland traffic, as symbolized by the city crests of Dutch cities, were restricted to the entrance hall, visible only for the actual railway user who had already entered the building. At the same time, the metropolises of foreign cities were put up on the outside façade, where they announced Amsterdam’s position in the centre of a European network of trade, while the national provinces are, although included on the main façade, removed to the less important place on the lateral wings.

⁵¹⁷ St. Petersburg was made capital in place of Moscow in 1712 and remained so until 1918.

⁵¹⁸ This is corroborated by certain allegories arguing the role of Amsterdam as Europe’s staplemarkt. See chapter 2.

⁵¹⁹ See Romers, *Spoorwegarchitectuur in Nederland 1841-1938*, 102–104.

⁵²⁰ When the author visited Amsterdam, this part of the façade was covered with scaffolds due to an ongoing renovation, so that no further clues for identification could be collected.

⁵²¹ See Romers, *Spoorwegarchitectuur in Nederland 1841-1938*, 102–104.

III.2 London Blackfriars Station (1886): A Tourist Network

In **London Blackfriars Station (1886)** city arms were abandoned altogether and letters only fulfilled the task of locating the terminal within the growing spider net of European railway tracks. (Figure 3-66) The rusticated pilasters flanking the entrance listed in capitals the names of the principal stations that allegedly could at one time be reached directly using the London Chatham and Dover Railway (LC&DR): Baden-Baden, Beckenham, Bremen, Broadstairs, Brindisi, Bromley, Ramsgate, Sittingbourne, Marseilles, Westgate-on-Sea, Walmer, Wiesbaden, Geneva, Lausanne, Leipsic, Lucerne, Marseille, Vienna, Dresden, St. Petersburg, Cologne, Cannes, Calais, Bruxelles etc.⁵²²

Some of these (Beckenham, Bromley) are clearly suburban destinations, interesting to commuters; others (Ramsgate, Walmer, Westgate-on-Sea) are watering places in Kent, the region served by the LC&DR. The large number of continental cities is surprising only at first sight, since the line also served Dover, whence left the most important ferry connections crossing the Channel to Calais, and hence onwards to the rest of the continent. Many of the cities named are classic destinations of the Grand Tour, the English upper-classes' educational round-trip of continental cities that gave "tourism" its name.⁵²³

Thus, in a way, Blackfriar's was indeed the best starting point to visit, say, Switzerland or Italy at the time, although even today prospective travelers will have problems traveling non-stop. Even with the Eurostar trains coming through the 1994 opened Channel tunnel, (but delivering their passengers to St. Pancras Station rather than Blackfriars) passengers can only reach Calais, Lille and Paris Gare du Nord, (or

⁵²² Cities listed by Betjeman in Betjeman, *London's Historic Railway Stations*, 50. The complete list encompasses 54 cities, they are: Antwerp, Ashford, Gravesend, Darnstadt (sic!), Bale, Baden-Baden, Beckenham, Herne Bay, Florence, Nice, Berlin, Bickley, Maidstone, Frankfort (sic!), Genoa, Boulogne, Broadstairs, Margate, Geneva, Paris, Bremen, Bromley, Ramsgate, Lausanne, Milan, Brindisi, Canterbury, Rochester, Leipsic (sic!), Brussels, Chatham, Sevenoaks, Lucerne, Lyons, Calais, Crystal Palace, Sittingbourne, Marseilles, Turin, Cannes, Deal, Sheerness, Vienna, Naples, Cologne, Dover, Westgate-on-Sea, St. Petersburg, Venice, Dresden, Faversham, Walmer, Wiesbaden. According to a 2009 press release, when the original building was demolished in 1977, the inscribed pilasters were kept and included in the new building. In preparation for the 2012 Olympics in London, the station will be modernized once more, again moving the "destination wall", which will be restored and the lettering regilded, to a new location inside the station. See Network Rail, *New destination for historic Blackfriars 'Destination Wall': Press Release (24.09.2009)*; available from <http://www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=4598&NewsAreaID=2>; Internet; accessed March 26, 2012.

⁵²³ See chapter 4.

Brussels, for the connection to Belgium) where they will have to change trains for further destinations.

III.3 Paris Gare du Nord (1861-65): A Political Network

The embellishment of **Paris Gare du Nord (1861-65)**, at least, had planned to advertise its international connections from its first inception as “Belgian Railway” in 1838.⁵²⁴ (Figure 3-67) When the station was reconstructed and enlarged to about three times the original size between 1861 and 1865, the Compagnie du Nord assigned the task to the Franco-German architect Jacques Ignace (Jakob Ignaz) Hittorf. His terminal influenced all the other great terminals that should be built in the metropolis hereafter. For the decoration of the station’s façade he kept its predecessor’s iconographical system by depicting the cities served by the Compagnie du Nord. Yet Bowie, in her studies of Parisian stations in the nineteenth century⁵²⁵, rightly observed that the embellishment (as well as the architecture) of the new Gare du Nord surpassed all hitherto designed stations in Paris both in complexity and in the quality of its execution.⁵²⁶

The main façade mirrors a threefold basilica, the largest central hall connected with the two halls on the sides by a lower structure with straight roofline. The sculptures of nine international cities are placed along the roofline of the main façade, with Paris crowning the top of the gable. (Figure 3-70) On her left side stand in pairs Brussels and Warsaw (figure 3-69), Amsterdam and Frankfurt (figure 3-68), to her right stand London and Vienna (figure 3-71), as well as Berlin and Cologne (figure 3-72). The placement seems arbitrary, neither vaguely geographical, nor ordered for distance or importance, but the selection seems to be clearly focusing on national capitals. The inclusion of two German metropolises besides Berlin – Frankfurt and Cologne – not only mirrors the importance these cities held (and still hold) as transport hub for East-West connections, but also the political realities of Germany prior to its unification in 1871.

One storey below, fourteen statues of French cities connected by the Northern Line were placed more modestly in a single file along the cornice of the windows. From left to right these are: Boulogne, Compiègne (figure 3-73), Saint-Quentin, Cambrai (figure 3-74), Beauvais, Lille, Amiens, Rouen, Arras, Laon (figure 3-75), Calais, Valenciennes

⁵²⁴ Alas, the “Bourla project” of 1838 was never executed. See also chapter 1.

⁵²⁵ Bowie, ““L’eclectisme pittoresque” et l’architecture des gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle”; Bowie, *Les grandes gares parisiennes au XIXe siècle*.

⁵²⁶ See Bowie, “Les grandes gares parisiennes: historique”, 110–112.

(figure 3-76), Douai (figure 3-77), and Dunkerque (figure 3-78). Again, there seems no comprehensible rule to their placement, neither geographical, nor in terms of distance from Paris or each other. Yet the viewers are left with the impression of a dense network of prosperous cities, all of them important enough to be represented by their own personification. Indeed, the Compagnie du Nord served most industrialized region in France, with connections to Belgium, the Netherlands, Northern Germany, and via the port of Calais: Great Britain.⁵²⁷

While the program itself was far from original, the quality of its execution was unusually high: the twenty-three statues were executed by thirteen of the most distinguished sculptors of the time, many of them winners of the Prix du Rome.⁵²⁸ The rules of the commission – unfortunately lost⁵²⁹ – must have been strict, which would explain the exterior conformity of the different statues. All of them look very much alike: Tall women draped in antique garments, leaning on a big shield bearing the city crest that reaches up to their hips. They are wearing the traditional crown reminding of a city wall and carry one attribute or other in their free hand. Only Paris is accompanied by an eagle sitting to her feet. At first glance, and as seen by the uninterested passenger from street-level far below, they are so similar that they are only identifiable by the city name chiseled into their respective bases.

Considering the high quality of the statues and the impact of this undoubtedly prestigious commission in the art world, Bowie found it significant that there seems to have been little or no public discussion about the subject matter or the choice of artists for the station's embellishment, although she feels that there must have been some tension between the technical world of the railway and the world of art. It seems the company left it to the architect to relieve this alleged tension and negotiate the contacts where the two worlds were to meet. Bowie's complained:

“One gets the impression that the Compagnie de Nord wanted the prestige of an association with the great names of the epoch's artistic ‘establishment’, but its function did not allow for many contacts with the artistic milieu or practices. [...] But how could we not conclude that this

⁵²⁷ See Lartilleux, *Géographie des Chemins de fer français*, 114. See also chapter 2.

⁵²⁸ See Bowie, "Les grandes gares parisiennes: historique", 110.

⁵²⁹ See Bowie, "Les grandes gares parisiennes: historique", 112.

absence of documentation about the questions of art and architecture is the result of the badly defined, if not difficult situation of ‘art’ in the domain of the railway...?”⁵³⁰

Bowie’s malaise, on the other hand, quickly dissolves if the implied chasm between “industrial technology” and “fine art” is reduced to a more functional view of the sculptural decor. Hittorf had decided on a very common topic and managed to get enough funds for an unusually elaborate, high-quality execution. He must have seen the figures as a functional detail of his architecture, rather than art-for-art’s-sake – certainly he left little room for any artist’s personal expression. Seen from this more pragmatic view, it stands to reason that neither company nor architect saw much reason for public discussion.

The examples suggest that the display of international relations was mainly a privilege of stations in national capitals.⁵³¹ But even then, the message broadcast by the selection of international cities to be displayed could range from political (Paris Nord), over recreational (London Blackfriars), to mercantile (Amsterdam Centraal) interests. All stations have in common that the area circumscribed by the chosen city representations is tightly focused on a very traditional, narrow conception of Western Europe: there is no place named west of Madrid, or east of St. Petersburg. To the south, Vienna and some Italian cities are included, but there is no mention of any east European ports (for instance Odessa). As for northern Europe, Scandinavia seems to be non-existent.

Thus, in the late nineteenth century, at the height of European nation building, the choice of metropolises displayed on the capital cities’ railway stations betrayed which nations were considered central to the idea of a core Europe and which were considered negligible – even if opinions disagreed on the exact border between periphery and center. Naturally, these ideas changed over history and with the actors involved. But they also shaped the actual plans for the construction and development of truly transnational railway networks in the twentieth century.⁵³²

⁵³⁰ Bowie, "Les grandes gares parisiennes: historique", 112. My translation

⁵³¹ Exceptions are typical border stations, for instance Rosendaal (1926).

⁵³² The topic has been explored in depth by Irene Anastasiadou. See Irene Anastasiadou, "Networks of power: Railway visions in interwar Europe", and chapter 2.

IV Railway Stations Positioning Themselves Firmly Within the Networks

Seeing how urgently railway stations insisted on their interconnection with the network's other destinations, it seems absurd that the French sociologist Marc Augé included them, together with other transit spaces (such as highway service stations or airports), in his list of “non-spaces.”⁵³³ Non-Spaces, according to Augé lacking in history, relation and identity, are characterized by a non-descriptive architecture aiming at interchangeability, thus offering no orientation for the traveler.⁵³⁴

Yet, the close inspection in the chapter above has shown that this description does not at all apply to the greater part of railway stations. In many ways, the decoration of numerous stations placed them immovably within their host city – and even more often, it aimed at neatly describing the station's position within the whole network, both real and imaginary, and in a multitude of ways: apart from the more prosaic and necessary props such as timetables and maps, there were simple city crests or elaborate personifications, sometimes identified by inscriptions, as well as panoramic views and cityscapes.

But railway companies did not limit themselves to the depiction of their own network – often, references to and depictions of international destinations suggested a transnational collaboration of railways allowing for unhindered travels across the European continent. Alas, this vision was usually pure wishful thinking –in reality, it was most often hampered by diverging technological standards and national-political interests.

⁵³³ See Augé, *Non-places*.

⁵³⁴ See Augé, *Non-places*, 77.

Chapter 4 Wanderlust – Travelers, Tourists, and Their Destinations

I Travelers and Tourists

Next to freight traffic, one of the core businesses of railway companies was passenger transport. Nevertheless, the topic of “traveling and tourism” plays a surprisingly subordinate role in station decoration.⁵³⁵ In the rare cases where traveling was made a topic, artists fell back on established modes of depiction; rather than developing a new iconography for the unfamiliar phenomenon of emerging mass tourism. In conformity with already established decorative traditions, the claim to universality was asserted by the use of allegories.

Often – as no mythological deity was readily available – this was achieved by generalizing typical travel scenes by a timeless, vaguely “antique” setting, that also lifted the embellishments up to a grand style. Another way was the attempt to distill the essence out of common travel forms in order to present an archetype, which could be then personified. The resulting images differed in their form and in their degree of abstraction, which could make them at times quite difficult to read. For each, an example will be given in the form of three allegorical depictions of “Traveling” found in **Amsterdam Centraal Station (1882-1889)**, **Frankfurt/Main Hauptbahnhof (1879-1888)**, and **Amsterdam Muiderpoort Station (1938)**. The examples from Amsterdam and Frankfurt show how artists grappled with the task of adapting the established iconography, and offer insights on different aspects of tourism history: they demonstrate how middle-class travel customs, especially the *Bildungsreise*, were modeled on its aristocratic precursor, the Grand Tour. The depictions also reveal strong notions of class and gender by focusing on male, middle-class travelers.

Therefore, the enquiries concentrate on the emergence of long-distance train travel and its consequences for the tourist industry. This chapter explores how the profound changes in travel patterns and travel behavior of the – notoriously mobile – middle- and

⁵³⁵ Parts of this chapter have previously been published in the *Journal of Transport history*. See Asta von Buch, "In the image of the Grand Tour: Railway station embellishment and the origins of mass tourism", *The Journal of Transport History* 28, no. 2 (September 2007). The comments of Gijs Mom and of four anonymous referees improved this paper a lot. I am also much indebted to Gijsbrecht Speyart van Woerden for his help with the Dutch translations and photos.

upper-middle classes that by the railway had made possible found their way into railway station embellishment. The rather more common short distance train use and emerging or fully fledged commuting practices of the working classes will not be part of these analyses – not because of their lack of interest to the historian of mobility, but rather because they hardly ever – apart from stylized maps⁵³⁶ – found their way into railway stations' decorative programs.

Finally, the chapter looks at landscape paintings depicting potential destinations as an incentive for yet-undecided travelers. Early on, landscapes were perceived as suitable decoration for passenger buildings, but the costs often prevented them from being executed. Yet, the investment in landscape art was mainly dependent on the direct gain that the companies hoped to achieve. In Switzerland, the railways cooperated actively with agents of the local tourist industry. Tourist and hotel associations often ordered and paid for landscapes depicting their region's recreational values. The railway companies in turn offered free wall space to hang the advertising art works, thus promoting their lines as ideal means to reach the desired places. In Paris, the Company Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée used the same method of artwork-turned-advertisement to promote its own achievements. Not stopping at promoting the regions connected by its railway network, the company used landscape art to celebrate itself as patron of the Fine Arts.

I.1 Amsterdam Centraal Station (1882-1889): The Aristocratic Grand Tour as Archetype of Middle-Class Traveling

Amsterdam's Centraal Station was built between 1882 and 1889 by P. J. H. Cuypers and lavishly decorated both inside and on the outside.⁵³⁷ For the façade of the royal pavilion at the eastern end of the building, in the zone between the first and the second floor, Eduard Roskam created a five panel frieze of bas-reliefs that runs over all three sides of the projection. (Figures 4-1 and 4-2)

On the first panel, facing the west side of the pavilion, five chubby putti are packing a trunk in preparation for the journey. All of them are garbed in antique drapery. The story continues in a second panel on the main façade, above the entrance and facing south: it shows two pairs of putti bidding farewell from each other. One of them carries

⁵³⁶ See chapter 3.

⁵³⁷ For information on the architectural history see Romers, *Spoorwegarchitectuur in Nederland 1841-1938*, 99–110; van Leeuwen and Romers, *Een spoor van verbeelding*, 18–24, and Oxenaar, *Centraal Station Amsterdam*, as well as chapter 2 and chapter 3.

a box on his shoulder, another shakes hands with a third, clapping him on the back, while the one on the far right seems to be crying with his head bent low. The third and central panel shows the departure: our two travelers are already seated on a wagon, one of them waving a big handkerchief in a farewell gesture, the other whistling on his fingers with puffed cheeks, maybe as an allusion to the trains' loud steam whistle. To their left, two putti are embracing each other, and on the right another one waves, his arm lifted up high. In the fourth scene the two travelers are still seated in a cart that is now distinctly recognizable as a railway carriage. (Figure 4-3) One of them is about to explain something when they meet another putto with a little dog standing next to the steaming locomotive engine. To the very right, a second putto stands still in the nudity and elegant contraposto of a classical statue. The last panel, on the east side above the royal coat of arms, depicts our travelers' arrival and their happy reunion with friends or family.

The use of children, or rather putti, shown in the act of performing all the different practices connected with traveling, indicates that this story-board is not meant to depict a concrete journey, but rather is an attempt to show the activities of a journey in an abstract way – what we see is an allegory of Traveling. To confer this idea, the artist falls back on the iconography of the Grand Tour that was established in countless landscapes and cityscapes in the course of the eighteenth century: a group of at least two persons, one of whom, the tutor, uses his outstretched arm to point out the marvels of antiquity to his student. In Amsterdam, the Grand Tour seems to stand as the embodiment of leisure travel. This is interesting since the concept was quite anachronistic at the time. The question arises, what made the Grand Tour archetypal, enabling it to stand emblematically for later forms of travel?⁵³⁸

The Grand Tour originated in the late sixteenth or seventeenth century⁵³⁹ and consisted of an extended educational journey around the European Continent, with focus on Italy and the remnants of antiquity. It averaged two years and served as an important rite of passage for young men from the British upper classes.⁵⁴⁰ Its purpose consisted mostly of

⁵³⁸ A similar putto-peopled, two field bas-relief in Mainz Hauptbahnhof (1882-1884) shows only the two scenes taking place at the station: departure and arrival. Because the actual journey is left out and not treated, an examination of the example would not have been helpful in the context of this chapter.

⁵³⁹ Opinions vary, see John Towner, "The Grand Tour: A Key Phase in the History of Tourism", *Annals of Tourism Research*, no. 12 (1985), 300.

⁵⁴⁰ See Withey, *Grand tours and Cook's tours*; John Towner, "The Grand Tour: A Key Phase in the History of Tourism".

educational motives; practical training for a career in government service or diplomacy was not as significant an object as has often been assumed. Until the 1780s, up to 80 percent of Grand Tourists consisted of young men from the aristocracy. The students or pupils were aged between fourteen and twenty-three and accompanied by their tutors, who were often in their thirties and forties.⁵⁴¹

This typical tutor-student relationship is depicted in panel 4 of the Amsterdam bas-relief where the two putti quite obviously assume different roles during their journey: One of them, obviously the tutor, is shown explaining the landscape, its sights and the customs of the strange country's inhabitants to the other one, his student.

This remained true for most of the eighteenth century. But already in the 1760s, the privilege of the Grand Tour had ceased to be restricted to the upper classes. Thanks to the industrialization, an increasing number of men from the middle-classes earned enough money to afford a prolonged absence from home, often taking the Tour with their families. Some professional writers could even finance their travels by publishing their travelogues.⁵⁴² The new Grand Tourists still concentrated on the routes established since the early seventeenth century – France, Italy, along the Rhine-valley through Germany and the Netherlands - thus fostering a more and more organized tourist industry. But, as John Towner has noted, the changes in the tourists' class affiliation

“had repercussions on many aspects of the tour including the age of the tourist, his education and occupation, motives for travel, the composition of the travelling groups and the length of time of the tour. These changes occurred before the railways or figures like Thomas Cook had any significant impact.”⁵⁴³

After the 1830s the customary travel patterns were breaking down even more, making way for a shorter form of journey during the summer months only, the new railways allowing for a much shorter travel time.⁵⁴⁴ Thomas Cook began organizing excursion tours for members of the Temperance movement in 1841 when he discovered that the

⁵⁴¹ See John Towner, "The Grand Tour: A Key Phase in the History of Tourism", 310f.

⁵⁴² See John Towner, "The Grand Tour: A Key Phase in the History of Tourism", 312.

⁵⁴³ John Towner, "The Grand Tour: A Key Phase in the History of Tourism", 326.

⁵⁴⁴ See for this transitional episode in the history of tourism: Michael Heafford, "Between Grand Tour and Tourism: British travellers to Switzerland in a period of transition, 1814-1860", *The Journal of Transport History* 27, no. 2 (2006), providing detailed data on British tourists passing through Geneva.

railway lines would allow groups to travel on reduced fees. Soon he professionalized in organizing group travels and established an empire that fostered the development of modern mass tourism. But even before that time, the word “tourist”, formerly used synonymously with ‘traveler’, had acquired a pejorative connotation that it has still not lost. Up to today, the tourist is seen as “the dupe of fashion, following blindly where authentic travellers have gone with open eyes and free spirits.”⁵⁴⁵

Scholars of tourism have repeatedly stated that these persisting clichés are based on a stereotype that has been growing for over 200 years,⁵⁴⁶ but they seem to feel that it is still necessary to point out that “obviously, what is being proposed is not historical definition but a vision of a Golden Age [. . .] a phantasm, compounded of modern self-dislike, intellectual snobbery and sentimentality about the past.”⁵⁴⁷ This was certainly already true for the second half of the nineteenth century. But the increasing influence of travel guides like the Murray or the Baedeker handbooks, with their system of asterisks indicating the tourist value of the sights, and detailed information on formal traveling procedures, facilitated an individual “traveler’s approach” to late-nineteenth’s century leisure journeys that also encouraged their users to look down on the mere “tourist excursionists” of the Cook-type.

Thus, the Bildungsreise had become the New Grand Tour of the middle classes, and the Baedeker targeted these educated travelers. The handbooks focused on culture and art history while downplaying or outright neglecting industrial or commercial sights that would have been interesting to a lesser educated audience of, say, artisans or workers.⁵⁴⁸ These latter social groups could generally not afford to undertake a long distance journey, or take any extended vacations, until after World War I.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁵ James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 1.

⁵⁴⁶ The first to do so was Dean MacCannell as early as 1976: Dean MacCannell, *The tourist: A new theory of the leisure class* (New York, NY: University of California Press, 1976).

⁵⁴⁷ Ian Ousby, *The Englishman's England: Taste, travel and the rise of tourism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 6–7, quoted in Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, 4. Also see Shelley Baranowski, "Common ground: Linking transport and tourism history", *The Journal of Transport History* 28, no. 1 (March 2007).

⁵⁴⁸ Rudy Koshar, *German Travel Cultures, Leisure, Consumption and Culture* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2000), 31 and 46f.

⁵⁴⁹ See Richards and MacKenzie, *The railway station*, 137f; Paul Smith et al, *The history of tourism: Thomas Cook and the origins of leisure travel* (London: Routledge/Thoemmes, 1998), 24. Although motorisation allowed workers in the US to undertake long-distance leisure travel somewhat earlier than in Europe, there too, it took until ‘the early decades of the twentieth century [to expand] vacationing beyond the privileged middle class’. And it was only the decade of the Depression that saw ‘a majority of working class Americans finally gaining the right to an annual paid summer vacation.’ Cindy Sondik

It comes as no real surprise that the Baedeker was also heavily gendered in implying that women were traveling only in conjunction with a husband or family. For working class women, traveling alone seems to have been easier, even though their journeys were mainly restricted to day-trips, such as organized by Thomas Cook.⁵⁵⁰ Indeed,

“Cook’s tours had more women than men, the spinster schoolteacher or governess becoming typical clients of the company. More than half of all the US tourists registered in Paris hotels in summer 1888 were women.”⁵⁵¹

But for the middle classes the planning and organization of a journey was still seen as the men’s domain – to what extent will be explored later in this chapter. Thus, the somewhat idealized image - and self-perception - of a traveler in the 1880s is that of an upper-middle-class male, a person with a strong interest in cultural sights, who tried to broaden his horizon by going on an educational journey or *Bildungsreise* in the tradition of the Grand Tour. This image is mirrored in the Amsterdam frieze, but the old-fashioned depiction of the two putti posing as tutor and student on the Grand Tour in the Amsterdam relief contrasts with their use of the railway, then the most modern means of transport. The anachronistic clash of seeing an eighteenth century tutor-student couple using nineteenth century transportation derives solely from the forced belief in the use of allegory to depict an idea or concept.

This may be the reason why the story told in the relief is complemented by two cartouches at the beginning and the end. (Figures 4-4 and 4-5) They contain a poem by the Dutch poet J. A. Alberdingk Thijm that comments the frieze and adds a rationale to it. Obviously it was felt that the narrative, scenic allegory alone could not be understood by itself. Above the figures industriously packing their trunk it reads:

“Sometimes Fortuna visits also him who sits still
This spirit’s vigour drives us to strange countries
Thus different Peoples form fruitf’l brotherly bands
Rest means rust no saying is as certain as this”⁵⁵²

Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 4.

⁵⁵⁰ See Joan Perkin, *Victorian women* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1995), 110f.

⁵⁵¹ Koshar, *German Travel Cultures*, 40.

⁵⁵² ‘Bezoekt fortune somtijds ook hem die stille zit/De veerkracht van den geest drijft ons naar vreemde landen/Zoo sluiten volk met volk hun vruchtbre broederbanden/rust roest geen spreekwoord gaat zoo zeker door als dit’.

The home comers' happy reunion with their friends or family is glossed with these words:

“There Blazes a pleas'nt glow in one's own home and
hearth.
If one takes one's flight from there with strong muscled
wings
The Wise Man knows how to celebrate and control his
strength
He knows which riches for him in the welcoming home
are kept”⁵⁵³

Here, the urge to travel is described as a strong, but fortunate force. In driving the traveler away from home, it allows him not only to familiarize himself with neighboring countries but also to befriend their inhabitants. It was a common belief that travel would encourage mutual knowledge and understanding among peoples of different nationalities – a belief on which Thomas Cook founded his career.⁵⁵⁴

Of course, the fact that the panels are mounted on the outside of the royal pavilion maybe invites a more political interpretation. What could have been understood as a leisure journey in the fashion of the Grand Tour seems now to become part of a larger puzzle, a game of international politics and diplomatic relationships. The tourist does not travel for his own enjoyment only. He becomes an ambassador for King and Country, somebody on whose relations and experiences the state can draw, if only indirectly. This is of course a key notion for a small country like the Netherlands, which had – despite its small size and many powerful neighbors – managed to build up and keep a large empire of international trade over the centuries.⁵⁵⁵

But the second poem's emphasis on the traveler's return – the text thus balanced the pictorial focus on departure – sets a slightly different accent. It embodied once more the cultural and social mindset of the middle classes, this time by taking up their

⁵⁵³ ‘Daar Vonkt een dierbre gloed in eigen huis en haard/Neemt men van daar zijn vlucht met sterk gespierde vleuglen/De Wijze weet zijn kracht te vieren en te teuglen/Hij kent de weelde hem in't welkom thuis bewaard'

⁵⁵⁴ See Withey, *Grand tours and Cook's tours*, 343. For the belief in peace-bringing forces of railway infrastructure building, see Irene Anastasiadou, "Networks of power: Railway visions in interwar Europe".

⁵⁵⁵ The importance of and the success in international, or rather colonial trade for the Netherlands is depicted on the main pavilion of *Centraal Station*'s façade: an allegory of Lady Amsterdam receiving gifts from the Colonies. See chapter 1.

idealization of the private home. This comes as no surprise: the power of the Dutch commercial empire and the country's wealth is deeply rooted in a mercantile society.

The Dutch concept of state thus bears a thoroughly bourgeois imprint, notwithstanding the popularity of the House of Orange. Again, this interpretation can be set in yet a wider context: industrial, especially urban, modernity has been associated with a sense of displacement ever since Baudelaire and Simmel.⁵⁵⁶ Business travelers, tourists and their involuntary counterparts (immigrants, exiles, refugees) were separated from home and exposed to new experiences. As the resulting sense of alienation was to become a predominant feature of modernity, the poem suggests a possible refuge in the idealized privacy of the Home.

I.2 Frankfurt/Main Hauptbahnhof (1879-1888): The Bildungsreise, and the Honeymoon of the Middle-Classes as a Gendered Form of the Grand Tour

In Frankfurt/Main's central station, built 1879-1888 by Georg P. Eggert, we find a contemporary but – despite some superficial similarities – quite different approach to depict the idea of traveling. In 1888, six statues were erected, showing different types of travelers. There was a tourist, an emigrant, a student on a field trip, a commercial traveler, a pair of honeymooners, and – again – a tutor and his student taking the Grand Tour. The statues were executed by four different sculptors and erected high above the heads of the public, respectively framing the side entrances to the Great Hall on the outer façade, and the portal leading from the platforms into the hall.⁵⁵⁷

Whoever had conceived the Frankfurt program – presumably the architect, although sources are unfortunately lost – had been aware of the various motives and motivations for undertaking a journey, and tried to generate a comprehensive understanding of late nineteenth century traveling by displaying several, if not all of them. Despite this encyclopedic approach the focus was nevertheless on middle-class travelers, with the

⁵⁵⁶ See especially: F. W. Leakey, *Baudelaire, Les fleurs du mal*, Landmarks of world literature (Cambridge New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).and Charles Baudelaire, *Paris spleen, 1869: translated by Louise Varese* (New York, NY: New Directions, 1970); Georg Simmel, "The Stranger", in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. Kurt Wolff (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1950b); Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life", in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. Kurt Wolff (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1950a).

⁵⁵⁷ See also chapter 1.

single exception of the “Emigrant”.⁵⁵⁸ Unfortunately, most of the statues of travelers have been removed during later reconstruction, so that one can only guess at their appearance. However, Hermann Becker, an artist who had himself participated in the competition for the station’s embellishment, left extensive descriptions.⁵⁵⁹ Thus we learn that all the statues showed boys or young men in antique garments, so as to represent an abstract concept rather than a realistic person.

Today, only the two sandstone groups showing “The Grand Tour”, by Friedrich Schierholz (figure 4-6), and “The Honeymoon” by Anton Carl Rumpf (figure 4-7), each measuring 270 cm, are still preserved. The “Honeymooners” are shown as a young couple in antique clothes seated on a bench or a sort of open carriage not unlike a chariot. The bride, sitting at the left, bends her head towards her husband, who points something out to her with his left hand raised. The group “Tutor and Student” consists of a young man to the left and a boy, the former once more indicating something with his outstretched right arm while the latter follows his gaze and takes notes. They, too, are seated in what seems to be a chariot or open cart, and dressed in antique clothing. Becker praises both groups although he admits that they are “a little bit academic if judged from the latest, more naturalistic fashion.”⁵⁶⁰

Upon a closer look at these two remaining groups of sculpture, one finds that the iconography of “The Grand Tour” strongly resembles the putto-travelers from Amsterdam. Here again, the different roles assumed are clear: the older man points out sights and explains what there is to be seen, the younger boy listens attentively and takes notes on the small slate he is balancing on his knee. But the use of putti in Amsterdam did not allow Roskam to discriminate much between tutor and student. Schierholz, on the other side, could bring out their physical differences, showing their age, attire and habitus, so that he needed not to rely on gesture alone to indicate their different roles.

Although antique attire and posture resemble each other, the Frankfurt program is more modern than the Amsterdam frieze, because it tried to grasp the idea of travel in its many already established modes. That makes the appearance of the Grand Tour

⁵⁵⁸ This has already been noted by Klein in Klein, “Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof und seine Rezeption im deutschen Bahnhofsbau des ausgehenden 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts”, 48–49. Klein assumes the Emigrant to be mostly of proletarian origin, emigrating to escape poor living conditions or political prosecution.

⁵⁵⁹ Cited by Schomann in Schomann, *Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof*, 145.

⁵⁶⁰ Hermann Becker, quoted in Schomann, *Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof*, 146. My translation.

amongst the depicted travel types all the more surprising. After all, even though the Frankfurt group was no longer used as an archetype that encompasses all forms of traveling, the Grand Tour was no longer practiced in the depicted form. But we have already seen how the middle classes first adopted and then transformed the Grand Tour concept for their own purposes. Like in Amsterdam, the group stands therefore emblematically for its modern derivation, the bourgeois *Bildungsreise*.

But what about its counterpart, the Honeymoon? This travel form can be described as a Grand Tour in an especially gendered form, culminating in an especially patronizing view of the female traveler, hinted on before. This view becomes manifest in the position of the Honeymooners which mirrors the pose of their Grand Tour counterparts. But here, it is the husband who explains the journey's sights to his young wife. There is an intimacy in their posture, expressed by the way she slightly leans in to him and he wraps his arm around her waist that seems very befitting to a newlywed couple. At the same time, their posture is proof to a heavily gendered notion of traveling: maybe the man had already visited the Continent in his youth and is now revisiting the stations of his former journey. And even if it was his first such voyage, it would be the man who was in charge of the itinerary and, by way of the guide-book, possess all the relevant information. Her body language suggests that she accepts his superior role as the more experienced traveler, and gladly follows his lecture.

The iconographical similarities in posture and gesture between the two Frankfurt groups parallel also the similarities in the concept of the two different types of travel. The Honeymoon grew, after all, out of the tradition of the Grand Tour – except that the educational goal in this case was not exclusively aimed at the remnants of classical culture or the pleasures of picturesque landscape. In her study of Victorian honeymoons, Helena Michie shows how the geographical transformation of the journey mirrors the social, psychological, and last but not least bodily transformations the newlywed couples experienced – from essentially virginal and homosocial to legibly heterosexual.

“It is perhaps not surprising that this undertaking so often, for those who could afford it, involved a journey away from the familiar landscapes to a place that thematized otherness in its very terrain: upper-middle-class honeymoons, replete with their consuming rituals of

tourism, sex, and shopping, produced, if successful, different kinds of knowledge.”⁵⁶¹

As for the significance of her sample – Michie examines only British honeymooners – it seems to be wide enough to be – at least to some extent – applicable to continental couples as well. Her research allows her to

“identify three different kinds of journeys typical of Victorian honeymooners of the aristocracy, the upper-working classes, and the upper-middle and middle classes respectively. The first involved visiting relatives or borrowing a friend or relative’s home; the second consisted of a trip to the English seacoast or other forms of domestic tourism; and the third [...] involved a trip to the European continent.”⁵⁶²

Although the ritual of honeymooning had thus been adopted by the upper-working classes as early as 1865, their itinerary remained domestic, and the length of their trip rarely exceeded the “canonical fortnight”.⁵⁶³ It was the middle and upper-middle classes who could afford to venture on trips following the tracks of the Grand Tour: it would take several weeks or even months to do a tour of the capital cities of the Continent and the picturesque scenery of the Alps and the Rhine valley. That this form of honeymooning was also in Germany dominated by the educated upper-middle and middle classes is corroborated by the sculpture’s iconographical resemblance to the Grand Tour-group.

The unequal roles of husband and wife during their journeys seem to be well documented. The written accounts of some such bridal journeys that Michie examined emphasized “the cultural demands placed upon the woman honeymooner in the effort to align herself with her partner and with the educated touristic gaze.”⁵⁶⁴ Even if women had been to Rome or the Alps before, they were now expected to see through their husband’s eyes and to experience – often intrinsically masculine gendered – places quite

⁵⁶¹ Helena Michie, "Victorian Honeymoons: Sexual Reorientation and the "Sights" of Europe", *Victorian Studies* 43, no. 2 (2001), here: 234.

⁵⁶² Helena Michie, "Victorian Honeymoons: Sexual Reorientation and the "Sights" of Europe", 249, annotation 3.

⁵⁶³ Helena Michie, "Victorian Honeymoons: Sexual Reorientation and the "Sights" of Europe", 249, annotation 4.

⁵⁶⁴ Helena Michie, "Victorian Honeymoons: Sexual Reorientation and the "Sights" of Europe", 235.

literally from his point of view. The phenomenon of female attunement to the male gaze is crucial to the Frankfurt statue's composition: instead of looking lovingly at each other, the couple's gazes seem to meet at some point far beyond the husband's extended arm. The man determines which sights are to be shared by pointing them out to his wife. Her role is to follow his gaze, and to subordinate herself to his guidance. The honeymoon in its described form appears as an especially gendered derivative of the Grand Tour, with the wife as student and the husband assuming the role of tutor.

In her dissertation on the architectural history of Frankfurt's Hauptbahnhof, Birgit Klein includes the sculptural program without giving it the benefit of an in-depth analysis. All the same she concludes that the sculptures of travelers symbolize the consequences of technical and economical transformations, especially the "enhanced experience of environment and greater mobility"⁵⁶⁵ of the people in the nineteenth century. Pointing out that the program depicts predominantly bourgeois, i.e. privileged travelers, she criticizes that a large number of social groups using the train, such as commuters, workers and farmers

"are excluded from those parts of the station's architectural sculpture which refer iconographically to the topics Travel and Traffic. Only bourgeois travelers seem to be worthy of depiction within the sculptural program of a Wilhelminian railway station."⁵⁶⁶

Actually, this restriction to upper-middle-class travelers should not have come as a surprise to Klein. After all, Frankfurt had been *Reichsstadt*, until it was annexed by Prussia in 1866, so that the city had a history of being ruled by burghers. The construction of the new Hauptbahnhof, which was to replace the three former stations in the west of Frankfurt, is an illuminating example of the tug-of-war for the city's governance. In 1876 Berlin had to consent to the wishes of the City Council concerning the location of the construction site within the city. At the same time the jury that decided the public architectural competition consisted entirely of members of the

⁵⁶⁵ Klein, "Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof und seine Rezeption im deutschen Bahnhofsbau des ausgehenden 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts", 48. My translation.

⁵⁶⁶ Klein, "Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof und seine Rezeption im deutschen Bahnhofsbau des ausgehenden 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts", 48–49. My translation.

Bauakademie (Academy for Architecture) in Berlin.⁵⁶⁷ Klein herself underlines how architectural elements from castles and cathedrals were employed to legitimate the social position of Frankfurt's bourgeoisie:

“The quotation of traditional historical forms of architecture shows not only that the new ruling classes of the industrial era wanted to follow in the steps of the former rulers. The station's sculptural programme depicts moreover their own economic and cultural achievements.”⁵⁶⁸

If the station was indeed supposed to underscore the important economical, cultural, and political role of the bourgeoisie within the Prussian Empire - why should it account for the working classes in its embellishment? There is yet another, even more important reason why Klein's critique is beside the point: the objective of the sculptural program had been to create types of travelers to depict the idea of “Travel”, not to show who was using the railway in general. And while trains were indeed the first real mass transport system available and – in some countries under certain circumstances – affordable for the working classes, these latter did not yet have the leisure time to undertake the kind of long journey that was still associated with leisure travel in the late nineteenth century. It was only during the Nazi-Regime that the German workers achieved the legal right to 6-12 days of paid vacation per annum.⁵⁶⁹

Contemporaries naturally took the hierarchical class distinctions embodied by the statues for granted. Their critique was once again far more concerned with the successful reading of the program, for without a commentary it seems to have been difficult to identify the meaning of the sculptures. And indeed, even favorable contemporary critics called for an explanation, as did the reviewer for the *Deutsche Bauzeitschrift*:

⁵⁶⁷ See Klein, "Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof und seine Rezeption im deutschen Bahnhofsbau des ausgehenden 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts", 19ff.

⁵⁶⁸ Klein, "Der Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof und seine Rezeption im deutschen Bahnhofsbau des ausgehenden 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts", 113.

⁵⁶⁹ The Nazi-Regime of course immediately used the new market of workers' tourism as a propaganda tool by monopolizing it through its KdF-Organization. For more information see Christine Keitz, *Reisen als Leitbild: Die Entstehung des modernen Massentourismus in Deutschland* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1997).

“The architect has tried to adapt it [the rich sculptural embellishment of the architecture] to the building’s function – an intention, which is nevertheless not always recognizable out of the figures themselves but wants an elucidating explanation.”⁵⁷⁰

He then proceeded with his report in order to remedy exactly this lack of self evidence. The “elucidating explanation” was mostly necessitated by the mode of the sculptures’ depiction. As in Amsterdam, antique drapery is used to generalize the situation as timeless, but the antique attire makes it difficult to recognize the represented types for what they are. Without the proper nineteenth century attributes typical for the different types of travelers – like certain baggage, travel-clothes, or guide-books – it was very difficult to read and interpret the program correctly. A more “naturalistic manner”, such as Becker postulates, might have solved that problem. But there seems to have been a fear that it would have also thwarted the stab at generalization, at depicting types rather than portraying people, and hence, that the statues could not have been read as what they are: allegoric personifications of different travel forms.

I.3 Amsterdam Muiderpoort Station (1938): Migrating Geese as an Analogy for Modern Mass Tourism

As late as 1938 leisure travel was once more the topic of a railway station’s decoration: this time inside Amsterdam’s Muiderpoort station, built by H. G. J. Schelling. For the light modern entrance hall with its simple but impressing proportions, Heinrich Campendonk designed a round lead-and-glass window called “Vogeltrek” (bird migration; figure 4-8). A flock of geese and some smaller birds, probably seagulls, are flying from right to left over the ocean, symbolized by some stylized waves. Only three of the smaller birds fly in the opposite direction, perhaps because seagulls are not migratory. Since the hall is well lit on three sides by clear-glass windows and additional electric lamps, the window was definitely not installed for functional reasons. Its single purpose was decorative. Why, then, would the artist choose such a zoological topic? While depictions of (industrial) history, landscapes, or personifications of cities were

⁵⁷⁰ Karl Emil Otto Fritsch and F. W. Büsing, "Der neue Haupt-Personen-Bahnhof in Frankfurt a. M.: (Fortsetzung aus No. 68 u. 72)", 554. My translation.

rather common, animals, and especially birds - other than heraldic ones - were not very frequently used to decorate railway stations.

Still, the experience of high speed during a train ride has been connected with analogies of flying like a bird from the beginning of railway travel. Already in the 1840s, the Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen had portrayed the experience of a journey with the still new railway in one of his travelogues, saying: “We put our magic horse in front of the cars and space disappears, we fly like clouds in a storm, as the migratory birds; our wild horse neighs and snorts, the steam mounts from its nostrils.”⁵⁷¹ Charles Dickens, too, had entitled his account of a railway journey from London to Paris “A Flight”.⁵⁷²

By comparing the speedy railway journey with flying, Anderson and Dickens helped establish a topos that would serve until well into the twentieth century.⁵⁷³ As Gijs Mom has shown, the metaphor was still used in the beginning of the twentieth century, even though he speaks of early automobiles.⁵⁷⁴ When it comes to railway travel, as late as 1924, the LNRR renamed the ‘Special Scotch Express’ ‘The Flying Scotsman’, with the train connecting London and Edinburgh under this name even today. From 1929, the ‘Oiseau Bleu’ (Blue Bird) served the route from Paris to Antwerp (extended 1936 to Amsterdam), and in 1933, the aerodynamic diesel train ‘Fliegender Hamburger’ (Flying Hamburger) connected Hamburg and Berlin as the worldwide fastest train, reaching up to 160 km/h.⁵⁷⁵

It is illuminating that Anderson picked the migratory birds as the most fitting analogy to the human traveler. It is they, after all, that fly twice a year over enormous distances to spend the cold winters in the warm South and the hot summers in the cool North, thus serving as an example to the leisure traveler. Towner remarks that in planning the itinerary,

⁵⁷¹ Quoted after Orvar Löfgren, *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 47.

⁵⁷² See Charles Dickens, *Selected Journalism 1850-1870*, Penguin classics (London, New York: Penguin Books, 1997).

⁵⁷³ The metaphor is also evident in the ubiquitous sign of the winged wheel which from the very beginning symbolized the Railway all over the world.

⁵⁷⁴ See Gijs Mom, *The electric vehicle: Technology and expectations in the automobile age* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 38.

⁵⁷⁵ See Brian Hollingsworth and Arthur Cook, *The Great Book of Trains* (St. Paul, MN: MBI, 2001), Karl Grieder, *Berühmte Züge und Lokomotiven: Eisenbahnfahrten in aller Welt* (Zürich: Orell Füssli, 1987).

“the overall impression gained is of Grand Tourists moving to northern Italy in the summer months and visiting southern Italy during the winter. North of the Alps, seasonal patterns were less clear although tours of Switzerland took place in the summer, generally between July and September.”⁵⁷⁶

Later on, industrial development and the emergence of Alpine winter sports made tourism more independent from the seasons, but in its origins tourists went to “hibernate” in the South just like the flocks of migrating birds.

Thus, the geese and seagulls depicted in Muiderpoort’s window are enriched with a symbolic significance. What would have been in another context – say, a school or museum – a mere decoration with an ornithological topic, obtains in the setting of the railway station an obvious and easily understandable secondary meaning: The birds’ twice-yearly migration is a metaphor for the railway passenger’s supposed wanderlust.

II Landscapes and Destinations

For a long time, the skilled depiction of personae and animated objects was regarded as superior a skill than the depiction of lifeless matter. Another criterion was the “nobility” of the subject matter. Thus, in the ranking of the genres as proposed by André Félibien in 1667, the genres of the art were ranked from allegories and historical subjects, to portraiture and genre scenes. Next came paintings of animals, then still-lives, followed by sea- and landscapes.⁵⁷⁷ But by the mid nineteenth century, landscape had become the dominant genre on the art market. It was common for artists to meet during the summer months in villages on the countryside where they executed first sketches, later fully finished paintings “en plein-air”. The most famous of these artists’ colonies include Barbizon and Pont-Aven in France, Volendam in the Netherlands, Worpswede and Dachau in Germany, or Skagen in Denmark. In her study of rural artists’ colonies, Nina

⁵⁷⁶ John Towner, "The Grand Tour: A Key Phase in the History of Tourism", 320.

⁵⁷⁷ André Félibien, *Conférences de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture pendant l'année 1667*, Réimpr. de l'éd. Paris, 1668 (Genf: Minkoff Repr., 1973). For more on Félibien, see Stefan Germer, *Kunst, Macht, Diskurs: Die intellektuelle Karriere des André Félibien im Frankreich von Louis XIV* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1997).

Lübbren⁵⁷⁸ has shown how the painters working in these villages helped to construct a collective image of the place by putting on canvas not merely what they saw, but also the “expectations, hopes, stereotypes and associations attached to the place.”⁵⁷⁹

Lübbren shows this process using Rob Shields’ theory of “place-images” and “place-myths”.⁵⁸⁰

“According to Shields, people attribute certain characteristics to places. By a process involving oversimplification, stereotyping, labeling and activating prejudices, these conceptions crystallize into symbolic formations, which Shields calls place-images. Collectively, a group of place-images makes up a place myth: a set of widely-held and distributed core-images toward which individuals orient their own experiences. Place-myths are powerful motors of meaning, and they stubbornly continue to govern what people think of a place even when it no longer conforms to the images.”⁵⁸¹

The artists were “negotiating a representational and cultural terrain, admitting certain aspects of the environment and rejecting others, moving between the realities of a place, the ideal image of what a place should be like, and the possibilities opened or foreclosed by the conventions of pictorial tradition.”⁵⁸² Thus, they constructed place-myths that became a powerful instrument in promoting the tourism industry. It was aimed at an urban audience longing for the ideal world of the pre-industrial countryside, a world that was held alive through landscape art and made available by the modern railway net and the tourism industry.

Lübbren has shown how the artists fled established tourist resorts only to promote new sites through their paintings, and how the tourist industry then followed the artists to their colonies and established new destinations for the ever-growing number of leisure travelers who wanted to see for real the dreams that the artists sold in their paintings.

⁵⁷⁸ Nina Lübbren, *Rural artists' colonies in Europe, 1870-1910*, Issues in art history series (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001.).

⁵⁷⁹ Lübbren, *Rural artists' colonies in Europe, 1870-1910*, 115.

⁵⁸⁰ See Rob Shields, *Places on the margin: Alternative geographies of modernity*, International library of sociology (London, New York: Routledge, 1992), 46-7, 60-1.

⁵⁸¹ Lübbren, *Rural artists' colonies in Europe, 1870-1910*, 115f.

⁵⁸² Lübbren, *Rural artists' colonies in Europe, 1870-1910*, 115.

Looking at landscape art in railway stations, the next section shows how the tourist industry stopped following the artist and started taking the initiative. Tourist associations and railway companies – through commissions and under the veil of patronage – began to actively use painters and paintings to sell their products, turning Landscapes into Destinations.

II.1 London Euston Station (1848): Landscapes as a Teaching Device

A watercolor sketch by the architect Philip Charles Hardwick (figure 4-9) shows that he intended to lavishly decorate the main hall of his prototype of all monumental metropolitan railway stations, London's Euston Station of 1848. The sketch shows some bas-reliefs with allegorical depictions of major cities along the railway line in the corners under the ceiling, a statue of George Stephenson in the centre of the hall, and a sculpture group consisting of Britannia with Mercury and Industry above the main entrance door. On the walls, we discern a cycle of monumental landscape frescoes. But while the sculptural embellishment was executed and installed⁵⁸³, the murals were never painted.

Wagner assumed that the “gigantic landscape paintings depict idiosyncrasies of the landscape crossed by the line”⁵⁸⁴, in analogy to the bas-reliefs of the cities, which sported landmarks or other typical items. This seems a sensible assumption, and there are well-known examples for such decorations, even if from a later period.

Nevertheless, a closer look at the life-size figures and antique architecture in the frescoes suggest that they were conceived as “heroic landscapes” in the tradition of Claude Lorrain and Nicholas Poussin, who tried to enhance their landscapes with historical scenes. Unfortunately, the definite subject of the murals cannot be determined, but obviously the notion that monumental painting should serve an educational goal which a simple landscape could not fulfill was still strong in mid-nineteenth century England.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, when the railway companies had become rich and powerful contributors to the nations' economics, they still shied away from the extra

⁵⁸³ See chapters 1, 2, and 3 and N. N., "New Station of the London and North-Western Railway, Euston Square"; N. N., "General Meeting-Room of the London and North-Western Railway", *The Illustrated London News*, Sept. 15, 1849. The Britannia-group and the statue of Stephenson are today in the National Railway Museum in York.

⁵⁸⁴ Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, 167.

costs for paintings or frescoes. Although not unheard of, such pictorial embellishment would remain much rarer than the ubiquitous sculptural embellishment, which was, after all, considered part of the architectural structure. But by now, landscape as a genre had firmly established itself in the art market and had begun to play an increasingly important role in station decoration. But it was not for altruistic reasons of educating the people that the companies invested this kind of extra money in the embellishment of their stations – rather they used landscapes quite explicitly to advertise their railway network and to promote their own role in tourism industry.

II.2 Basel SBB (1920s): Natural Sights and Pre-Industrial Nostalgia as Advertisement for Tourist Associations

Already in 1974, Christine Kyburz undertook a quantitative survey of landscapes for the catalogue of the exhibition “Schweiz im Bild – Bild der Schweiz”.⁵⁸⁵ In the archives of the Schweizerische Bundesbahn (SBB; Swiss Federal Railway), she had discovered reference to 193 artworks, created between 1907 and 1970, about 50% of which were already removed or destroyed at the time of her survey.

The lion’s share had consisted of landscapes, dominated by clearly recognizable cityscapes or mountain ridges such as the Matterhorn. Most of the employed artists painted motives from their home regions and were nationally, sometimes even internationally, acknowledged painters. Unlike the works created for Paris Gare de Lyon, most of the landscapes were not ordered by a big railway company monopolizing train travel for a certain region – the SBB was created 1902 by nationalizing several private companies - but by the smaller private lines serving the tourist resorts, and by tourist organizations, often banding together to pay for the work. As a rule, the SBB offered the walls for free, thus trying to aestheticize the plump directness of conventional posters while at the same time offering the tourist industry space to promote their ends. Some documents allow inferring the patrons’ intentions. In those cases, there is no doubt that artwork, especially the landscapes, were seen as a form of advertisement. Frequently, the tourism associations (Tourismusvereine) or associations of the hotel industry (Hotelierevereine) refused to pay if they doubted the promotional value or “*Reklamewert*” of a mural.⁵⁸⁶ The call for proposals for the competition in

⁵⁸⁵ Kyburz, "Zum malerischen Schmuck der Bahnhöfe", 74–82.

⁵⁸⁶ See Kyburz, "Zum malerischen Schmuck der Bahnhöfe", 76.

Neuchâtel insisted, on the other hand, that the landscapes depict a tourist view or picturesque sight although it was to be in no way habitual or have the aspect of a local advertisement.⁵⁸⁷ Obviously the officials were well aware that Swiss landscape painting destined for public buildings had been heavily influenced by poster art and advertisement, and wanted to counteract this development.

But for the artists to comply with the conflicting objects of their patrons meant that they had to evolve a commercialized landscape, a landscape that renounced the painter's personal style in favor of a landscape typology that seemed almost coded in its reduction to easily identifiable sights. Even the composition was standardized, mainly featuring panorama or bird's eye views. According to Kyburz, these landscapes can be divided in three major groups: a) sublime landscapes, focusing on snow-covered glaciers and tall, ragged summits, b) idyllic landscapes, including folkloristic elements such as shepherds in traditional costume blowing an alpenhorn and c) historicizing landscapes emphasizing medieval buildings and ignoring the outward signs of modern industrialization.⁵⁸⁸ Obviously, it is possible to combine elements of several of these groups in one painting.

The entrance hall of Basel SBB station, built between 1905 and 1907 by Emil Faesch and Emanuel La Roche in a neobaroque style, still contains as of today several landscapes that fit Kyburz' typology. In 1927, three panels with landscapes were installed above the ticket stalls, each in its own simple black wooden frame but all connected pictorially to show the illusion of a mountainous panorama. (Figure 4-10)

The lower frame bears in white paint presumably the names of the depicted regions, along with the name of the railway company serving it and the altitude of the destinations: the "Jungfraubahn Jungfrauoch 3457 m S/M" to the left was painted by Ernst Hodel (1881-1955) and paid for by the Jungfraubahn Railway Company, named after the mountain range forming its main destination. (Figure 4-11) Werner Miller (1892-1959) painted "Gstaad 1100 m S/M" and "Berner Oberland" in the middle for the Gstaad Tourist Association (figure 4-12), and the Directors of the Rhätische Bahn Railway Company commissioned Hans B. Wieland (1867-1945) to produce

⁵⁸⁷ See Kyburz, "Zum malerischen Schmuck der Bahnhöfe", 76.

⁵⁸⁸ See Kyburz, "Zum malerischen Schmuck der Bahnhöfe", 78.

“Silsersee/Engadin/Graubünden” to the right.⁵⁸⁹ (Figure 4-13) The subdued color scheme is dominated by shades of brown and ochre for the mountains and rocks, little blue sky, even less green pastures, and the obligatory white flecks of the glaciers.

On the east wall, to the right when facing the ticket stalls, a large painting shows a view of the Lake of Lucerne, naming the destination tourist-friendly in English, German and French. (Figure 4-14) Like the “Jungfrauoch”, it was painted by Ernst Hodel and probably hung – like the others – in the late 1920s. Today, its aspect is obstructed by a row of public telephones, although few people pay attention to the enormous canvas anyway. In the left part of the picture, a large cliff adorned with the odd crippled tree serves as a repoussoir for the lake in the middle ground. With broad flat color fields in shades of ochre and brown the artist tries to give the landscape a modern look, while at the same time keeping it timeless: no people, no dwellings, no signs of human civilization can be discerned. Only a very close look allows the inquiring mind to guess some houses in a couple of yellowish cubes on the opposite shore of the lake, which mirrors the mountain ridge in a smudge of green water.

Finally, there is a painting of the obligatory Matterhorn (figure 4-15), obligingly entitled “Zermatt-Gornergrat 3136 M. – Matterhorn”. Facing the “Lake of Lucerne” on the west wall, to the left of the ticket stalls, it was painted by Ekkehard Kohlund (1878-1974) in 1928 by order of the Gornergratbahn Railway Company.⁵⁹⁰ The viewer stands on a mountain pasture while opposite the magnificent peak fills the horizon and most of the cobalt blue sky. Fluffy clouds and glaciers sprinkle the summit with white. A simple path leads between rocks past two typical wooden huts and disappears in a valley. In a way, the artist managed to combine in this masterpiece all three types of landscape that Kyburz has described: the majestic summit stands in the sublime-landscape tradition, but the evening light and the intense colors soften the effect towards the more idyllic foreground. The traditional buildings serve both to heighten the folklore and to de-historicize the situation.

⁵⁸⁹ Information on the paintings can be found in Dorothee Huber, *Bahnhof Basel SBB* (Bern: Gesellschaft für Schweizerische Kunstgeschichte, 2004). I am very grateful to Samantha Pellegrini and Martin Vogt of SBB Historic Archive in Bern to make the information available to me.

⁵⁹⁰ Originally, the “Matterhorn” served to complement the painting “Rhône Glacier – Rhonegletscher”, that Kohlund had painted 1925 for the Furka-Oberalp-Bahn railway company. According to Huber, *Bahnhof Basel SBB*, it hangs today in an office in the tower of Basle’s French Station.

The tendency to gloss over reality with an idealized landscape, depicting familiar mountain ridges and especially the Matterhorn as quintessentially Suisse even in places where the natural landscape was significantly branded by the reality of factory towers and modern urbanity was of course neither special to Switzerland nor in any way new for the early twentieth-century. Quite the contrary: the raise of landscape art in the nineteenth century owes much to the rural nostalgia of the ever increasing number of city dwellers. It is only too clear that the captions on all three described paintings serve to aid the undecided travelers-to-be to pick their favorite destination.

II.3 Paris Gare de Lyon (1900-1905): The Compagnie Paris-Lyon-Marseille as Sponsor of the Fine Arts

In France, it was not the tourist industry relying on the rail, but a railway company itself that most famously used landscapes for promoting its own ends on a large scale. In preparation for the World Exhibition of 1900 the Compagnie du Paris, Lyon, Méditerranée (PLM) decided to order 36 large landscape paintings for the restaurant in the new building of the Gare de Lyon in Paris. In her analysis of the decoration, Pauline Prevost-Marcilhacy⁵⁹¹ comes to some conclusions about the sort of decorative program that the French railway companies were willing to pay for.

The landscape paintings in question cover the walls of the new Gare de Lyon's restaurant. They depict regions and cities along the railway line, hanging a view of Mont Blanc, a cityscape of Algiers or the Castle of Fontainebleau next to each other without an obvious sense of order. There seems to be a focus on the regions of Southern France, and the sun in these pictures shines on a beautiful countryside, full of rich agriculture and happy people. The paintings themselves strongly resemble picture postcards and posters, thus more than anything else promoting the depicted regions and cities as suitable destinations for as yet undecided travelers. Their promotional character is underlined by the randomized order of their hanging that reminds of the ways in which advertising posters were hung. Prevost-Marcilhacy can even show that there is not only a strong link between the landscapes and the "placards décoratifs", an artistically superior form of the contemporary advertisement posters, but that some of the Gare de Lyon landscapes were indeed, if only in detail, re-used as "affiches publicitaire". Thus not only the program that stands behind the decoration is very

⁵⁹¹ Prevost-Marcilhacy, "Le décor du Buffet de la Gare de Lyon", 144–154.

simple – the Glory of the PLM Railway Company – but also the seemingly arbitrary organization of the paintings is inspired by the ways of fin de siècle advertising procedures.

A bit surprisingly, Prevost-Marcilhacy identifies as “key” for the iconographic program one of three paintings that were only added in 1905, four years after the official opening of the Buffet to the public.⁵⁹² “The Theatre of Orange” by Albert Maignan (figures 4-16a and 4-16b) shows some of the Company’s principal shareholders together with the stars of nineteenth century French theatre: Sarah Bernhardt, Julia Bartet, Gabrielle Réjane and Edmond Rostand. Prevost-Marcilhacy’s interpretation of the program states the obvious: the landscapes are all part of the PLM-network, and the Company marks its territory and at the same time presents itself as “veritable patrons of industrial art”.⁵⁹³

I would go a bit further than that: Commissioning thirty-six paintings for the decoration of a railway station restaurant can hardly be called “industrial art”, even if none of the artist belongs exactly to the avant-garde. But the deliberate combination of railway officials and theater jet-set suggests an affiliation of PLM with the other Fine Arts as well. That the painting, which takes up an important position in the Grande Salle, replaced a double view of Cannes and Menton is revealing: Either the PLM wanted to project a new image of the company as a patron of the Arts, or it felt that this concept had not been made sufficiently clear by the previous arrangement.

It is surprising only to the modern observer that the art and the artists supported by the PLM were far from the then-modern currents of avant-garde art, as represented by the impressionists, or the realists following Courbet. On the contrary, the PLM encouraged pure and rather unimaginative academicism: while most of the thirty painters working at the Gare de Lyon had exhibited in the Salon and even won some medals, almost none of them had acquired a big reputation outside his specialist field or even outside his home city. The Company, that had built its riches and power from using the latest technology in engineering and advancing modernity to areas hitherto embossed by agriculture, was not interested in promoting an equally modern art. Contemporary critics realized this and decried it as “retrograde, retarding and outrageous”.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹² See Prevost-Marcilhacy, "Le décor du Buffet de la Gare de Lyon", 147.

⁵⁹³ Prevost-Marcilhacy, "Le décor du Buffet de la Gare de Lyon", 147.

⁵⁹⁴ P. Fortuny, "Nouvelles gares, à propos de l'inauguration de la gare de Lyon", here: 159.

From the Company's point of view it seemed reasonable: Like any parvenu the railway tried to legitimate itself by adopting the time-honored customs of the establishment. Therefore, in an effort to blend in with other public architecture of the late nineteenth century, railway stations were built in the historicist style of their time, rather than taking the possibilities of steel and glass construction of the railway sheds to their logical end. What is true for the architecture is true for the details of the decoration: the Compagnie PLM was addressing a rather conservative, bourgeois public. The modern styles in painting were far from being widely accepted. Commissioning avant-garde artwork for their prestigious new Railway station would have won them maybe the appraisal of a few contemporary art critics, but it would also and most certainly have provoked strong opposition amongst the public.

Besides, the railway company's principals were part of the established bourgeoisie themselves. There is no way of knowing what kind of paintings they personally liked, but the probabilities run high that they actually were not too keen on avant-garde art. And even if they privately supported non-academic artists, it is doubtful that they would have invested their shareholders' money in something that, for all they knew, was just a volatile fashion. If they wanted to promote the arts, and use this sponsoring as part of their public relations strategy, there was no need to risk a lot of money or a public debate on the style of the commissioned art – the very fact that the restaurant in the Gare de Lyon had such a generous decoration at all sufficed.

III Promoting Wanderlust while Overcoming Notions on Class and Gender

In the nineteenth century, the railways became the main means to literally mobilize society: thanks to the increasing network of rails, ever growing parts of the population could afford to travel, be it a day trip to the closest seaside for a worker or a three months stay in a fashionable, and often distant, winter resort for a member of the upper classes. With passenger traffic growing steadily, the railway companies soon began to actively promote their role in the nascent industry of mass tourism. In order to reach all social strata, the images used as station embellishment gradually changed. While in the late nineteenth century depictions of railway travelers and their destinations still betrayed the world view, artistic routines and educational preferences of the middle-classes, the embellishment of the ongoing twentieth century increasingly included the

horizon of the working classes: both in form (non-allegoric depictions) and content (mass traveling, rural nostalgia of industrialized urbanites of all classes).

In order to develop an iconography of railway travel, artists in the late nineteenth century fell back on the pictorial tradition of the Grand Tour that had been established in the eighteenth century. In Roskam's Amsterdam frieze, the Grand Tour came to stand emblematically for all forms of modern leisure travel. The set of sculptures in Frankfurt is no less anachronistic, but at least this program acknowledges the variety of contemporary travel forms. Even so, when it comes to the types of recreational travel looked at in this chapter, artists used the Grand Tour as a symbol for its more modern derivative, the Bildungsreise, as cultivated by the affluent middle and upper-middle classes.

The focus on the middle-classes can also be seen in the landscapes depicting the promoted destinations. The very splendor of the "Train bleu" restaurant is directed at the more affluent clients of the company. The occasional identification figure in the scenes is a well dressed specimen of the bourgeoisie; while the lower classes only appear as picturesque native fishermen or shepherdesses. (Figures 4-17, 4-18) The working classes were clearly not included in the addressed "target group". Even the variety of statues in Frankfurt ignores the working classes and their travel behavior. (The sole exception is formed by the Frankfurt Emigrant, who was probably prevalently working class – but then again not really traveling for the fun of it.)

While the emphasis on middle-class traveling does not mirror the actual realities of railway usage, it does reflect both the bourgeois claim of the railway as their very own achievement⁵⁹⁵ and a manifest assumption about who was entitled to travel for sheer leisure. Obviously, or so the iconography of the nineteenth century suggests, long-distance travel was still the exclusive domain of the upper and middle-classes.

Campendonk's Muiderpoort window on the other hand is free of class distinctions. But in the 1930s, social realities had changed: by now, members of all classes could afford to travel, and members of all classes did. Modern mass tourism was born, although the real 'explosion' would only occur after the war. The analogy of the migrating bird includes everybody, no matter their social affiliation, since everybody could identify with the birds' wanderlust.

⁵⁹⁵ See also Wilhelm Lübke, "Die heutige Kunst und die Kunstwissenschaft", *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 1866, 4; Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, 66.

As for the form, the nineteenth century artists obviously agreed about the mode of depiction, which was allegorical and in the antique manner of the academies, even if the subject was contemporary and essentially modern in substance. This rather old-fashioned approach was diametrically opposed to the inherent modernity of the technology epitomized by the railway architecture, especially of the train sheds. It was congruent, though, with the historic eclecticism that the architects had used when designing the entrance buildings in a way to procure for them a place amongst the established monumental buildings of the time, like theatres or city halls: allegories, by means of their degree of abstraction and the required intellectual effort in deciphering them, were considered as lifting any topic from dry, anecdotic specificity to a sublime, general idea in the Grand Style.

Despite its ubiquitous pervasiveness, this approach was opposing even the views of contemporary avant-garde art theory, which declared allegories as useless for the depiction of modern topics – maybe quite correctly, because most of them needed further commentaries to be understood. Hence the major point of critique: the new allegories were not comprehensible for the wide range of public they were addressing. But they were still seen as preferable to realist depictions which were feared to be banal or prosaic.⁵⁹⁶ Using any allegory, even of unintelligible meaning marked the embellishment as “grand style”, fit for the educated upper-classes. In short, the “visual code” (allegory) had become almost more important than its content – almost, but not quite. The chosen allegories are by no means arbitrary, and the inclusion of texts or a published explanation helps to overcome what Joachim Knape calls “rhetorical resistance”: the difficulty of ensuring that the meaning intended by the author of any one text or visual sign (orator) is taken up and correctly understood by the reader/holder of an artwork.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁶ See Burckhardt, "Die Allegorie in den Künsten: 1887"; Hugo Blümner, *Über den Gebrauch der Allegorie in den bildenden Künsten* (Freiburg im Breisgau, Tübingen: Mohr, 1881), 6. See also Wappenschmidt, *Allegorie, Symbol und Historienbild im späten 19. Jahrhundert*; Wagner, *Allegorie und Geschichte*, 79–81.

⁵⁹⁷ For a more detailed introduction into Knape's theory of the orator see Joachim Knape, *Was ist Rhetorik?*, Universal-Bibliothek, vol. 18044 (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2000), 18044. For his still insufficient but very interesting attempt to translate his concepts into a “visual sign theory” (Bildzeichentheorie) see Joachim Knape, "Rhetorik", in *Bildwissenschaft: Disziplinen, Themen, Methoden*, ed. Klaus Sachs-Hombach, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2005) and Joachim Knape, "Bildrhetorik: Einführung in die Beiträge des Bandes", in *Bildrhetorik: [zweites Tübinger Rhetorikgespräch am 4. und 5. Oktober 2002]*, ed. Tübinger Rhetorikgespräch, Saecvla spiritalia (Baden-Baden: Koerner, 2007)

With respect to the artwork presented in this chapter: While the rather dowdy putto-frieze in Amsterdam Centraal Station tried to depict the concept of Leisure Travel by allegorizing the action of traveling in a narrative sort of comic-strip, the Frankfurt typology of travelers attempted the same through personifications of different forms of journeys, acknowledging at the same time that the Grand Tour had lost its archetypical status. Both allegories were relying on outside commentaries or explanations to convey their message.

The Muiderpoort window captures the idea of Travel by using a flock of geese as a metaphor, thus comparing by analogy human wanderlust and the birds' drive for migration. Campendonk could deviate from the concept of allegory without giving up the search for a general meaning. The metaphor of the migrating birds, as opposed to the lifeless personifications of the late nineteenth century, is therefore the only example that requires no further written comment or explanation to be comprehensible across all social and educational strata.

As for the landscapes: We have already seen that the turn-of-the-century paintings in Paris were aimed at a middle-class audience. The inclusion of famous actresses and writers of the stage in its "key painting" is a sign for the softening of high-brow attitudes – patronage of the Fine Arts – into using celebrities for promotional ends. The picture-postcard elements of the Paris landscapes are in Basel and other Swiss stations further stylized into almost stylized clichés of rural, pre-industrial nostalgia that work for all city-dwelling railway clients of the inter-war period: the blue-collar factory worker as much as white-collar employees, and also their employers.

Chapter 5 Railways, Nation Building and National Mythology

It is a well known fact that nineteenth century nation building in Europe and the Western world strongly relied on economic transformations caused by industrialization and was supported by the development of supra-regional railway networks.⁵⁹⁸ Quite often, the foundations of these networks were laid by private investors who had recognized the signs of time and invested in technologies with future potential. However, frequently those daring entrepreneurs were inhibited from reaping the full fruits of their efforts, as hitherto reluctant governments recognized the potential and increasingly tried to gain control over the growing networks – either by gradually (re-)nationalizing them or by submitting them to systems of increasingly severe state control.

This happened especially in continental Europe (Germany: since 1879; Austria: 1841-1854 and again since 1877; Belgium: 1834- 1842 and again since 1872; France: state control of private investment since 1833 – the real national railway SNCF only since 1938; Hungary: since 1867; Italy: since 1874; The Netherlands: since 1860; Switzerland: after unsuccessful trials 1872 and 1888 since 1898; Russia: strategically coherent since 1881), and often more for strategic reasons than economic, while the Anglo-Saxon states of Great Britain and the United States of America hardly interfered directly with the powerful private railway companies.⁵⁹⁹

Only after World War I, with the creation of the Big Four in 1923, was the railway system in the UK severely reformed, but it was not nationalized until 1948 (to be privatized again in 1994).⁶⁰⁰ The United States still don't maintain a national railway system: Amtrak, which was founded in 1971, serves only the costly passenger transport, while the more profitable freight traffic and the actual rail network remained in private

⁵⁹⁸ See for instance Robert C. Allen, *The British industrial revolution in global perspective*, 3rd printing (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Dieter Ziegler, *Die Industrielle Revolution* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005); Hans-Werner Hahn, *Die Industrielle Revolution in Deutschland*, 2nd revised edition, *Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte*, vol. Bd. 49 (München: Oldenbourg, 2005), Bd. 49; Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*.

⁵⁹⁹ See v. Wittek, "Eisenbahnpolitik", 4 (1913): 103ff. Several countries had during a period of time a mixed system of private and national railway companies, which some countries retain, e. g. Spain, Sweden or Portugal. Economically poor states like Greece or Turkey only possessed private railway companies.

⁶⁰⁰ See Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford companion to British railway history*.

hands.⁶⁰¹ The power of the influential railway barons had nevertheless been broken by massive support of the budding automobile industry. The government subsidization of road and highway construction, while at the same time decreeing regulations concerning the railway companies' pricing politics, had endangered the companies' profit and cut down their former power. Unlike the European nation states, US American governments failed or neglected to take over the railway companies though, thus surely missing out on opportunities for infrastructure diversification.⁶⁰²

Notwithstanding its national or private ownership, passenger train stations have been perceived by their users as true public space from early on. As we have seen, this pseudo-publicness made an ideal space for marketing messages to the users of this space. So far, this dissertation concentrated on commercial messages, advertisement and promotion of the railway companies, their goals, their achievements and their products. The following chapter will focus on the promotion of political goals, especially in the context of nation building. To this aim, railway stations were embellished with references to issues of national mythology.

Possibly these nationalist depictions are more obvious and aggressively put forward in buildings of national or nationalized railway companies, but they do also appear in the stations of private companies. After all, their architecture and especially its embellishment is always an expression of a certain *zeitgeist*, and thus takes up on a nationalist or patriotic atmosphere. Besides, a well secured nation state is also a safely guarded economic region in which a railway company operates: passengers (and chairmen) are not only clients but also citizens. Therefore, the housing of national imagery is not specific for national railway companies but also for private ones.

The difference therefore lies not in the choice of referencing a national myth but in the way of its presentation: not if, but how is it done? This "how" seems to depend less on a modish style of a certain time, than on the point of development within the formation of the nation state.

The images of two railway stations opened at the beginning of the 1930s shall serve as examples: the US American Cincinnati Union Terminal's glorious mosaic decoration and a landscape cycle for Johannesburg Park Station in South Africa. Although one was

⁶⁰¹ See Brian Solomon, *Amtrak*, MBI railroad color history (St. Paul, MN: MBI, 2004).

⁶⁰² See Albro Martin, *Railroads triumphant: The growth, rejection, and rebirth of a vital American force* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992).

built and owned by seven private companies, and the other was the most prestigious construction of the national SAR&H, the two programs have much more in common than is visible at first sight. Both referred to the Frontier Myth, the Myth of the Empty Land, although naturally each in their national shape. And in both the importance of the design was highlighted by hiring talented and already well established artists. But while the USA had emerged strengthened from the biggest threat to its national conscience, namely the Civil War of 1861-65, and at the beginning of the 1930s embodied a truly settled nation state, the much younger South African Union was still in the process of actively implementing a national conscience and forming a common nation out of its diverse population. Still, both these programs' persuasive skills aim at an audience of citizens, of insiders who have shared the political history from within.

This inside view distinguishes them from two examples in the second part of this chapter, two railway stations opened after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71 in the *Reichsland* Alsace-Lorraine, whose German-speaking population had been socialized for centuries by French culture. Therefore, as "cultural aliens", they did not relate to or identify with the powerful myths that had driven the German nationalization for almost a century, a fact that had been ignored or misjudged in 1878 Strasburg Central Station, but was catered to in the reconstruction of Metz Central Station of 1908

I National History Transformed into National Mythology

I.1 Context: Nation Building in the United States of America after the Close of the Frontier in the 1890s and the War of 1898

The area of today's United States of America was settled by and formally colonized by several European nations since the early seventeenth century.⁶⁰³ The most influential and long lasting were the British colonies in the North-East, French colonies in the South-East, and Spanish colonies in the South and West; the smaller Swedish, Dutch or Russian settlements were soon swallowed up. By 1732, there were 13 British colonies established in British America, and after the French and Indian War of 1754-

⁶⁰³ For a detailed history of the United States of America in German language see for instance Jürgen Heideking, Christof Mauch and Michael Wala, *Geschichte der USA*, 6th revised and extended edition (Tübingen: Francke, 2008); Volker Depkat, *Geschichte Nordamerikas: Eine Einführung* (Köln: Böhlau, 2008).

1763, they gained all French areas around Québec and Montreal, and Spain lost Florida, but gained former French areas west of the Mississippi.

Soon after, British colonists started protesting against their homeland's taxation politics, the conflict widened and led to the American Revolutionary War of 1775-1783 and the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The ratification of the United States Constitution in 1787 strengthened the ties between the federal states, but the constant territorial expansion – both official state policy like the Louisiana Purchase 1803 or the Mexican War of 1846-1848, and unofficial westward expansion by independent or malcontent settlers – led to a federation encompassing a very diverse cultural heritage. At the same time, the North began to base its economy on industrialization, while the Southern States remained predominantly agricultural, the plantations relying heavily on slave labor. Political, social and economic conflicts between the states intensified since the 1830s, and soon began to concentrate on the question of abolition. When Abraham Lincoln based his presidential campaign on the abolition of slavery in all states and succeeded in 1860, eleven states left the Union. The American Civil War of 1861-1865 ended with the defeat of the secessionist states and the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments, introducing equal rights of citizenship, legal rights, and the right to vote for persons of color and former slaves.

While it is true that many of these political achievements were subsequently subverted by new legislation that enforced racial segregation and discrimination, and that were not remedied until the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, it is important to note that the American Civil War marked an important transition in American national identity: For the first time, in the amendments, it was legally defined who was a citizen of the United States and subject of its jurisdiction, regardless of ethnicity, race or social standing. However, Native Americans were not to gain citizenship under these amendments. Only in 1924 the Indian Citizenship Act was passed. Therefore, the veterans of the former opposing armies could conveniently unite against a common enemy and fight the last, and some of the most famous battles of the American Indian Wars, amongst them the Apache Wars (led by Geronimo between 1858-1886) the Great Sioux War of 1876-1877 with the notorious Battle of Little Big Horn, or its last outburst, the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890.

This last battle (massacre is the more appropriate term) coincided with the official announcement that the frontier (defined as an area in which the population was under 2

persons per square mile) was closed, population density having risen to an average of more than six persons per square mile. In 1893, historian Frederick Jackson Turner published an enormously influential paper arguing that no other factor had been as influential in shaping American national identity as the frontier.⁶⁰⁴ Moreover, continuous territorial expansion had been a driving force of the Union's policies for decades, and the availability of "free" land – unheard of in Europe – had been a vital component in making immigration to the U.S. attractive. The Close of the Frontier led to immediate nostalgia for the "good old times" and subsequent mythologization of frontier life by way of popular culture, including literature, early movie productions, or staged entertainment shows, most famously "Buffalo Bill" Cody's Wild West Shows.⁶⁰⁵

According to Turner, one of the most important effects of the frontier was the promotion of democracy, because the frontier settlers had struggled for participation rights in order to keep control over their individuality and freedom. With the Frontier thesis widely accepted, it comes therefore as no big surprise that the United States opened new frontiers in its imperialist campaigns following the Spanish-American War in 1898. The reasons for US-American participation in Cuba's and Puerto Rico's conflict with their colonial motherland Spain are diverse and complex and have been analyzed elsewhere.⁶⁰⁶ But it certainly helped to re-unite US-Americans for a common purpose, with Northerners and Southerners, blacks and whites fighting side by side and thus finally overcoming the trenches of the American Civil War, with enormous consequences for the US-American national identity. President McKinley was well aware of this when he stated: "We are reunited. Sectionalism has disappeared. Division on public questions can no longer be traced to the war maps of 1861."⁶⁰⁷

As McCartney put it,

"[b]efore the War of 1898, the United States was a strong but mostly self-absorbed nation; afterwards, it was a globally active 'power' in possession of colonial territories at the far end of the Pacific Ocean and with a markedly

⁶⁰⁴ Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", in *The Frontier in American History*, ed. Frederick Jackson Turner (Malabar: Krieger, 1985)

⁶⁰⁵ See Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through violence: The mythology of the American frontier, 1600 - 1860* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000).

⁶⁰⁶ See for instance Paul T. McCartney, *Power and progress: American national identity, the War of 1898, and the rise of American imperialism*, Political traditions in foreign policy (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2006).

⁶⁰⁷ Quoted after McCartney, *Power and progress*, 271.

increased influence in the affairs of its immediate island neighbors. For this reason, Woodrow Wilson wrote in 1902, '[n]o war has ever transformed us ever quite as the war with Spain has transformed us. We have witnessed a new revolution. We have seen the transformation of America completed.'⁶⁰⁸

After its joining the European nations as a colonial power, the United States played an increasingly important, although initially still reluctant role in world politics. This was possible by the firm establishment of a national identity to guide its appearance and behavior amongst the other nations. The Frontier mythology played a decisive role in the shaping of this national identity, and could be adapted even decades after the close of the frontier, as can be seen in the imagery at Cincinnati Union Terminal of 1933.⁶⁰⁹

I.2 Cincinnati Union Terminal, 1931-33. The Frontier Myth and the American Dream

An overview of the building's construction and the published research of the extensive decoration program have already been given in the introduction to the analysis of the "Industrial" or "Worker Murals" formerly featured in the station waiting area.⁶¹⁰ A detailed analysis of the two large mosaics along the curved walls of the semi-rotund entrance hall is still left to be desired. It shall be undertaken in this chapter.

I.2.1 South Side – The Advance of Civilization or: Indian Wars vs. Noble Savage

The mosaic on the south side of the entrance hall measures approximately 30 by 6 meters. (Figure 5-1) Like the "worker murals", it was set into colored concrete by the Ravenna Mosaic Company in New York using an innovative blending of techniques called silhouette mosaic: the 3, 66 m high figures on the first plane are filled out in true mosaic, while the scenes in the middle and background consist of colored concrete

⁶⁰⁸ McCartney, *Power and progress*, 3.

⁶⁰⁹ The following text was presented at the "American Artists in Munich" conference in Munich, 2007. I would like to thank all participants for their feedback on the first draft. Special thanks go to Hubertus Kohle, Christian Fuhrmeister and Frank Mehring for their valuable comments that helped improving my paper since. It has also been published in similar form with the conference proceedings. See Asta von Buch, "A German View of American History?: Winold Reiss's mosaics at Cincinnati Union Terminal, 1931 – 33", in *American Artists in Munich: Artistic Migration and Cultural Exchange Processes*, ed. Christian Fuhrmeister, Hubertus Kohle, and Veerle Thielemans (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009)

⁶¹⁰ See chapter 2.

highlighted by mosaic contours, thus dividing the scene into three independent planes. These are bound together by an elaborate color scheme which allows Reiss to narrate a coherent story on all three levels.

The first plane shows from left to right three Blackfoot Indians meeting a family of settlers (figure 5-2), then three railway workers (figure 5-3) and one engine driver (figure 5-4), and finally two construction workers balancing on a steel girder (figure 5-5). The figures stand on a sand-colored fresco plane interspersed with desert plants. Clothes and faces are treated in great detail and in bright colors, using glass stones of varying sizes and forms to achieve maximum effect of texture and volume.

The second plane depicts the natural landscape setting: behind the Indians to the left are red rock mountains that merge into the wide green prairie filling the space behind the settlers and the railway workers. (Figure 5-6) It finally reaches a river full of steamships which boasts a colorful city on its right bank. A thin line of yellow stones marks the border between the foreground plane and the middle ground landscape and is echoed by the yellow shades under the figures' boots.

The third plane connects the figures with the history of transport: above the Indians are a dog-travois and a horse-sleigh (figure 5-7), the settlers are shown with the typical covered wagons drawn by oxen (figure 5-8), the men constructing the railroad are depicted together with three locomotive engines, starting with a 1831 DeWitt Clinton locomotive (figure 5-9), and ending with a modern steam engine to the right (figure 5-10). Finally the construction workers are overshadowed by an airplane and a zeppelin (figure 5-5), matching the ocean steamer below in size and modernity (Figure 5-11). All these vehicles are set in the clouds of a sky that is broken like a prism into different shades of blue and grey, lending an unreal and dreamlike quality to them. At the far right, a utopian vista of skyscrapers in the same blue hues serves as a backdrop for the existing colorful city, thus forging a connection between the vision of a high rising City of the Future in the back and the steel frame for a new skyscraper that the two workers in the foreground are constructing.

The overall impression is one of simplicity and reduction. Like a poster, the mural aims at easy intelligibility at a cursory glance. Each plane is clearly defined by technique and color and given little depth. The figures in the foreground stand separately and hardly interact. Still, their occupation, their relation to the means of transport in the

background, and the use of colors bind them into groups; and all three narratives intersect in a central hub occupied by the railway, its workers and engines.

Because of the various vehicles in the background, the title of the mosaic is often given as “History of American Transport”⁶¹¹, but originally it was named after the main narrative: “The Advance of Civilization”.⁶¹² The three Blackfoot Indians on the left stand for a primitive culture relying on a nomadic lifestyle, while on the right the climax of civilization is shown – the modern skyscraper city stands for urbanity based on industry and modern technology. The two remaining groups represent a stadium somewhere in between: The white pioneers represent a sedentary agrarian lifestyle, which was traditionally regarded more civilized than the hunting-and-gathering of the “savages”, but counted as less advanced than the higher living quality of the urbanites. The surveyors who build the railway bring modern steam technology to the west, furthering industrialization. Their positions as engineer and workers symbolize the Taylorist division of labor, one of the foundations of modern Fordian society.

The well-searched poses of the figures reveal the detailed studies Winold Reiss had undertaken. By stylizing the figures he highlights their symbolic meaning within the narrative. Each figure stands for a whole group of the American population. He has also included several portraits of family and friends. Thus, the settler in the checkered trousers is Hans Reiss, the artist’s brother, and the stooping railway surveyor is Tjark, his son.⁶¹³ (Figures 5-2 and 5-3). The three Indians have also been identified as Turtle, Middle Rider, and Chewing Backbone. Reiss had met, befriended and painted them during his stays in Glacier Park, Montana.⁶¹⁴

Reiss had been interested in painting the American Indians even before he immigrated to the United States in 1913.⁶¹⁵ Thanks to a commission by the Great Northern Railway Company (GNR) Reiss could spend most of his summers between 1927 and 1943 in the Blackfoot reservation near Glacier Park, Montana. There, Reiss painted many of the Blackfeet who came to the traditional Sun Dance Festivals. In many of his portraits he

⁶¹¹ See Stewart, *To Color America*, 96–97, and Jeffrey C. Stewart, "Winold Reiss as a Portraitist", 8–10, probably referring to *Times-Star*, March 10, 1933

⁶¹² See Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, *The Cincinnati Union Terminal Pictorial History*, n. p. (10).

⁶¹³ See Crotty, "The Cincinnati Union Terminal and the Art Deco Movement", 29.

⁶¹⁴ See Crotty, "The Cincinnati Union Terminal and the Art Deco Movement", 29.

⁶¹⁵ See W. Tjark Reiss, "My Father Winold Reiss - Recollections by Tjark Reiss", 58.

included the formal costumes that the Blackfeet wore for the festival, and he documented the ornaments and their meaning. The GNR used his pictures for their “See America First” campaign; the paintings were hung in hotels and printed on calendars and postcards.⁶¹⁶ Reiss used some of these studies for the Cincinnati Union Terminal commission.

His keen interest in Native American culture – and American ethnic diversity in general – places Reiss in the tradition of ethnographic painters of the nineteenth century. A hundred years earlier, the same Blackfoot tribes had been sketched by two of the most influential painters of the Plains Indians: George Catlin and Karl Bodmer both had travelled to the Plains, in 1832 and 1836 respectively, in order to paint the last of what they believed to be a dying people.⁶¹⁷ The anthropologist John Ewers summarizes: „Their paintings went far toward making the Plains Indians the symbols of the American Indians *par excellence* for non-Indians in America and abroad.“⁶¹⁸ Like Catlin and Bodmer, Reiss paid much attention to details of costume and appearance. Nevertheless, none of them can be regarded as true ethnographer. Even though Reiss aimed for character and individuality in the faces of his sitters, their poses and costumes often serve the by then deeply established stereotypes of a “typical” Plains Indian, complete with feather headdress or buffalo bonnet. Obviously, this lies in the nature of his commission: after all, his portraits were to be used to attract tourists, and those were

⁶¹⁶ See Jeffrey C. Stewart, "Winold Reiss as a Portraitist", 7. The president of the Great Northern Railroad, Louis W. Hill owned several hotels in Glacier Park and marketed the Native Indians as a tourist attraction.

⁶¹⁷ See for instance: George Catlin, *Letters and notes on the manners, customs, and conditions of the North American Indians*, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Dover, 1973), 1; Pamela Kort, "Die unbewältigte Vergangenheit des Mordes an den Indianern", in *I like America: Fiktionen des Wilden Westens*, ed. Max Hollein, and Pamela Kort (München: Prestel Verlag, 2006), 50–53; Peter Bolz, "Indianerbilder für den König: George Catlin in Europa", in *I like America: Fiktionen des Wilden Westens*, ed. Max Hollein, and Pamela Kort (München: Prestel Verlag, 2006), 68–85; Prince Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied, *Maximilian Prince of Wied's Travels in the Interior of North America, during the years 1832 – 1834*. (London: Achermann & Company, 1843-1844); Hans Wilderotter, *Edelleute der Natur: George Catlin, Carl Bodmer und das Bild des Indianers* (Stuttgart: Parkland Verlag, 1986); Hans Läng, "Karl Bodmer: Sein Leben und Werk", in *Prärie- und Plainsindianer: Die Reise in das innere Nord-America von Maximilian Prinz zu Wied und Karl Bodmer*, ed. Rheinland-Pfalz-Tag, and Städtische Galerie Mennonitenkirche (Mainz: Schmidt, 1993); Hans Läng, *Indianer waren meine Freunde: Leben und Werk Karl Bodmers 1809 - 1893* (Ostfildern: Hallwag, 1984); Bernard Augustine de Voto, *Across the wide Missouri* (Boston, MA: Mifflin, 1998), 404–405.

⁶¹⁸ John C. Ewers, "Winold Reiss and the Blackfeet Indians", in *To Color America: Exhibition Catalogue to an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, October 27, 1989, to April 1, 1990*, ed. Jeffrey C. Stewart (Washington, D. C.: 1989), 128. See also John C. Ewers, "An Anthropologist Looks at Early Pictures of North American Indians", *New York Historical Society Quarterly* 33, no. October (1949), 223–34.

less interested in the grim realities of a poor Reservation Indian, than in the mythologized grandeur of the almost-lost Indian civilization.⁶¹⁹

In Cincinnati, the three depictions of Blackfoot Indians show people of the First Nations in their different social positions – the warrior (figure 5-12), the shaman (figure 5-13), the chieftain (figure 5-14). Just like in the “Worker Murals”, they oscillate between portrait and fiction, real-life study and artful type.⁶²⁰

Jeffrey Stewart was the first to point out the shift from portrait to type:

“For the Cincinnati commission, Reiss portrayed the Blackfeet as characters in the narrative of American progress, rather than as the complex, introspective personalities they had been in his earlier portraits. [...] Quite simply, Reiss had borrowed two of his Blackfeet friends to perform in this pageant to American progress. But Reiss had been determined to bring along his Indian friends to the Cincinnati mural project, despite their difficult fit in his narrative history of American transportation.”⁶²¹

Because Stewart interprets the mural as American Transport History, he does not recognize the Blackfeet’s important role in its narrative. For Stewart, American Indians do not seem to be an essential part of American Progress – they were just another obstacle that had to be overcome while settling the West, like the Mississippi river or the Rocky Mountains. But for Reiss, “bringing along his Indian friends” was not a spontaneous whim, but a crucial part of his image of the Wild West. Because he was born and raised in Germany, the stereotypes in his image differed from an American’s view of Frontier life. This specific German attitude becomes evident in his depiction of American Indians.

For Americans of white Anglo-Saxon heritage, Indians traditionally presented a threat to civilization. The historian Richard Slotkin tried to explain this attitude by examining

⁶¹⁹ See Jeffrey C. Stewart, "Winold Reiss as a Portraitist", 7; Stewart, *To Color America*, 70–81, 95–109.

⁶²⁰ See chapter 2.

⁶²¹ Jeffrey C. Stewart, "Winold Reiss as a Portraitist", 8–10.

the origins of American national character.⁶²² He remarks that, early on, the European colonists faced “problems of acculturation, of adjusting the mores and world view of one’s native culture to the requirements of life in an alien environment.”⁶²³ The easiest way to achieve this acculturation was by contrasting the own, supposedly superior culture with the other, supposedly primitive culture of the natives. Slotkin writes:

“The Indian wars, in which culture was pitted against culture, afforded a perfect opportunity for this sort of definition by repudiation. In opposing Indian culture, the Puritan symbolically affirmed his Englishness. Even as social and religious issues grew complex and clouded [...] there remained a fundamental simplicity in the opposition between Indian and settler.”⁶²⁴

The American attitude towards the Westward Expansion and its results for the Indians was subsumed in the catchphrase of „Manifest Destiny“.⁶²⁵ It takes shape in the famous painting of the same name by John Gast: Columbia, a personification of the United States, leads American settlers westward, bringing schoolbooks and telegraphy with her while Indians and wild animals flee.⁶²⁶ (Figure 5-15)

In his work, Slotkin has tried to excavate and define the mythology that underlies the narratives of American history. This mythology deals in his opinion mostly with western Frontier life, on the border of “barbaric” Indian land and “civilized” Eastern cities. Since all narratives of the Wild West emerged during the age of the printing press, they immediately solidified from oral history into widely circulated literary accounts of frontier hardship and Indian captivity. Authors like Melville or Cooper took these stories up and romanticized them in order to justify their heroes’ emotional title to

⁶²² Slotkin, *Regeneration through violence*.

⁶²³ Slotkin, *Regeneration through violence*, 22.

⁶²⁴ Slotkin, *Regeneration through violence*, 22.

⁶²⁵ See for instance Reginald Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian policy, 1783-1812* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967); Haynes, Sam W., Christopher Morris, Robert W. Johannsen, John M. Belohlavek, and Thomas R. Hietala, eds., *Manifest destiny and empire: American antebellum expansion*, The Walter Prescott Webb memorial lectures, vol. 31 (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 31; Anders Stephanson, *Manifest destiny: American expansionism and the empire of right* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1998).

⁶²⁶ See William H. Truettner, "Ideology and Image: Justifying Westward Expansion", in *The West as America: Reinterpreting images of the frontier, 1820-1920*, ed. William H. Truettner (Washington, D.C.: Published for the National Museum of American Art by the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), esp. 37–38; Patricia Hills, "Picturing Progress in the Era of Westward Expansion", in *The West as America: Reinterpreting images of the frontier, 1820-1920*, ed. William H. Truettner (Washington, D.C.: Published for the National Museum of American Art by the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), esp. 134–136.

the alien land, which was seen as wild and savage, like its inhabitants. The fight for this land was thus a fight against the Indians. Slotkin writes: “Even at the source of the American myth there lies the fatal opposition, the hostility between two worlds, two races, two realms of thought and feeling.”⁶²⁷

The German vision of the West differs from the American one. A recent exhibition in Frankfurt/Main has shown that it was very stereotyped, too, but the German clichés emphasize different points, especially when it comes to the role of the Indians.⁶²⁸ The American discourse focused much on the Indian Wars. It singled out heroes like General Custer or “Buffalo” Bill Cody, and villains like Sitting Bull or Geronimo, and culminated in the almost mythical battle at Wounded Knee.⁶²⁹ In Germany, on the other side, it was –literally– safe to give kudos to the brave men who fought for what was considered a just war for their dying world.⁶³⁰

In the early nineteenth century, Cooper’s “Leatherstocking” tales had enjoyed a wide popular success on both sides of the Atlantic. But on each continent, their illustrators highlighted different aspects of the tale. The German-born artist Emanuel Leutze painted “Last of the Mohicans” (figure 5-16) during his stay at the Düsseldorf Academy.⁶³¹ It shows the young George Copway, only Indian participant on the Third World Peace Congress in Frankfurt/Main in 1850, as Chingachgook. The portrait breaks with the romantic tradition of Rousseau’s Noble Savage and marks a turn in the perception of the Indian in Germany: he is no longer mere object of ethnographic curiosity, but becomes the symbol of identification with nationalist ideals – ideals that the true Indian will not betray by assimilation to Western civilization.⁶³²

⁶²⁷ Slotkin, *Regeneration through violence*, 17.

⁶²⁸ See Hollein, Max, and Pamela Kort, eds., *I like America: Fiktionen des Wilden Westens* (München: Prestel Verlag, 2006).

⁶²⁹ See Max Hollein, “Vorwort”, in *I like America: Fiktionen des Wilden Westens*, ed. Max Hollein, and Pamela Kort (München: Prestel Verlag, 2006), 10.

⁶³⁰ See H. Glenn Penny, “Illustriertes Amerika: Der Wilde Westen in deutschen Zeitschriften 1825-1890”, in *I like America: Fiktionen des Wilden Westens*, ed. Max Hollein, and Pamela Kort (München: Prestel Verlag, 2006), 145–148.

⁶³¹ Leutze’s parents had immigrated to the United States when he was a child. Aged 25, he returned to Germany, to study painting at the Dusseldorf academy in 1841. Subsequent travels lead him to Munich, Venice and Rome. He returned to Dusseldorf in 1845 and became one of the Academy’s leading figures, until he returned to the USA in 1859.

⁶³² See Barbara McCloskey, “Von der “Frontier” zum Wilden Westen: Deutsche Künstler, nordamerikanische Indianer und die Inszenierung von Rasse und Nation im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert”, in *I like America: Fiktionen des Wilden Westens*, ed. Max Hollein, and Pamela Kort (München: Prestel Verlag, 2006), 300–302.

Painters in the United States found once more the tales of captivity most worthy of depiction. A famous example is Thomas Cole's "Cora Kneeling at the Feet of Tamenund" (figure 5-17): Cora and her sister Alice had been captured by the Magua and the white pathfinder-hero Natty Bumppo, called Leatherstocking, and his noble friend Uncas, last of the Mohicans, try to save the girls. After many adventures, Cora and Uncas are both killed by the Magua, while Alice is safely restored to her white fiancé.

Slotkin has shown that captivity narratives form a staple of Frontier mythology. They were still reiterated by Frederic Remington and other artists around the turn of the century, long after the Indian Wars.⁶³³ But in Germany, Cooper's influence was soon superseded by tales of German origin, by Balduin Möllhausen, Friedrich Gerstäcker, and, most important, Karl May, whose "Winnetou" trilogy first appeared in 1893.⁶³⁴

In novels and illustrated magazines authors and artists alike transformed the American frontier-myth into a German fiction. That way they could keep their own, gradually different beliefs of modernity, nature, and progress. Although they never doubted the ethnocentric superiority of the white race or the "Manifest Destiny" of the "doomed" Indians as such, they turned against certain Anglo-American clichés to substitute them with their own.⁶³⁵ Again, the Indian tribes were pitted against Anglo-Americans to spotlight traits of national character. But while the Americans had needed the "wild savages" to reassure themselves of the superiority of (European) civilization, German authors like Karl May contrasted the "nobility" of the Indian who lived in harmony with Nature with the negative characteristics of the "typical Yankee": lack of (respect for) tradition, hostile attitude towards nature, an inclination to violence, and a capitalist mindset geared towards profit.⁶³⁶

We have already seen that Reiss's Indian portraits stand in a tradition of ethnographic paintings that aimed to conserve a detailed knowledge about an endangered culture. But

⁶³³ See Alex Nemerov, "'Doing the 'Old America' ": The Image of the American West, 1880-1920", in *The West as America: Reinterpreting images of the frontier, 1820-1920*, ed. William H. Truettner (Washington, D.C.: Published for the National Museum of American Art by the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991); Truettner, "Ideology and Image: Justifying Westward Expansion", 44ff.

⁶³⁴ See Karl Markus Kreis, "Deutsch-Wildwest: Die Erfindung des definitiven Indianers durch Karl May", in *I like America: Fiktionen des Wilden Westens*, ed. Max Hollein, and Pamela Kort (München: Prestel Verlag, 2006), 252.

⁶³⁵ See Penny, "Illustriertes Amerika: Der Wilde Westen in deutschen Zeitschriften 1825-1890", 154-155.

⁶³⁶ See Penny, "Illustriertes Amerika: Der Wilde Westen in deutschen Zeitschriften 1825-1890", 154-155.

the same tradition that brings Reiss to record the Indian costumes and attributes in full detail also allows him to “dress up” his subjects in the most picturesque costume. Thus, while his paintings faithfully capture the likeness and the character of his subjects, their habitus is generalized into the stereotype of a Plains Indian. The portraits are transformed into types that signify “The Indian” *per se*. This is especially obvious when Reiss places his subjects in the narrative of American progress, where all figures represent symbolically the actors of the frontier myth.

For most US-Americans, Wild West narratives after the end of the Indian Wars of the 1880s had become stories of Cowboys and Outlaws. Native Americans had been put away into reservations and no longer posed any threat. Their life had been romanticized and served now as picturesque tourist attraction. But the Cincinnati narrative deviates from the American myth by depicting the Indians not as bloodthirsty savages, but as dignified representatives of a different, but equal civilization. Reiss emphasizes the German twist by using two Germans, his brother Hans and his son Tjark, as models for two of the main characters: Hans with his longish blond hair and blue eyes posed as leader of the emigrants meeting the Indians to the left. And Tjark, the railroad surveyor in the center of the mural, immediately calls to mind that Karl May’s hero and narrator “Old Shatterhand”, friend and blood-brother of all Indian tribes, had come to the West working as an engineer for a railroad company.⁶³⁷

A close look at these elements in the narrative – the white (German) pioneer and surveyor-engineer – shows clearly that Reiss was not trying to give a realistic account of the Westward Expansion. Instead, he reiterated a German variation of the common American Frontier myth.⁶³⁸ Otherwise he, who was so keen on depicting ethnic minorities, would surely have gladly taken up the opportunity to include a Chinese amongst the railroad workers. After all, immigrants from China were the upmost important labor workforce during the construction of the tracks. Stan Steiner informs us that

“men of China not only built the western half of the first transcontinental railroad, they built the whole or part of nearly every railroad line in the West. [...] On the prairies

⁶³⁷ See Karl May and Euchar A. Schmid, *Winnetou I: Reiseerzählung*, vol. Bd. 7 (Radebeul: Karl-May-Verlag, 1992), Bd. 7.

⁶³⁸ See Truettner, "Ideology and Image: Justifying Westward Expansion", esp. 39ff.

and in the mountains of the West there were few railroads that these young men of Kwangtung did not build, in whole or in part.”⁶³⁹

Another good opportunity to add some ethnic diversity to the picture and to give a more realistic account of American work realities would have been the depiction of the construction workers on the right. The German reviewer Paulsen identified them as “workers constructing a bridge”⁶⁴⁰; although it seems more reasonable to assume that the steel girder serves as frame for a skyscraper. Either way, a recent exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution has reminded a wide public that since the 1880s Mohawk Indians had built skyscrapers and bridges throughout the United States and Canada, including many of New York City’s most prominent landmarks, like the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, the George Washington Bridge, and the World Trade Center.⁶⁴¹ What better way to include another Indian in his narrative of American civilization, thus framing the picture with Native Americans on both sides? But Reiss did not use this opportunity. Although the worker facing us on the steel girder (figure 5-5) is certainly darker in skin tone and hair color than his blonde colleague, there is no further indication to identify him as a Mohawk Indian. In fact, the New York dancer Iorne Kincaid has claimed to have served as model for this figure.⁶⁴² Thus, instead of telling the story of the multicultural, multi-ethnic US-American melting-pot, Reiss sticks to the German variation of the North-American Frontier Myth: a Wild-West life in the tradition of nineteenth century German literature.

⁶³⁹ Stan Steiner, *Fusang: The Chinese who built America* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1980), 128–140.

⁶⁴⁰ Friedrich Paulsen, “Wandgestaltung: II. Mosaiken”, *Monatshefte für Baukunst und Städtebau* V, no. 17. Oktober (1933), 470.

⁶⁴¹ See the photographs in the exhibition “Booming Out. Mohawk Ironworkers build New York”. An exhibition created by the National Museum of the American Indian and organized for travel by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. It was on show since September 11, 2004 at the Museum of Science and Technology, Syracuse, NY and thereafter traveled to several institutions, closing October 28, 2007 at the California University of Pennsylvania, California, PA. No publication. For information see: Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, *Booming Out: Mohawk Ironworkers build New York* (30.06.2003); available from <http://www.sites.si.edu/exhibitions/booming%20out.pdf>; Internet; accessed March 19, 2012. See also David Weitzman, *Skywalkers: Mohawk ironworkers build the city*, 1st edition (New York, NY: Flash Point / Roaring Brook Press, 2010).

⁶⁴² See *Times–Star*, December 12, 1933.

I.2.2 North Side – The History of Cincinnati or: The River Age vs. the Underground Railroad

The mosaic on the North side depicts the History of Cincinnati. (Figure 5-18) Like its counterpart on the South side, the image is divided in three planes, the foreground starring the actors, the middle ground the landscape, and the background providing an imaginary vision of buildings that no longer or not yet exist. But this time, the historical narration proceeds from right to left. Therefore, the story of both murals is being told from their outer edges to the center, whence the hallway leads to the trains.

Again, there are several narratives intertwined in the three planes of the mosaic: the visionary past and future in the blue tints of the background take up both building and transport history, depending on which of the two is already referred to in the middle ground. As for the people in the foreground, they correspond with the groups in the South mural: Moving inwards from the edges and onwards in time, there are the “original” inhabitants (trappers and backwoodsmen), the (white) settlers/farmers who take over from them, representatives of the cotton industry and its infrastructure (skipper, Afro-Americans with cotton bales), and, finally, workers constructing the city – the most immediate correspondence. Despite the similarities, however, the composition is not symmetrical. But the analogies help to identify the depicted persons or types, even offering the key to the understanding of the mural.

To the very right, the group consisting of a trapper and two officers of the American Revolution (figure 5-19) can be identified as General Arthur St. Clark (left), and the land developers Colonel Robert Patterson (middle) and John Filson (right). Symbols of the first pioneers in Ohio, their presence establishes that this part of the mosaic’s story line dates to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.⁶⁴³ In 1788, Robert Patterson had founded the city, which Filson had named “Losantiville” meaning City (ville) across (anti) the mouth (os) of the L(icking River).⁶⁴⁴ John Filson had become famous in 1784 for writing *Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucke*,⁶⁴⁵ which included an account of the adventures of Daniel Boone. The book was quickly

⁶⁴³ Compare Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", 4–9.

⁶⁴⁴ See Official webpage of the City of Cincinnati, *How Cincinnati became a City*; available from <http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/crc/pages/-5928-/>; Internet; accessed July 25, 2007, Condit, *The railroad and the city*, 4–5.

⁶⁴⁵ John Filson, *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucky to Which Is Added the Adventures of Daniel Boon 1784*, Reprint (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005).

translated into several European languages and made his protagonist famous throughout the Western world. Daniel Boone became the archetype of all the trappers, real and fictional alike.⁶⁴⁶ While the mosaic shows probably no direct portrait of Filson, and certainly no portrait of the real Boone,⁶⁴⁷ the trapper figure serves as a reference to the legendary hunter and – if only indirectly – the city-founder who penned his “autobiography”. Filson disappeared after a Shawnee attack on 1 October 1788. In 1790 Governor General St. Clair renamed the settlement “Cincinnati”, thus ending in the city’s annals “the period of the scout and soldier”.⁶⁴⁸

The next group, a family of farmers, corresponds to the settler family in the South mural. (Figure 5-20) Simple, hard working people, they embody all the values and virtues of the pioneers. The two well-muscled carpenters on the very left (figure 5-21) show the future that the workers of an industrialized Cincinnati are about to build for themselves. The buildings behind them form the actual contemporary skyline of Cincinnati in 1933: the Carew-Tower (which was only finished after the mural was finalized), the slightly older PNC tower, and the John A. Roebling Suspension Bridge serve as distinct landmarks.

Only the center group does not seem to match with the corresponding figures on the South side: a skipper watches imperiously two Afro-Americans, respectively lifting a sack and holding a shovel. (Figure 5-22) When the station was opened, the scene was described as a glimpse of the “picturesque river age of the negro and captain”.⁶⁴⁹ Sixty years later, the group reminded Jeffrey Stewart of the song “Ol’ Man River”: “This man’s action recalls that song’s famous line, ‘tote dat barge, lift dat bale’ of cotton—which this figure is about to do.”⁶⁵⁰

Stewart seems disturbed by the implication and went to some length to show that Reiss’s depiction was not meant to be racially stereotyped or even pejorative.⁶⁵¹ He recalled the artist’s involvement with the Harlem Renaissance and his close collaboration with the leading Afro-American intellectual Allan Locke – Reiss had

⁶⁴⁶ See also Slotkin, *Regeneration through violence*, 21; Truettner, “Ideology and Image: Justifying Westward Expansion”, 41–42.

⁶⁴⁷ The only known portrait of Boone that was painted from life is today in the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. It was painted by Chester Harding in June 1820, when Boone was aged 84.

⁶⁴⁸ Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, *The Cincinnati Union Terminal Pictorial History*, 1987) #213: n. p. (10).

⁶⁴⁹ Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, *The Cincinnati Union Terminal Pictorial History*, n. p. (10).

⁶⁵⁰ Jeffrey C. Stewart, “Winold Reiss as a Portraitist”, 12.

⁶⁵¹ See Jeffrey C. Stewart, “Winold Reiss as a Portraitist”, 10–12.

supplied the illustrations for Locke's epoch-making anthology "The New Negro".⁶⁵² (Figure 2-34). He even suggests that a man like Reiss might have rather wanted to include notable leaders of Cincinnati's Afro-American community in the mural than poor dock workers. Stewart then overcomes his obvious unease by pointing out that all figures were sketched from life and thus formed "subtle critiques of the conditions of employment for Blacks during the 1930s."⁶⁵³ He claims: "Although such images may make some of us uncomfortable today, they are documentary studies of what Black life was like in Cincinnati during the thirties."⁶⁵⁴

Apart from the fact that the "picturesque River Age" was long over in the thirties, Stewart correctly assumes that Reiss's patrons, the railway representatives, probably did not care much about the representation of Blacks in their train station, least of all in such an exposed position.

So why *did* Reiss pose two Afro-American workers in the center of his mural? And why do they make Stewart feel "uncomfortable" today? Obviously, the depiction of working Black men seems to attract the suspicion of racism or at least racist stereotypification. Yet such a reading, as Stewart has so rightly pointed out, does not make any sense in view of what is known about Winold Reiss.

But it does make sense in view of its associative relation with the musical "Show Boat"⁶⁵⁵, which is also set in the 1880s, the same period as the mosaic's timeline. Because the play broaches the question of interracial relations, the history of its reception has been controversial from the very beginning. After all, it deals with the injustice of a system where "niggers all work while the white folks play".⁶⁵⁶ At first, the (white) producers felt very uncomfortable about the anti-segregational subject matter of the popular play, so that in most of the adaptations for films and radio shows, the more "delicate" scenes were cut out or altered – especially the subplot dealing with the marriage between the mulatto-girl Julie and her white husband Steve.⁶⁵⁷ Subsequently,

⁶⁵² Alain Leroy Locke, *The New Negro*. See also chapter 2.

⁶⁵³ Jeffrey C. Stewart, "Winold Reiss as a Portraitist", 13–14.

⁶⁵⁴ Jeffrey C. Stewart, "Winold Reiss as a Portraitist", 12–13. While this might be true for the depiction of industrial workers elsewhere in the concourse murals, the Afro-Americans shown here belong to an earlier period of the mosaic's time line. See also chapter 2.

⁶⁵⁵ Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein, *Show Boat: Vocal Score*, In (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1927).

⁶⁵⁶ Oscar Hammerstein, II, *Show Boat: Original Libretto - Book and Lyrics*, In *Collection of Musicals Lyrics and Libretti* (1927).

⁶⁵⁷ Note the 1951 all-white MGM cast.

the offence was taken no longer by Whites but by Afro-Americans. Therefore, the opening line “Niggers all work on the Mississippi”, taken up again in the play’s most famous song “Ol’ man river”, was soon replaced by “colored folks work”, or even “here we all work” in Frank Sinatra’s version of the song. While understandable, this change distorts the meaning and function of the song in the context of the play: the offensive N-Word was after all not used to debase the Afro-Americans, but served to accurately describe the situation of careless disrespect they still faced, long after the abolition.⁶⁵⁸ When the musical was first staged, the Afro-American community seemed to be well aware of this social criticism: Even civil rights activist Paul Robeson had no problems performing as stevedore Joe in numerous film and stage productions during the 1930s and 1940s. Reiss, who had portrayed Robeson (figure 5-23) in 1924⁶⁵⁹, and kept close contact to the Afro-American community until at least the mid-1930s⁶⁶⁰, was probably aware of their perception of the play.

Indeed, a closer look reveals that the depiction of the group is not that negative: Although the white man does indeed not work, the Afro-Americans are not shown as inferior. Rather, they frankly return the skipper’s gaze, acting like free men with equal rights, thus openly defying Ohio’s “Black Laws” of 1807, a racist legislation that discriminated the “Negro” population, denying them education, voting, and legal rights.⁶⁶¹ Reiss surely was aware that he risked offending his clients, so he kept his social critique rather subtle.⁶⁶² But by placing the group in the center of the composition he managed to hide a reference to one of the most important achievements in the Afro-Americans’ struggle for Civil Rights. The key to this reference lies in the symmetrical composition of the two rotunda murals.

As detailed above, the corresponding group in the Southern mosaic consists of men laying railway tracks and an engine driver, as is appropriate for both the place – a railway station, after all – and the pictorial theme, which was supposed to reflect the influence of infrastructural development in civilizing the American West. It is therefore

⁶⁵⁸ See wikipedia.org, *Show Boat*, available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Show_Boat; Internet; accessed July 30, 2007.

⁶⁵⁹ See Stewart, *To Color America*, 49.

⁶⁶⁰ See Stewart, *To Color America*, 62.

⁶⁶¹ See J. Reuben Sheeler, "The Struggle of the Negro in Ohio for Freedom", *The Journal of Negro History* 31, no. 2 (April 1946), 208–26.

⁶⁶² Reiss was known for his sense of tact and diplomacy in dealing with his clients, so far so that he made it an explicit task of his to teach it to his students. See Anonymous, "Tact in Art", *The Art Digest*, no. 1st September (1933).

rather surprising that the railway does not appear at all in its counterpart on the North wall. In fact, the only land vehicle in the Northern mural is a covered wagon on a boat behind Colonel Patterson. (Figure 5-24). Considering that the Little Miami Railroad reached Cincinnati already in 1836, and that during the time of the terminal's construction in 1933 no less than seven lines served the city,⁶⁶³ this obvious lack of any reference to the railway is rather suspicious. Or is there a railroad?

In 1852, Cincinnati citizen Harriet Beecher Stowe published her novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin"⁶⁶⁴ to help the cause of slavery abolition.⁶⁶⁵ An important part of the novel describes how the slave couple George and Eliza flees to Canada. Quakers help them along an escape route that was later to become famous under the name "Underground Railroad".⁶⁶⁶ Today, there is a museum dedicated to the Underground Railroad in the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Cincinnati.

The secrets of the Underground Railroad were revealed in 1873, eight years after the 13th amendment of the constitution had officially banned slavery in the USA, when William Still published an account of his experiences helping escaping slaves.⁶⁶⁷ He describes how the abolitionists applied railway metaphors to their proceedings, for reasons of safety. Thus, people who helped slaves find the railroad were "agents", guides were known as "conductors", hiding places were "stations", escaped slaves were referred to as "passengers" or "cargo" etc. Thus, in analogy to the composition on the South mural, the Afro-Americans' central position could be a hidden reference to Cincinnati's important role in the "Underground Railroad".

It is very likely that Winold Reiss was familiar with the legendary movement, as he was very interested in Afro-American culture and stood, because of his collaboration with the Harlem Renaissance, in close contact with some of the foremost black intellectuals of his time. But the early 1930s had not yet developed a climate where art dealing with Afro-American history, or indeed any other politically controversial topics, could be displayed in public places without meeting resistance. As mural painting was still a

⁶⁶³ See Condit, *The railroad and the city*; Linda Bailey, Barbara Dawson and Ruby Rogers, *Cincinnati Union Terminal* (Cincinnati, OH: Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal, 2003), 3.

⁶⁶⁴ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's cabin*, Bantam classics (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1981).

⁶⁶⁵ See for instance Edmund Wilson, *Patriotic gore: Studies in the literature of the American Civil War* (New York, NY: Norton, 1962), 3–58; Lyde Cullen Sizer, *The political work of Northern women writers and the Civil War, 1850 - 1872* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 52–57.

⁶⁶⁶ See Fergus M. Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement* (New York, NY: Amistad, 2006).

⁶⁶⁷ William Still, *The Underground Railroad* (New York, NY: Arno Press, 1968).

nascent art-form in early-twentieth century America, the US-American muralists were all more or less influenced by post-revolutionist Mexican artists working in the United States, like Rivera, Orozco, or Siqueiros.⁶⁶⁸ Nevertheless – even though many of the public Art Projects of the New Deal tended to be patriotic⁶⁶⁹ – there are hardly any direct political statements in the public murals of the 1930s.⁶⁷⁰

The message in the Cincinnati mosaics is subtle, but perceivable. Certainly, the keen interest in the position of ethnic minorities and the value Reiss put on racial equality lay as much in his personal character as in his upbringing in rural Germany. Of course there had been racist stereotypes in late nineteenth century Germany, but due to the then still very homogenous population he probably had little experience with day-to-day racism until he arrived in the United States in 1913. And while his reverence for the First Nations seems to bear the imprint of a positive racism to the sensitive citizen of today, it was surely not aggressive and within its time probably rather rare. Also, having lived in New York for almost twenty years, Reiss had gained a lot of experience with the American art market. He knew better than Diego Rivera whose Rockefeller Center murals were destroyed because he had brandished a politically delicate issue – namely a portrait of Lenin – too openly into the face of his patron.⁶⁷¹ Rivera's case had taught Reiss "that, after all, it is the other fellow who owns the wall."⁶⁷²

Reiss would not have risked his work by openly celebrating Afro-American history. Instead, he artfully hid his memorial to the Underground Railway in the center of a History of Cincinnati. While it worked, and he was not called off the project, it is ironic that – due to misunderstood political correctness – the reference remained for such a long time as clandestine as the event it commemorates.

⁶⁶⁸ See Berman, "Amerika als Epos: Wandmalerei im Regierungsauftrag", 361–362; Olav Münzberg and Michael Nungesser, "Die mexikanischen Wandmaler Orozco, Rivera und Siqueros in den USA", in *Amerika: Traum und Depression 1920/40*, ed. Grant E. Mouser (Hamburg: Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, 1980), 392–393.

⁶⁶⁹ See Francis O'Connor, "Entwicklungsgeschichte der Projekte zur bildenden Kunst im New Deal 1933–1943", in *Amerika: Traum und Depression 1920/40*, ed. Grant E. Mouser (Hamburg: Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, 1980), 452–463.

⁶⁷⁰ See Berman, "Amerika als Epos: Wandmalerei im Regierungsauftrag", 362.

⁶⁷¹ For a first-hand account see Diego Rivera, "Introduction", in *Portrait of America*, ed. Bertram D. Wolfe (New York, NY: 1934), 25–27.

⁶⁷² Anonymous, "Tact in Art".

I.3 The Cincinnati Union Terminal Rotunda Mosaics: Visualizing US-American National Mythology from a German Perspective

Winold Reiss chose some national myths for the embellishment of Cincinnati Union Station that were already deeply ingrained in the psyche of American society. The most important of these myths is that of the Frontier, the settlement of the “Wild West”, of “empty” Indian Country by white pioneers from the East and European immigrants. He includes the important role of railway construction, of growing industrialization and of urbanization into his tale. But while the southern mural confines itself on the more general narrative strands, the northern mural focuses on the specifics of Cincinnati’s regional history. Rather than hinting at the Indian Wars, Reiss depicts farmers taming nature, claiming and cultivating the “empty” land, and merchants harnessing the river for trade and transport. In the centre, hidden yet visible for all, he reminds us of the accomplishments of the Underground Railroad, at this place, where North and South met.⁶⁷³

Maybe it is significant that the artist who chose which myths to bring to the wall had grown up in Germany. Adventure literature acquainted him with the American national mythology early in his youth, but it was a Europeanized and partially modified version of it, elevated by attempts of cultural philosophy. During his twenty years living in the US he had had many opportunities to compare the promises that many of these stories held with reality. Because his work centered on the ethnic variety of his new homeland he learned about racism and segregation, and during World War I he was himself haunted and affected by anti-German propaganda.⁶⁷⁴ And yet Winold Reiss, coming from the outside, could possibly grasp the essence of the American Dream better, and express the promises it held and the myths it rooted in it more truthfully, than any artist born and raised in the country could have done. After all, it were these promises and myths – even if in an Europeanized version – that had lured him to the USA in the first place. He was naturalized in 1932, while working at the Cincinnati commission.

⁶⁷³ Both southern neighbors, Kentucky and West Virginia, were Union states that permitted slavery.

⁶⁷⁴ See W. Tjark Reiss, "My Father Winold Reiss - Recollections by Tjark Reiss", 59–60; Mehring, ""The Unfinished Business of Democracy": Transcultural Confrontations in the Portraits of the German-American Artist Winold Reiss".

Our second example, Johannesburg Park Station, was opened to the public in 1933, only one year after Cincinnati Union Station. Nevertheless, the circumstances of its construction could hardly differ more.⁶⁷⁵

I.4 Context: Nation Building in the Union of South Africa after its Foundation in 1910

The Union of South Africa had been founded in 1910, merging the British colonies Cape Colony and Natal with the former Boer Republics Orange Free State and South African Republic (ZAR; “Transvaal”) into a new territorial state. As a British dominion, and later as a member of the Commonwealth, ties to the British Crown remained strong, with the reigning monarch serving as ruling head of state until the foundation of the Republic of South Africa in 1961.⁶⁷⁶

But in 1910, the new Union had yet to become a *nation*. According to Hobsbawm⁶⁷⁷, a national conscience does not develop automatically out of any common cultural, linguistic, literal or folkloric tradition; rather, it needs a lot of active, often quite militant political campaigning in order to acquire mass support. Hobsbawm points out that this campaigning for nationalist programs sometimes “occurs before the creation of a national state; probably very much more often it occurs afterwards, as a consequence of that creation.”⁶⁷⁸

This was also the case in South Africa. A whole new mindset for the population, a South African identity, had to be invented. Since the non-white actors⁶⁷⁹, despite their numeral majority, wielded hardly any political influence, nation building endeavors concentrated on the two major white ethnicities: On the one hand, these were the descendants of Dutch heritage (Afrikaner or “Boers”), who had settled in the Table Bay area since the arrival of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische

⁶⁷⁵ The following chapter relies heavily on N. J. Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape: The Johannesburg Station panels in context*, Pierneef, land en landskap. Die Johannesburg Stasiepanele in Konteks (Fourways: CBM Publishers, 1992), a detailed catalogue accompanying the exhibition of the station panels, and the main source available to me. I am grateful to Colin Divall for mentioning the catalogue to me.

⁶⁷⁶ See Leonard Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, 3rd edition, Yale Nota Bene (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 188.

⁶⁷⁷ Eric John Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd edition, 13th printing (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁶⁷⁸ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 12.

⁶⁷⁹ San, Khoikhoi and numerous Bantu tribes as well as descendants of former slaves from India and South-East Asia, the so called Cape Malays.

Compagnie; VOC) in 1652 and began pursuing extensive semi-migrant stockfarming in the eighteenth century and nineteenth century (so called “*trekboer* society”).⁶⁸⁰

On the other hand there were the British, who had annexed Cape Town during the turmoil of the Napoleonic wars and officially took over the colony in 1814.⁶⁸¹ Soon, many Afrikaner became discontent with the new rulers’ policies, which included the abolition of slavery and a guarantee of equal legal rights to “free persons of colour”. Between 1835 and 1870, an estimated 12 000 Afrikaner pioneers (“*Voortrekkers*”) migrated to more fertile land north-east and east of the Cape Colony. During that time, an era referred to as “Great Trek”,⁶⁸² they founded the Boer Republics, notably the South African Republic (ZAR; or “Transvaal”) and the Orange Free State, in what seemed to be a widely uninhabited area. But the region had only recently been depopulated by the *Mfecane*, or “scattering”, following the rise of Zulu power between 1815 and about 1840. A period of widespread chaos and disturbance, it stands for devastating intertribal wars due to shifting power structures and rising pressure to secure fertile land and water, thus increasing (often belligerent) migration.

Therefore, in the time following, the British led three great wars: one against the Zulu King Cetshwayo (Anglo-Zulu War of 1879), which ended the power of the Zulu Empire and their political independence, and two against the Boer Republics (First Anglo-Boer War of 1880-1881; Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902).⁶⁸³ Although the causes for those wars were complex, ultimately they can be traced back to the discovery of huge mineral deposits, namely, but not exclusively, of diamonds on the joint borders of the Cape Colony, the Orange Free State and the South African Republic. The “diamond rush” attracted not only hopeful prospectors from all over the world – rush-town Kimberley, founded 1867, grew to 50 000 inhabitants within five years – it also ended the relative isolation and political privacy of the Boers in South Africa’s interior. Tensions continued growing until the unrests led to the Second Anglo-Boer War and eventually to the fall of the Republic and the foundation of the Union.

So it was “Whites” of both British colonial heritage and Afrikaner roots that had to develop a common South African identity, in order to prevent the young nation from

⁶⁸⁰ See Leonard Thompson and Howard Lamar, “Comparative Frontier History”, in *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa compared*, ed. Howard Lamar, and Leonard Thompson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981a), 23.

⁶⁸¹ See Thompson and Lamar, “Comparative Frontier History”, 52.

⁶⁸² See Thompson and Lamar, “Comparative Frontier History”, 23.

⁶⁸³ See Thompson and Lamar, “Comparative Frontier History”, 23.

falling apart during the threat of a new civil war. But the two parties in question did not share the usual West European prerequisites for a nascent national conscience. There was no common language, no common culture, and the common history was highlighted by the two wars they had led against each other. Due to the recent belligerent history, South African nation building required a lot of political campaigning.

One of the main actors in this campaigning process was the South African Railway & Harbour Company (SAR&H), as becomes clear by Jeremy Foster's research conducted on the SAR&H's publicity department, published in 2003.⁶⁸⁴ Foster shows that the national railway company was a political institution which quite consciously used pictorial advertising and its influence on the media, not only to achieve economic goals, but also to serve nationalist objectives. So when the SAR&H decided to build a new, monumental railway station in Johannesburg rather than in the nation's capital Pretoria, both the location⁶⁸⁵ and its decoration with South African landscapes was not just a matter of aesthetics, but of declared political intention.

“This location [...] mediated a remapping of the imagined national territory, in which the Rand with its mines and industries challenged the older colonial port cities with their cultivated, semi-offshore society as the sub-continent's cultural heart. This shift was reflected in the massive new Park Station erected in the centre of Johannesburg, which included long distance and suburban platforms, the SAR&H administration's offices, and a main concourse surrounded by murals depicting all parts of the Union. As in the London termini of the great English railway companies, this modern complex announced the nation-building power of the Railways, while its decoration offered a synecdochic vision of the

⁶⁸⁴ Jeremy Foster, "'Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always known'? The SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910-1930", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, no. 3 (2003).

⁶⁸⁵ Johannesburg was founded in 1886 during the gold rush, and reached a population of 100 000 within ten years. When, after the two Anglo-Boer Wars and the foundation of the Union of South Africa, the mining industry was established in an organized way, the ever-growing city became the biggest metropolitan area south of the Sahara. See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 6.

national territory that was accessible through its portals.”⁶⁸⁶

Below, I will undertake to investigate this reasonable⁶⁸⁷ but as-yet unsupported claim by subjecting the paintings in question to a closer look.

I.5 Johannesburg Park Station (1926-32): A National Image Campaign Using Historical Myths, Political Ambitions, and Marketing Strategies

In 1926, the South African Railway and Harbour Company (SAR&H) decided to build a new railway station in Johannesburg. The station’s location, its dimensions and the projected lavish decoration were meant to match the increasing importance of and traffic in South Africa’s fastest growing city. Of the two hired architects, George Esselmont Gordon Leith (1886-1965) is usually credited as the chief architect compared to the contributions of his colleague, Gerard Leendart Pieter Moerdijk (1890-1958).⁶⁸⁸ But the very appointment of these two – one as obviously British as the other obviously Afrikaner – conveys the politically intended convergence of white ethnicities.⁶⁸⁹

Park Station was to have a decorative program that should advertise both Johannesburg’s wealth and South Africa’s newly-found position in Africa and the world. For example, two giant bronze elephants were to symbolize Africa’s grandeur.⁶⁹⁰ Due to the Depression, however, the budget for decorative elements was severely cut. Despite that, the landscape painter Jakob Hendrik Pierneef (1886-1957) received in 1929 the commission for a cycle of landscapes. They were to be hung in the concourse of the new station, which consisted of a well lit cross-vaulted porticus surrounding two atriums.

Pierneef painted twenty-eight South African landscapes, each measured 140,5 x 126 cm. According to photographs taken shortly before the inauguration in 1932, the panels were placed about 4,50 to 5 meter high over-head, on all four walls of the hall. (Figure 5-25)

⁶⁸⁶ Jeremy Foster, "'Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always known'? The SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910-1930", 662.

⁶⁸⁷ Of course, as we have seen in chapter 3, the London termini did not serve nation building goals but rather company promoting intentions, making theirs an economic rather than national political decoration.

⁶⁸⁸ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 5.

⁶⁸⁹ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 5-6, and note 61, 44.

⁶⁹⁰ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 6, quoting Sylva Moerdyk in note 69, 45.

Due to pollution customary in railway stations, the panels soon had to be restored, a work that Pierneef undertook himself in 1948, after which he required that the paintings should henceforth be protected by a glass frame. From 1960-63, the panels were removed successively to yet another new station concourse where they stayed until further restoration became necessary in 1971. After having cleaned them, the Pretoria Art Museum displayed them in 1973, but subsequently put them in storage until the opening of the South African Railway and Art Museum in 1979. From there, the paintings were given on permanent loan to the Johannesburg Art Gallery in 1987. Since October 2002, the Rupert Art Collection has been in charge of the station panels, exhibiting them from 2002 in Graaf-Reinet, until bringing them to their own museum in Stellenbosch in 2010.⁶⁹¹

For the catalogue of a 1992 exhibition, N. J. Coetzee has scrupulously reconstructed the original hanging of the panels in order to find the program underlying the seemingly arbitrary choice and arrangement of the scenes.⁶⁹² He has numbered them clockwise once around the concourse gallery, beginning at the south side to the right from the entrance Noord Street. (Figure 5-26) Following Coetzee's numbering, on the Southern wall, to the right of the steps, there are scenes depicting:

1. Hermanus, 2. Drakensberg, 3. Karoo, 4. Apies River, Pretoria, followed on the Western wall by depictions of 5. Table Mountain, 6. Louis Trichardt, 7. Okahandja, S.W.A., 8. Graaff-Reinet, 9. Bosveld, Transvaal, and 10. Karibib, S.W.A.

On the Northern wall it continues with paintings of 11. Premier Mine, 12. Meiring's Poort, C.P., 13. Waterval Boven, 14. Rustenburg Kloof, 15. Rand Gold Mine, 16. Lion's Head, Cape Town, 17. Knysna Heads, and 18. Vaal River, Parys, finishing up on the Eastern wall with panels showing 19. Heidelberg, Transvaal, 20. Hartbeespoortdam, 21. Mont-aux-Sources, 22. Swartberg Pass, 23. Malutis, Basutoland and 24. Amajuba.

Last, but not least, to the left of the steps on the Southern wall, there are paintings of 25. Klipriviersberg, Alberton, 26. Houtbos, Transvaal, 27. Pienaar's River, and finally, 28. Stellenbosch. There are also four panels depicting unidentified indigenous trees of a narrower format (145 x 30, 5 cm), which were hung in two pairs on the South Wall, on either side above the steps leading up to Eloff and De Villiers Streets: 29. Indigenous

⁶⁹¹ Information according to museum leaflet provided by Deon Herselman, Director of Rupert Art Foundation, via email (Oct. 7, 2011).

⁶⁹² See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*.

Tree (*Outeniqua* yellowwood/*podocarpus falcatus*?) and 30. Indigenous Tree (broom cluster fig/*ficus sur*?) to the left, and 31. Indigenous Tree (umbrella thorn/*acacia tortilis* or maybe camel thorn/*acacia erioloba*) and 32. Indigenous Tree (monkey thorn/*acacia galipinii*?) to the right. (Figures 5-27 – 5-58).

Regrettably, all official documents pertaining to the commission of the Park station panels were destroyed in 1950, so that Coetzee had to rely on newspaper articles and Pierneef's correspondence for some information on the conception of the embellishment.⁶⁹³ As it happens, the painter and one of the station's two architects, Gordon Leith, had been friends since school, and started corresponding about details of the commission as early as 1928.⁶⁹⁴ There is little doubt that it was largely due to this friendship that Pierneef received the commission for Johannesburg station.⁶⁹⁵

His assignment became official with its publication by the Afrikaner newspaper *De Volkstem*, which titled July 2nd, 1929: "Johannesburg Station will be Pierneef's *magnus opus*". The next day, a follow-up was published. Also July 3rd, the English paper *Rand Daily Mail* took up the news, with the slightly less enthusiastic headline "To Paint Panels for New Station Big Commission for Mr. J. H. Pierneef".⁶⁹⁶

The two newspapers relate the few known details specifying the commission: the paintings were to depict both scenes of natural beauty and important historical places in the Union's four provinces as well as Rhodesia and South-West Africa⁶⁹⁷. And the placement of the panels should indicate the direction in which the province lies, with the entrance hall as center.

⁶⁹³ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 6.

⁶⁹⁴ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 5.

⁶⁹⁵ Coetzee found references to the commission in their correspondence as early as 1928, a year before the commission was officially advertised. See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 5–6.

⁶⁹⁶ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 6.

⁶⁹⁷ Northern Rhodesia (today's Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (today's Zimbabwe) was a region administered by the British South Africa Company founded by Cecil Rhodes in 1889. In 1922, the BSA negotiated with the Union of South Africa about the incorporation of Southern Rhodesia, but after a settlers' referendum, the British government accorded it self-governing colony status, Northern Rhodesia becoming a protectorate.

The German colony South-West Africa was annexed by the Union of South Africa in 1914. See Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, 159. It received a Class C mandate by the League of Nations in 1919, as it was considered to be "best administered under the laws of the mandatory as integral portions of its territory". Charles Howard Ellis, *The origin, structure & working of the League of Nations* (Clark, NJ: The Lawbook Exchange, 2003), 494.

But even a cursory examination reveals that many of the subjects on the panels lie in quite different, sometimes even opposite, directions: For instance, even a lot of goodwill cannot move South-Western Cape Town (panel 16, North wall) (figure 5-42) to the North of Johannesburg, or the far Northern town of Louis Trichardt (panel 6, West wall) (figure 5-32) to the West. For most of the others, too, their position on the wind rose is only a very vague indicator for their placement within the hall. This is of course due to the fact that Johannesburg itself is not positioned centrally in South Africa but in the North-East. Hence, most of the depicted attractions are to be found in the south and west of the city, whence settlement took its course. Only the four panels depicting scenes from Namibia (panels 7, 10) (figures 5-33, 5-36) and Lesotho (panels 21, 23) (figure 5-47, 5-49) are in fact positioned “correctly” on the West and East Wall respectively.

Despite this obvious drawback, Coetzee declares both requirements – subject matter and placing – fulfilled by Pierneef. To him, the task lies in determining the motivation behind Pierneef’s actual choice of scenes. It seems that neither number nor size of the panels had been specified, and according to Coetzee there is no evidence that the architects interfered with the artist’s plans in any way. Coetzee concludes, that

“Pierneef not only decided on the selection of most of the scenes himself but also on their number, although the number of panels would have been partially dictated by the architectural considerations.”⁶⁹⁸

As Coetzee tried to discover a rule for the arrangement of the panels other than their geographical position, but proved unsuccessful: “so far, no consistently applicable denominator has been found to provide a more systematic classification”.⁶⁹⁹ As all of Coetzee’s attempts at grouping and arranging the Johannesburg station panels by subject matter, depicted region, style, or order of creation, remained unconvincing even to himself, he fell back to the obvious but not quite plausible solution of seeing the paintings as SAR&H’s way of promoting tourism within their network. For him,

⁶⁹⁸ Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 6.

⁶⁹⁹ Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 9.

“the building and Pierneef’s panels had a specific practical and advertising function. The Railway authorities were concerned not only with projecting an image as a successful and progressive corporation but also with the practicalities of promoting local national tourism.”⁷⁰⁰

Although it is neither unheard of nor even unusual for a railway company to use landscape art in order to enhance tourism or advertise the expansion of their railway network, (see chapters 3 and 4), Coetzee seems to have difficulties to prove his hypothesis. While he claims many of the panels to depict tourist resorts, he also admits that several of the shown locations were not developed for tourism or even near to a railway track (panels 5, 12, 27).⁷⁰¹ (Figures 5-31, 5-38, 5-53) About one of the most important South African landmarks, the Table Mountain (panel 5) (figure 5-31), he states: “This is not the standard tourist snapshot of the mountain, displaying the flat top.”⁷⁰² And in Pierneef’s view of Hartbeespoortdam (panel 20) (figure 5-46), the nearby settlements of Kosmos and Schoemansville, houses or hotels that would have been visible from that point of view, are left out.⁷⁰³

Maybe he wanted to depict the landscape’s “chocolate side”, addressing the rural nostalgia of the urban visitor, similar to the paintings in Swiss stations we have seen in chapter 4. But in promoting a tourist resort to the sophisticated urbanite, the deliberate exclusion of hotels and other guarantees of a civilized living standard seem to be a rather unusual marketing strategy. What makes concrete advertising goals even more improbable is the inclusion of at least two totally unidentifiable, possibly even idealized studio landscapes, which Coetzee cannot give a name to, let alone a railway station (panels 3 and 9).⁷⁰⁴ (Figures 5-29, 5-35).

Several things seem to make the interpretation for Coetzee so difficult. One is the fact that we deal with a cycle of paintings, a large group that at first seems rather incoherent. Another is the fact that we deal with pure landscapes, landscapes without any human presence in them. But the most evident problem seems to be that Coetzee, despite his

⁷⁰⁰ Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 7.

⁷⁰¹ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 34, 36, 37.

⁷⁰² Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 34.

⁷⁰³ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 33.

⁷⁰⁴ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 36.

producing a very thorough analysis of the paintings, neglects to draw the obvious conclusion from it.

At first he delivers a lengthy description of how Pierneef was involved in the Afrikaner nationalist movement, and subsequently had become in the public opinion the quintessential South African painter by the 1930s.⁷⁰⁵ He then dedicates the following chapters to the meaning of land and landscape in South African nationalist ideology.⁷⁰⁶ The gist of an extended argument about the – quite obvious and undeniable – influence of the Dutch painter Konijnenberg on Pierneef⁷⁰⁷ seems to be to establish said influence without doubting Pierneef’s model “Afrikanertum”.⁷⁰⁸

Throughout Pierneef’s career, he used his position as artist and lecturer on art to refine the unschooled taste of his compatriots and to define in works and words an independent and idiosyncratic South African Art. His teachings became very influential in the South African Art scene. One must keep in mind that South Africa was geographically quite cut off from the booming European and American art market, which at the time was revolutionized by different avant-garde movements and –isms. At the same time, the white population of the Union engaged in processes of nation building, trying to define their own specific South African culture and combining Afrikaner heritage with more recent cultural influences, mainly by British and other European first-generation immigrants.

Pierneef, who was only second-generation Afrikaner and spent much of his forming years in the Netherlands, was of decidedly Dutch heritage. Maybe it was because of this that he joined the *Afrikaner Broederbond* in 1918, a society dedicated to advance the interests of Afrikaners. After all, he was but a second generation immigrant, who had not only spent his adolescence far away in the Netherlands, but at the same time missed the most formative years in Afrikaner conscience: the Second Anglo-Boer War. It seems natural, that he should feel a great need of formal integration into Afrikaner society, and gave himself to the task with all the zeal of the freshly converted. In the course of time, this would alienate his British clients in Pretoria.

At the same time, his semi-foreignness possibly allowed him to identify the gist of South African nature and history, landscape and mythology much better than an old-

⁷⁰⁵ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 2–4.

⁷⁰⁶ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 17–30.

⁷⁰⁷ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 15–20.

⁷⁰⁸ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 17.

established “Boer” might have done – quite similar to the German immigrant Reiss in US America. And indeed, Pierneef in time managed to establish his landscapes successfully as “indigenous” South-African, but still “white”, art.⁷⁰⁹

But Coetzee shies away from the obvious next step in the argument, namely to interpret Pierneef’s Johannesburg landscapes in the light of this knowledge: a nationalist painter painting nationalist landscapes during a period of nation building. The panels would then contribute to the young state’s efforts to build a new nation by providing the necessary imagery.

1.5.1 Balancing Motifs: Enhancing Afrikaner Status with Regards to the British

Because Pierneef wanted to construct the visual anchor for a new South-African national conscience, he had to balance British and Afrikaner motifs within his landscape cycle.

Thus, his twenty-eight paintings encompassed thirteen subjects from the former Boer Republics (panels 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27), eleven from the former British colonies (panels 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 12, 16, 17, 22, 24, 28), and four depicted regions administered by the Union: Lesotho as High Commission Territory (panels 21, 23) and South-West Africa as Mandate by the League of Nations (today: Namibia, panels 7, 10).

The slight majority of “Afrikaner” (i. e. Transvaal) motives can be explained by the construction site (Johannesburg being the center of the Transvaal), and by Pierneef’s closeness to the Afrikaner nationalist movement. Although the situation was visibly changing during the 1930s, in the 1920s, the political and economic situation of Afrikaners was still inferior to that of the British.⁷¹⁰ Despite forming the majority of the white population in South Africa, Afrikaners often felt they had to strengthen their position in the new political partnership by stressing their older rights and longer traditions on the subcontinent.

Pierneef could probably not help but take an unobtrusive yet clearly visible stand for the Afrikaner side. But in this, we are left with the impression that the “Afrikaner motifs” are promoted from a position of slight inferiority. This would explain the seemingly arbitrary placement of landscapes within the station building– as opposed to the

⁷⁰⁹ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 1–4.

⁷¹⁰ See Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, 155.

stipulated but hard to achieve geographical arrangement that had puzzled Coetzee so much. Thus, the unsystematic hanging would be a conscious attempt to mix up sites of Afrikaner and British heritage and to place them un-hierarchically side by side.

Panel 4: Apies River – View of Pretoria, Capital of the Union

Panel 4 (Figure 5-30) depicts a view of Pretoria from the Apies River, an area well known to Pierneef as he had lived close by before 1924.⁷¹¹ The viewer stands on the lush green banks of a small creek that meanders through the center of the painting downhill to the fields. In the background, an urban structure is partly hidden behind several groves in the middle ground. A tall, white-washed building with red rooftops nestles to a steep hill. Depth is added by the coils of the creek and the echeloning of some trees: green and healthy to the left, crippled, dry, and leafless to the right. The scene is framed by clouds forming an arch in the high blue sky, framing the background cityscape, the hill and the main building and giving it a somewhat sacral air.

The steep hill and the edifice are identified by Coetzee as Meintjieskop hill with the Union Buildings which served as the seat of government and centre of South African administration.⁷¹² According to Coetzee, the scene was well known to Pierneef, who had painted many sketches and a series of oil paintings of the Union Buildings during their construction. Strange seems therefore the faraway view from the west and the focus on the rather insignificant Apies river – “hardly qualifying as a landmark”.⁷¹³

The Union Buildings was the main landmark of Pretoria in those days, and a symbol of political importance: each of the two wings of the semicircular building stands for one of the (white) parties of the Union, Afrikaners and British. Thus, the collaboration between the two major white groups was expressed in architectural terms, as was also the case with Park Station and its two architects. The cooperation was meant to demonstrate the new unity of the former opponents. But, as Coetzee points out, in “Apies River”, the significant feature “Union Buildings” is rather suppressed. To him, it means that Pierneef had changed his political loyalties (formerly pro-English, now pro-Afrikaner), and he wonders if the bare willow tree to the right was symbolic.

⁷¹¹ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 33.

⁷¹² See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 33.

⁷¹³ Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 33.

I agree with Coetzee, but take his conclusions one step further: In Pierneef's view, the "union" postulated in name and architecture of the government building is still far away. And while one tree stands tall, green and prosperous, the other is crippled and starving, just like the main political actors within the young nation. The willow symbolizes the political and economic weakness of the Afrikaners, and their vexation because they had hardly profited from the former Transvaal's mineral wealth that is referred to in two more panels: panel 11 "Premier Mine" (figure 5-37) and panel 15 "Rand Gold Mine" (figure 5-41) depict the gold and diamond mines in the Witwatersrand.⁷¹⁴

Panels 11 and 15: Diamond and Gold Mines – Source of South Africa's Prosperity

Premier Mine, a diamond mine near Cullinan, north-east of Pretoria, is shown from the edge of the deep excavation pit. There are buildings, like a small grey village, at the bottom, and at the far side shaftheads, and an industrial structure with three chimneys whose black smoke plumes billow towards the right frame of the picture.

The view of Rand Gold Mine is described by Coetzee as showing "No. 1 shaft headgear and tower of the City Deep Gold Mine near Johannesburg". The mine dump in the background, a "truncated triangle", is crowned by Pierneef's trademark arching clouds, mixing with the billowing black smoke from two chimneys. As Coetzee points out, the two panels form a pair, not only thematically but also compositionally: the triangular shape of the diamond mine pit points downward much as the dump heap points upwards in the gold mine. Yet, looking for tourist sites, Coetzee wonders about the inclusion of the two scenes and finds it "debatable" whether they depict landscape at all.⁷¹⁵

But for a kaleidoscope of the political status quo of the young nation the two panels are crucial. The mining industry formed the basis for the young nation's economical independence and its political position within the world and the world-market. With their exploitation, Johannesburg had become the new hub around which all South African provinces gravitated alike, notwithstanding their former colonial glory and pre-industrial history.

It was the discovery and subsequent exploitation of gold mines in the Witwatersrand mountain ridge south of Pretoria (capital of ZAR) in 1886, which had led to the

⁷¹⁴ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 38f.

⁷¹⁵ Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 39.

foundation, and rise to economical dominance, of modern day Johannesburg. The sudden influx of *Uitlanders* (foreign, mainly British gold-seekers) had led to growing disputes over *Uitlander* economic and political rights –especially, as the number of foreigners soon exceeded the number of *Boers*. Tensions continued growing until the unrests culminated in the Second Anglo-Boer War and eventually in the fall of the South African Republic and the foundation of the Union.

After that, the Transvaal's economic upsurge was largely controlled by British capitalists. Afrikaners, who still worked predominantly as stockfarmers, had been left behind, forming a new class of “Poor Whites”, who were hardly able to profit from the new prosperity.⁷¹⁶

The importance of the mining industry is expressed in the elements of “industrial sublime” that Pierneef chooses for their depiction. But the mirrored triangles of the deep, dark diamond pit and the high, light dump hill also mark the two sides of the medal, the ups and downs: not everybody profited from the new abundance; while some (British) became rich, many (Afrikaners) stayed poor.

1.5.2 Afrikaner Voortrekker Mythology Forming the Base for a Common, White South African History.

Only in the late 1920s, Afrikaners increasingly gained power and cultural confidence, culminating in the electoral victory of 1948.⁷¹⁷ Their rising influence was helped along by the production of a national mythology centering on the *Voortrekkers*, their migration to the endless *bosvelds* in the Eastern inlands, and their declared intention to be politically independent from British colonial rule.

As mentioned above, Coetzee dedicates most of chapter 3 to Afrikaner nationalism and Pierneef's position to it.⁷¹⁸ He summarizes that Afrikaner national character had formed by way of life of the *Trekboers* to such an extent that it fostered an “emotional and psychological dependence on the land, especially the vast spaciousness of the landscape.”⁷¹⁹ Coetzee also stresses the religious, i.e. Calvinist, foundation of the Afrikaner's claim to the land,

⁷¹⁶ See Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, chapter 5, esp. 154-157.

⁷¹⁷ See Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, 177–186.

⁷¹⁸ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 22–30.

⁷¹⁹ Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 29.

“The *trekboere* lived a life just like the Old Testament Israelites, being led ever closer by God to the promised land. The *Groot Trek*, the most pivotal event in Afrikaner history (another historical myth created in the Thirties) was presented as historical proof of the elect status and the pre-ordained exclusivity of the *Boerenasie*. [...] Afrikaner historians then inventend an attendant myth, the myth of the ‘empty land’ to enhance further, indeed to sanitize, their claim to the land.”⁷²⁰

The Afrikaner notion of being a chosen people was fuelled by their Calvinist beliefs which in turn led to the paternalist conviction that they had to rule over the indigenous peoples – what Coetzee calls “the Afrikaner’s version of the ‘White man’s burden’”.⁷²¹

It is in this context that the “‘empty land’, denuded of the human ecology and presence, as represented in Pierneef’s landscapes”⁷²² obtained its important meaning within Afrikaner national conscience. And it is exactly the kind of landscape that Pierneef became famous for, and which finds an archetypical expression in panel 9. (Figure 5-35)

Panel 9: Bosveld – the Empty Land

The “Bosveld” is depicted in such an idealized way that many experts believe the composition to be fictional, a studio assemblage out of typical elements.⁷²³ The landscape is not only completely empty of human presence – this is true for most of Pierneef’s Johannesburg panels – but also sanctified by the arch of clouds in the paintings upper half, another typical feature of the station panels. The two framing trees pull the viewers’ glance into the empty depth of the painting, reminding them of the fact that in South Africa too, just like in North America, the myth of the “empty land” was a driving factor in the settlement of the continent’s inner regions.⁷²⁴

The stylized composition of the panel highlights all the mythic elements of the Afrikaner’s attitude to the soil. But in the political reality of the 1930s, this emotional

⁷²⁰ Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 24.

⁷²¹ Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 24.

⁷²² Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 24.

⁷²³ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 36.

⁷²⁴ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 22–30.

dependence on the soil had already become an act of urban nostalgia for many. During the Depression, the majority of poor rural inhabitants – both black and white – were forced to seek work in the industrialized cities. Naming this new mass-migration a “Second Great Trek”⁷²⁵ proves how deeply the *Vortrekker*-mythology had already been ingrained in the young nation’s conscience.

It is important to keep in mind that the *Voortrekkers*’ movement to the interior regions of Southern Africa played a similar role in the Afrikaner national mythology as the pioneers and the Western frontier in North America.⁷²⁶ The history of the *Groot Trek* solidified into a national myth after the foundation of the Union. Very influential in this process were the writings of the South African author, journalist and historian Gustav S. Preller⁷²⁷ As script-writer for the 1916 film “*De Voortrekkers*”, Preller played an important part in popularizing the public conception of the *Voortrekker* movement.⁷²⁸ His writings took a very visible shape in the *Voortrekker* monument, built in 1938.⁷²⁹ Several of Pierneef’s panels bear reference to *Voortrekker* and other Afrikaner national heroes, for instance panel 6 (figure 5-32): It shows the town of Louis Trichardt, which was named after a *Voortrekker* leader.

Panel 6: Louis Trichardt – A South-African Daniel Boone

From a hill in the foreground, the viewer looks over cultivated fields and green meadows towards a quiet settlement of white buildings. Tall trees are interspersed between the houses. The painting focuses on a church standing on a hill in the middle of the background, red roof and spire highlighted by a shaft of light from the otherwise overcast sky, grey clouds forming the familiar arch above the scene. Except for the church, which seems to be borrowed right from a European landscape, the scene is not

⁷²⁵ Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 29.

⁷²⁶ See Lamar, Howard, and Leonard Thompson, eds., *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa compared* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981).

⁷²⁷ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 24. For information on Preller see e. g. P. J. Du Plessis, "Die lewe en werk van Gustav Preller (1875-1943)", (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1988); N. N., "Preller, Gustav Schoeman", in *Dictionary of South African Biography*, ed. C. J. Beyers de W. J. Kock (1976), 1; *You may like to read*, "Preller".

⁷²⁸ See Isabel Hofmeyr, "Popularizing History: The Case of Gustav Preller", *The Journal of African History* 29, no. 3 (1988).

⁷²⁹ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 5, footnote 56. For detailed information on the monument see Andrew Crampton, "The Voortrekker Monument, the birth of apartheid, and beyond", *Political Geography* 20, no. 2 (February 2001).

very remarkable, the village being rather small and unimportant. Its inclusion is best explained by its connotations with *Voortrekker* mythology described by Coetzee.⁷³⁰

First of all, there is the name of the town. Louis Trichardt was one of the first white pioneers who came to the area in 1836. Allegedly looking for a harbor, but more likely a big game hunter, Trichardt was considered to be “the trailblazer of the ‘White’ migration of the *Groot Trek*” and later was “accorded not merely ordinary *trekker* status but the status of being the real pioneer.”⁷³¹ This seems to make of Trichardt a sort of South-African Daniel Boone. His fame was supported by a diary that he had kept during the journey and which was popularized in the writings of historians like Preller.

But the *Voortrekker* allusion does not stop in the past. Coetzee has explained that

“Louis Trichardt is the most northerly scene depicted in this series and is thus closest to the great continent of Africa. The church possibly represents the spearhead of the ‘White’ man’s burden to bring civilization to the Dark Continent. The civilizing mission of the ‘Whites’, by way of Christianity, was frequently discussed in the writing of the time.”⁷³²

The status of the missionaries as “white pioneers” puts them on the same level with the *Voortrekker* farmers. Indeed, agricultural and missionary work could be interpreted as two sides of the same medal, as Coetzee’s remarks on landscape and identity have shown: if landscape equals farmland, and farmland equals God’s land,⁷³³ cultivating the land, and evangelizing it were inseparably tied to each other. Except that the history of missionary and territorial expansion was far from finished, but was considered a job that still had to be completed in the near future.

Panels 7, 10, 21 and 23: High Commission Territories – an Imperialist Attitude

In this same sense, the inclusion of panels 7 (“Okahandja, S. W. A.”), 10 (“Karibib, S. W. A.”), 21 (“Mont aux Sources”) and 23 (“Malutis, Basutoland”) (figures 5-33, 5-36, 5-47, 5-49) not only “might possibly reflect imperialistic attitudes towards these

⁷³⁰ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 31f.

⁷³¹ Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 31 and footnote 250.

⁷³² Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 32.

⁷³³ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 22–26.

territories then prevalent in Union government circles.”⁷³⁴ They are also a variation of the *Vortrekker* theme.

The paintings obviously were conceived as two pairs, their composition resembling each other. In both Namibian scenes, the viewer gazes over open grassland in the foreground towards a mountain scene in the back. Trees frame the view, adding depth and guiding the eye towards the low horizon. As usual, clouds (or, in case of “Okahandja”, the evening light) form an arch above the center of the scene.

Similarly, both Lesotho-scenes depict the view of a mountain from the bottom of a valley framed by hills that help guiding the eyes deeper into the picture. Here, too, the sky forms the already familiar, trademark cloudy arch. Even the blue, green, red and earthy hues are alike, contributing to Pierneef’s idiosyncratic style.

These four landscapes from Lesotho and Namibia, about 15 per cent of the cycle’s scenes, show regions outside of, but politically claimed by, the Union. In their pursuit for new territories, Afrikaner pioneer spirit – or rather: *Vortrekker* spirit – met British Imperial colonialism. The feeling of white superiority that fueled the politics of segregation, and the belief in the legitimacy of territorial expansion, might have belonged to the few beliefs that both white parties shared.

In 1910, the Union and Britain had unofficially agreed to incorporate the so-called High Commission Territories (Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland) into the Union soon, goals which both Prime Ministers J.C. Smuts and J.B.M. Hertzog pursued. For Coetzee is clear: “Therefore not only do the Station Panels express pride in the Union’s new-found status [...] but two of the panels colonially, imperially, even covetously stake a claim to these territories.”⁷³⁵

Indeed, South Africa’s political claim to both territories remained intact throughout the Segregation era and was in fact carried out via the South African Customs Union which “integrated Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland into the South African Economy”.

Subsequently, major South African companies dominated the economy of Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia as well as they controlled railroads and ports.⁷³⁶ The imperial-colonial ambition of both white groups was fostered by their mutual sense of European ethnocentricity, and shared racial stereotypes about the indigenous

⁷³⁴ Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 11.

⁷³⁵ Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 11.

⁷³⁶ See Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, 230.

population. All “whites” had tried to assume exclusive control of the land, disregarding local culture, hospitality, religion and mores.⁷³⁷

The complex North American frontier is today often simplified to having run between a multi-ethnic group of European-Americans on one side and an indigenous population of mainly hunter-gatherers who seemed to know neither pastoralism nor agriculture nor the use of iron tools on the other. (This is also the image Winold Reiss presents in the Cincinnati mosaics.) The South African frontier situation knew more participating groups and was thus not so easily simplified. There were Bantu-speaking farmers (including the belligerent Zulu), who used iron tools, and were thus considered more civilized by Europeans than most North American Indians. There were also nomadic pastoralists called Khoikhoi (or “Hottentots” by the European settlers). And there were the San (still often known as “Bushmen”), who lived as hunter-gatherers in desert areas.⁷³⁸

Nevertheless, British and Afrikaner descendants alike ignored, and increasingly limited and denied, the political (and basic human) rights of the indigenous African and other non-white population. In South Africa, more than 6 million land-owning, farming Bantu alone formed ca. 80% of the population.⁷³⁹ Moreover, in southern Africa, the indigenes had worked for white farmers as herdsmen or domestic servants in return for squatting rights from the beginning. Most of the manual labor, in the mines or for construction of the railway, was performed by Bantu-speaking Africans. And “because the Africans were too numerous and too powerful to be completely expropriated”⁷⁴⁰, they had also kept effective occupation of considerable tracts of land in the former Transvaal, Lesotho (Basutoland), Swaziland, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), eastern Botswana, northern Namibia and much of Mozambique, a fact that South African legislation of all (white) parties continuously tried to change. This policy had begun with the anti-African wars of the nineteenth century⁷⁴¹ and culminated in the infamous politics of *apartheid* after 1948.

It is therefore not surprising that Pierneef completely excludes not only depictions of African people, but any signs of their settlement, agriculture or cattle in his paintings.

⁷³⁷ See Thompson and Lamar, "Comparative Frontier History", 16–18.

⁷³⁸ See Thompson and Lamar, "Comparative Frontier History", 18–22.

⁷³⁹ See Leonard Thompson and Howard Lamar, "The North American and Southern African Frontiers", in *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa compared*, ed. Howard Lamar, and Leonard Thompson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981b), 27.

⁷⁴⁰ Thompson and Lamar, "The North American and Southern African Frontiers", 33.

⁷⁴¹ At the time also known as “Kaffir Wars” or “Zulu Wars”.

The only traces of human presence in the landscapes of the Park station cycle show evidently European buildings. Contrary to reality, Pierneef's South Africa does not give evidence to the existence of Africans at all.

Overall, the white colonists' fight for the "heathen" land had become, in the course of history, a common experience for the white class which placed the former opponents closer together. Starting with their mutual feeling of white superiority and the increasing acceptance of Afrikaner identity within South African society (as epitomized by the erection of the *Voortrekker* monument), Afrikaner and British versions of history slowly began to merge into a common national founding myth. A case in point are panels 14 and 19: "Rustenburg Kloof" and "Heidelberg". (Figures 5-40, 5-45)

Panel 14: Rustenburg Kloof – Hometown of Paul Kruger, Transvaal President

According to Coetzee, "Rustenburg Kloof" was a well-known destination and picnic spot for people from Johannesburg and Pretoria. To him, its function as a tourist destination justified the inclusion of the scene within the landscape cycle.⁷⁴² We are shown an arid valley crossed by a little creek and surrounded by the bare cliffs of a rocky and steep, almost horizontal mountain range crowned by the typical cloud-arch. Although the scenery is indubitably beautiful, it also seems to be a somewhat inhospitable place for a city-dweller, even for a day-trip.

On the other hand, Rustenburg is well known to South Africans as the hometown of Paul Kruger, four times president of the South African Republic (Transvaal) from 1880 onwards and face of the resistance against the British during the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). The painting could therefore be interpreted as allusion to this conflict, which after all formed a piece of common history for both British and Afrikaners alike.

Panel 19: Heidelberg – Seat of Transvaal's Provisional Government

The same holds true for panel 19, which shows the historic town of Heidelberg. The view is led towards the town's center by way of a bridge, and to the green mountains beyond by a valley snaking between them, exactly in the center and again framed by the arching clouds. It is a real cityscape, shown from a hill in Heidelberg's outskirts, with

⁷⁴² See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 36.

many different buildings and a church of quite impressive size. At the time, Heidelberg formed an educational centre with a college and several famous schools, but during the First Anglo-Boer War (1880-81) the town served also as seat of the provisional government of the Transvaal. Even the treaty ending that war was signed there.⁷⁴³

Similar to the Anti-African wars described above, the two Anglo-Boer Wars with time received the air of an intra-national, civil war, rather than a conflict between two separate political entities. Much like the American Civil War of 1861-1865, in retrospect, the descendents of the former opponents registered those battles as part of their common history, even renaming the conflict “South African Wars”. From there, African and British South Africans alike could identify with the rising popularity of *Voortrekker* mythology as part of *white* South African history.

1.5.3 The Role of SAR&H in Constructing the Image of South Africa as “The Land of Contrasts”

According to Foster, the “emergence of white South African society in the Twentieth Century has usually been ascribed to a complex intertwining of economics, class, and race, but the focus on these categories has led to neglecting how the construction of an “imagined geography”⁷⁴⁴ served to unify the white population of the newly-founded “state without a nation”⁷⁴⁵. He points out that the early government of a “collection of colonies and republics, with uncertain borders, no consensus on what constituted citizenship, and a polity divided by the most fundamental badge of cultural identity, language” saw its only chance to overcome their problems by “eradicating divisions between whites left by the South African War, either through massive immigration, or the creation, within a very short period of time, of a sense of white unity” while at the same time stripping “the non-white majority of their political rights and economic power.”⁷⁴⁶

Foster argues that “the emergence of the 'imagined community' of nationhood [...] [often] coincide[s] with that of a collective subjectivity towards a given territory, an imaginary geography [...]”, a process involving

⁷⁴³ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 32.

⁷⁴⁴ Jeremy Foster, "'Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always known'? The SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910-1930", 658.

⁷⁴⁵ William Beinart, *Twentieth-century South Africa* (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁷⁴⁶ Jeremy Foster, "'Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always known'? The SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910-1930", 659.

“production and circulation of visual images of the shared territory. Smoothing out the world's inconsistencies, aberrations and contradictions, and privileging that which is picturable over that which is not, such imagery offers a confirmation of nationhood, and renders a national territory visible to all through reproduction and circulation. It situates a country's citizens through a subtle process of familiarisation and globalisation, constructing an array of cultural ‘places’ that stand for an imaginary territory, while simultaneously creating the audience/inhabitants of this territory.”⁷⁴⁷

The strategy seems to have been successful: “By the end of the 1920s [...] a tentative sense of collective white settler identity – a consensus about being ‘South African’ – had begun to emerge”.⁷⁴⁸ This sense of national identity “was also mediated by an imaginative identification with the country’s physical territory. Reification of ‘the land’, through locally specific ways of physically and imaginatively using the landscape, became an effective way of glossing over the deep underlying divisions in white society.

According to Foster, the SAR&H achieved their goals of shaping an “imagined geography” of the South African nation by creating thousands of visual images – films, photographs, lantern slides, woodcuts and similar artwork. These were subsequently used in manifold ways at home and abroad to promote a distinctive image of South African Landscape – an image that both captured the South African identity and was attractive for European tourists.⁷⁴⁹

Foster has shown that the search for distinctively South African subject matter took a new course in the SAR&H’s image policy in the 1920s. No longer did they attempt to find South African equivalents to European archetypes (Port Alfred: the Dartmouth of South Africa; the South African Riviera etc.), but instead, they focused on the promotion of distinctly and idiosyncratically South African motives. Rather than

⁷⁴⁷ Jeremy Foster, "'Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always known'? The SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910-1930", 658.

⁷⁴⁸ Jeremy Foster, "'Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always known'? The SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910-1930", 659.

⁷⁴⁹ See Jeremy Foster, "'Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always known'? The SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910-1930", 668.

promoting one “typical” South Africa, they began focusing on the diversity of South Africa’s many distinct landscapes, coining the slogan “land of contrasts”

“A whole array of regions never before depicted as ‘landscape’ were proposed: the rich winelands of the old Cape, the tortuous passes through the coastal mountains, the arid flats of the Karoo, the great gorge where the Crocodile River carves its way into the Transvaal Escarpment near Waterval-Onder, even the Rand's mine dumps.”⁷⁵⁰

In a footnote, Foster traces these examples to a “fictional conversation between three travelers in an SAR&H magazine.”⁷⁵¹ It is remarkable that this fictional conversation reflects exactly the variety of subjects Pierneef chooses for his Park Station commission. As he had already started his work on the panels when the article in question appeared I won’t try to force a connection, but it does show that he had either had more detailed instructions than we know of today, or that he at least had hit the *zeitgeist* with his work.

I.6 Pierneef’s Johannesburg Panels: Balancing Afrikaner and British Heritage Within South African National Mythology

Pierneef’s landscape cycle for Johannesburg Park station is a reflection of the processes that were at work to form the young nation’s budding conscience. Subtle references to history, as required by the commission, tend to bias the former Boer republics. But national campaigning and especially the emergence of a *Vortrekker* mythology had led to an all-white understanding of recent history to such an extent that citizens of British descent could readily identify with it: in this reading: the “white man’s burden” had been shouldered by British colonists and Afrikaner *Vortrekkers* alike. The Anglo-Boer Wars were transformed into the “South African Wars”, a civil war between members of the same nation, while the African wars against the Zulu and other Bantu tribes were regarded as a common experience.

⁷⁵⁰ Jeremy Foster, "'Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always known'? The SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910-1930", 672–73.

⁷⁵¹ See Jeremy Foster, "'Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always known'? The SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910-1930", footnote 76, quoting S. Kirkland, "From the Carriage Window: Scenic Pageantry Beside the Line", *Magazine*, October (1930).

Thus, the collective “white” history could justify the desire for future territorial expansion towards Namibia and Lesotho. At the same time, the variety of different scenes not only tried to reconcile former British and former Afrikaner regions in order to present them as one, united South African state, but confirmed to the SAR&H’s official marketing strategy at home and abroad: a land of contrasts.

II Shaping, Elaborating, and Interpreting National Mythology

Even though the big mosaic murals in Cincinnati Union Station do not seem to have much in common with Johannesburg Park Station’s famous landscape cycle, a closer look has revealed that they have actually a great deal in common. Both contribute to nation building processes by presenting the gist of their homeland’s national mythology. What is more, in both countries, the myth of a promised land, waiting to be taken into possession by white farmers, lies at the heart of the nation’s conscience, even though the local characteristics vary in detail.⁷⁵²

The similarities are easily explained by the comparable circumstances: European settlers tended to bring the same motives and values to the new colonies. They shared a protestant belief in a “Promised Land” in their attitude to the land, and a Eurocentric belief in white superiority in their attitude towards the indigenous peoples. They also correlated landownership with social standing, as had been common in pre-fordian, pre-industrial European society. Therefore, for both countries, the role and meaning of “free land” cannot be underestimated. Landownership bore the same connotations of status and (political) power as in the homelands. Thus,

“to own a hundred acres was to be a [...] yeoman farmer with perhaps the right to vote; to own a thousand acres was to aspire to be a gentleman and an office holder; to own ten thousand acres [...] was to be a lord. On the southern African frontier, it became customary for a trekboer to have effective ownership of six thousand acres, and the custom was maintained among the voortrekkers. Free land, therefore, not only inspired aggressive

⁷⁵² For a detailed comparison of the Frontier myth in the USA and South Africa see Lamar and Thompson, *The Frontier in History*.

expansion into indigenous areas for social and psychological reasons, it perpetuated hierarchical concepts of society and fostered forced labor systems on the so-called free frontiers of both North America and southern Africa.”⁷⁵³

Notwithstanding a similar subject matter, there are of course great differences in the artistic treatment of Frontier mythology that go beyond the obvious differences in genre, material, technique, or style. They lie on an iconographic level in the way the Frontier myth is narrated.

In Cincinnati, Frontier mythology is tied to persons, human actors, both individuals, and idealized archetypes representing varying population groups. Because the Frontier has long been closed and the depicted events lie in the past, they have been slowly transformed from National History to National Mythology. After “history” has turned to „story“, the legend could be changed: variations of a theme and interpretations of the underlying proto-story became possible without damaging the message or the “truth” of the myth. The more time elapsed, the more the Frontier narratives could be reduced to a certain semiotic symbolism: “typical” figures serve as representatives for well established parts of the narratives. It is still possible to identify individual protagonists, but it has become unnecessary: Scout, Soldier, Settler *pars pro toto* represent *all* scouts, soldiers, and settlers. Hence, the individual fate of a specific person is understood as a variation of a theme, following the narrative laws that left deep grooves in the “typical” story. Their appearance then retrieves much more complex information from the minds of the audience.

In Johannesburg, however, the formation of “history” was still under way. Due to the political friction between the two acting white parties, it was still difficult to tie many recent events – no matter how important they were for the political foundation of the nation state – to specific persons: their name alone would tell of ethnicity and thus of party affiliation. The focus lay on integrating factors that could serve as a basis for a common national conscience. In order to create a truly unified nation out of the ethnically, politically and culturally diverse population, Pieterneef insinuated future possibilities, rather than relating historical events. Images evoking the reminiscence of

⁷⁵³ Thompson and Lamar, "The North American and Southern African Frontiers", 30.

interfering factors – like the situation, even the existence of indigenous ethnicities, or recent belligerent conflicts – were consistently suppressed. Although the use of landscapes allowed subtle, even subliminal references to the diverse and battlesome origins of the multi-ethnic state, the primary objective remained the demonstration of mutuality. At the same time, the national myth of the “empty land” was not treated as a thing from the past but as an option for the future: the idealized, even sacralized land held the promise of a glorious future rather than reminding the audience of the not-so-glorious past.

The identification of the myths that influence a nation, and the contemporary generation within this nation, belongs to the most difficult tasks of the artist. It is an interesting aspect that both Winold Reiss and Jakob Hendrik Pierneef had in fact not grown up in the nation whose conscience they portrayed, but were first or second generation immigrants: Reiss immigrated to New York in 1913, aged 27, while Pierneef’s parents moved back to the Netherlands during the Second Anglo-Boer War, when he was fourteen. He spent his formative years in Europe and Coetzee reminds us right from the start of the “Dutch identity” he retained throughout his life.⁷⁵⁴ Sometimes, you get a much clearer view from the outside.

The examples of Cincinnati and Johannesburg have shown that railway station embellishment was used to transport political messages such as narratives of national mythologies. Obviously, it did not make a difference whether the nation state is already politically institutionalized and firmly established within the society – as in the case of Cincinnati, or if the nation building process is still in full campaign – like in Johannesburg.

The next two examples will show that it did make a difference if national campaigning happened to take place within the borders of said nation state, or if the population that needed to be convinced of its belonging to said nation considered themselves *alien* to it. This was definitely the case in Alsace-Lorraine, a region with German-speaking population that had belonged to France for centuries before it was annexed to the newly established German Empire. As the following two examples show, the style of the

⁷⁵⁴ See Coetzee, *Pierneef, Land and Landscape*, 1.

Imperial German nationalist image campaign was massively adapted, even changed, after Berlin realized how much the Alsatians needed to be “germanized”.

III The Limits of National Mythologies Outside of Their Culture

III.1 Context: Nation Building in Alsace-Lorraine after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871

After the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, parts of the French, but mostly German-speaking provinces Alsace and Lorraine were annexed and integrated into the newly founded German Empire. They became the “Reichsland” Alsace-Lorraine with Strasburg as its capital.⁷⁵⁵ The region had belonged to France since the reign of Louis XIV in the seventeenth century⁷⁵⁶, and although more than 86 % of the new citizens spoke German as their first and often only language, it soon became clear that they “wanted to be French”.⁷⁵⁷ As a common language had been the most important factor for Germany’s nascent national conscience, the Alsatians’ preference of French culture despite their German dialect was puzzling for “Old-Germans” and often misjudged.⁷⁵⁸

Hence, quite soon after the annexation, the new political rulers felt that there was a need for a “germanification” of the province.⁷⁵⁹ So when the German Empire began reconstruction after the war was over, the architecture of the new public buildings, their style and especially their decorative elements were systematically used to stress the

⁷⁵⁵ The term “Reichsland” means that Alsace-Lorraine was independent of any other German state or kingdom. It was directly governed by the German Empire via the Ministry of Alsace-Lorraine.

⁷⁵⁶ For further details on the political circumstances see Erbe, Michael, and Franz Brendle, eds., *Das Elsass: Historische Landschaft im Wandel der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002), esp. Stefan Fisch, “Das Elsass im deutschen Kaiserreich (1870/71–1918)”, 123-146; Frédéric Hartweg, “Sprachenpolitik im Elsaß: Die “Germanisierung” einer weitgehend deutschsprachigen Provinz”, in *Das 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hilke Günther-Arndt, Jürgen Kocka, Werner Abelein, and Hilke Günther-Arndt, *Geschichtsbuch* (Berlin: Cornelsen, 1991), 136-163; Hans-Ulrich Wehler, “Elsaß-Lothringen von 1870-1918: Das “Reichsland” als politisch-staatsrechtliches Problem des zweiten deutschen Kaiserreichs”, *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 109 (1961), 133ff; and Niels Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum: Das öffentliche Bauwesen in Elsaß-Lothringen (1871 - 1918)*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Landeskunde im Saarland, vol. 38 (Saarbrücken: Institut für Landeskunde im Saarland, 2000), 38; esp. 22-25.

⁷⁵⁷ Theodor Fontane, *Aus den Tagen der Okkupation: Eine Osterreise durch Nordfrankreich und Elsaß-Lothringen 1871* (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 1872 [1984]), 334, cited in Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 22.

⁷⁵⁸ See Fisch, “Das Elsass im deutschen Kaiserreich (1870/71–1918)”, 125.

⁷⁵⁹ See Daniel Mollenhauer, “Die Grenzen der Germanisierung: Identitätsentwürfe im Elsass um 1900”, *Comparativ : C; Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 15, no. 2 (2005).

allegedly common historical roots and to install into the public mind the notion of a continuous German history in the region.⁷⁶⁰

In his book on public architecture in Strasburg and Alsace-Lorraine between 1871 and 1918, Niels Wilcken made out three “periods” which largely correlated to the architectural-stylistic developments within the German Empire proper: First, between 1870 and 1890, Italian Renaissance was used for representational architecture. As this style was internationally used and recognized, in the 1890s, there was a trend to a more “typically German” design: German renaissance, Southern German Baroque and, preferred and promoted by Emperor William II himself, a Romanesque style referring to the Staufer period⁷⁶¹ were used, depending on the importance and the type of construction.⁷⁶² Wilcken also shows that construction for public buildings, especially on the Imperial scale, was firmly controlled by Prussian architects of the Schinkel School.⁷⁶³ Regardless of the style though, he summarizes that in “examining the state public buildings in their political context you notice that the iconography is often more interesting than the architecture itself”.⁷⁶⁴

This part of the chapter will focus on the two most important station buildings constructed during Alsace-Lorraine’s affiliation with the German Empire: for the period directly after its annexation, Strasburg (1878-1883) , and Metz (1874-1878), both by Johann Eduard Jacobsthal; and for the pre-World War I period of a more established Empire, Metz II (1904-1908) by Jürgen Kröger. The comparison enables to show the development of national-political visual rhetoric during the Wilhelmine era, a time that was constitutive for the consolidation of Germany as a nation.

⁷⁶⁰ See Niels Wilcken, "Strasbourg et l'architecture publique dans le Reichsland (1871-1918)". See also Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38. and Niels Wilcken, *Metz et Guillaume II: Architecture et pouvoir; l'architecture publique à Metz au temps de l'Empire allemand (1871 - 1918)* (Metz: Édition Serpenoise, 2007).

⁷⁶¹ Staufer: a dynasty of German Emperors in the 12th and 13th century. Most famous are probably Frederick I. Barbarossa (1112-1190), Henry IV (1165-1197) and Frederick II (1194-1250). See e. g. Odilo Engels, *Die Staufer*, 8th edition, Urban-Taschenbücher, vol. 154 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), 154.

⁷⁶² See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 345.

⁷⁶³ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 346ff.

⁷⁶⁴ Wilcken, "Strasbourg et l'architecture publique dans le Reichsland (1871-1918)", 180. My translation.

III.2 Strasburg Central Station (1878-1883): Self-Affirmative Celebration of the German National Spirit

The first railway station in Strasburg had opened in 1854. Its partial destruction during the Franco-Prussian war came as an opportunity, because the old facilities would not have been able to cope much longer with the steadily increasing traffic.⁷⁶⁵ Negotiations over a new site began immediately after the war in 1871, planning started in 1873, construction began in 1878. (Figures 5-59) The architect in charge of most of the public buildings that were to be reconstructed was Johann Eduard Jacobsthal, one of Germany's most renowned architects and professor of Ornamentation, first at the Bauakademie and then at the Technische Hochschule Berlin-Charlottenburg.⁷⁶⁶

III.2.1 The Reichsland Alsace-Lorraine's Prosperity Depending on the German Empire

Jacobsthal was very aware of the fact that the improvement of Alsace-Lorraine's civic and military infrastructure was not the only reason for the immediate reconstruction. The importance of Strasburg as new capital of the Reichsland demanded a rather monumental scale for the station that could only be fulfilled by a decoration scheme that was uncommonly lavish for a traffic building. Although most of his other station buildings in Alsace and Lorraine convinced more through their functional simplicity than through their ornamentation⁷⁶⁷, Jacobsthal was convinced that "the importance of the facilities did not allow for an exclusion of sculptural embellishment".⁷⁶⁸

The décor thus comprised two bas-reliefs on the outside façade, depicting personifications of Alsace (with Strasburg cathedral in the back) (figure 5-60) and Lorraine (in front of Metz cathedral) (figure 5-61) lounging on their respective thrones and receiving typical products of regional agriculture from selected peasants in

⁷⁶⁵ Johann Eduard Jacobsthal, "Empfangsgebäude auf dem neuen Zentral-Bahnhof zu Straßburg i. E.", *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 17, no. 82 (1883b), 485–86.

⁷⁶⁶ For a summary of Jacobsthal's life, see Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 360f.; or his obituary: F. Laske, "Geheimer Regierungsrath Professor Job. E. Jacobsthal in Berlin verstorben", *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung: Nachrichten der Reichs- und Staatsbehörden* 22, no. 3 (January 11, 1902) (1902).

⁷⁶⁷ See for instance Nouvel-Avrincourt station in Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 107. For a great number of typified smaller stations designed by Jacobsthal in the 1870s see Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 115ff.

⁷⁶⁸ Johann Eduard Jacobsthal, "Das Empfangsgebäude auf dem neuen Zentral-Bahnhof zu Straßburg i. E.: (Schluss)", *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 17, no. 94 (1883a), 557–58. My translation.

picturesque costumes. Jacobsthal credits the Berlin sculptor Otto Geyer⁷⁶⁹ (1843-1914) with the work and mentions four more unspecified figures of his in the frieze of the central building.⁷⁷⁰ Indeed, in the frieze above the vestibule's windows, there are figures flanking the escutcheons bearing the arms of Alsace, Lorraine and the German Empire. Further medallions depict the city arms of Alsatian cities served from Strasburg, like Mülhausen, Colmar or Lauterburg.⁷⁷¹

Within the entrance hall, two allegorical statues of Agriculture and Industry (figure 1-35), also by Geyer, guard the corridor leading to the platforms: both women wear timeless antique or medieval garments, unimaginatively holding on to the usual attributes: a sickle and a bunch of grain, and a locomotive, some cogwheels and similar tools respectively. There are also more city crests: European capitals in the vestibule, Alsatian towns in the waiting room of the third class.⁷⁷²

Each of these elements alone, the subject matter with its references to the spatial and economic situation and its specific iconography is highly conventional. But in the sum of their details – like the vegetal ornament of German oak leaves (figure 5-62) and laurel referring to the victorious position of the Empire – they emphasize the close affiliation of Alsace-Lorraine to the German Empire and insinuate, that its prosperity is due to and dependent on its ties to Berlin.⁷⁷³

III.2.2 Barbarossa and Barbablanca: The German Emperor William I as Heir of the Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa

What's more, and what's also rather uncommon, was the inclusion of two big murals with subjects from the history of the German Empire(s) on both sides of the entrance hall: The Old and the New Empire.⁷⁷⁴ Jacobsthal describes the frescoes⁷⁷⁵:

⁷⁶⁹ Between 1872 and 1880, Otto Geyer had already designed the medallions depicting the Arts of Architecture and Engineering on the façade of Berlin's famous Anhalter Bahnhof. See Maier, *Berlin Anhalter Bahnhof*, 215. For more on Geyer see Josephine Hildebrand, "Das Leben und Werk des Berliner Bildhauers Otto Geyer (1843 – 1914), dargestellt unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner historischen Figurenfriese", (Dissertation, Freie Universität, 1975).

⁷⁷⁰ See Johann Eduard Jacobsthal, "Das Empfangsgebäude auf dem neuen Zentral-Bahnhof zu Straßburg i. E.: (Schluss)", 558; Otto Sarrazin and Karl Hinckeldeyn, "Der neue Centralbahnhof in Straßburg: Schluß aus No. 40", *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung: Nachrichten der Reichs- und Staatsbehörden*, 42, October 20, 1883, 376.

⁷⁷¹ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 113.

⁷⁷² See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 113. See also chapter 1.

⁷⁷³ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 113–115.

⁷⁷⁴ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 113f.

“The Old Time shows the conveyance of the crown jewels by Emperor Barbarossa to Hagenau in 1167, grateful citizens receive the town charter; for the New Time was depicted the visit of His Majesty the Emperor to Alsace in 1877, his reception by the population at the Veste Kronprinz [a citadel in] Oberhausbergen near Strasburg.”⁷⁷⁶

They were designed and executed by Hermann Knackfuß (1848-1915), a professor of history painting at the Academy of Kassel.⁷⁷⁷

The lateral walls of the vestibule’s interior façade were divided into three levels: the lower level held doors, shops, offices, ticket stalls and similar facilities. The second storey was structured by three rectangular planes with an ornamental décor of garlands entwining crested shields bearing the Imperial eagle. The uppermost level held a rectangular field whose upper line followed the curvature of the roof, framed by a strip of blank wall bearing medallions with yet two more eagles at the sides, and another one containing a crown above the highest point of the curve. Within these curved rectangulars, Knackfuß placed his two frescoes. (Figure 5-63)

To the left side on entering the hall, the scene bore a banner with the inscription “Hagenau – Im alten Reich – MCLXVII” (Hagenau – In the Old Empire – 1167). (Figures 5-64, 5-65) It depicted Frederick I Barbarossa transferring the crown jewels to the castle of Hagenau in 1167. Barbarossa is placed in the centre of the painting sitting astride a noble white war-horse. The complete right side of the fresco is filled with his followers: a bare-headed man bearing the Imperial crown, four page boys carrying the crown jewels in a chest, a monk leading a horse, two mounted knights with a standard flashing the Eagle. The train is met by a group of townspeople on the left side: bearded old men, flower-crowned women, small children and a group of trumpeters stand outside the walls of Hagenau, thanking the Emperor for granting them their town charter in 1164.

Vis-à-vis, a similar scene was entitled “Veste Kronprinz – Im neuen Reich – 3. Mai 1877” (Citadel Kronprinz – In the New Empire – 1877). (Figures 5-66, 5-67) It showed

⁷⁷⁵ Technically, the murals were not painted *al fresco*, but consisted of oil-wax-paint on goldground. See Otto Sarrazin and Karl Hinckeldeyn, "Der neue Centralbahnhof in Straßburg: Schluß aus No. 40", 376.

⁷⁷⁶ Johann Eduard Jacobsthal, "Das Empfangsgebäude auf dem neuen Zentral-Bahnhof zu Straßburg i. E.: (Schluss)", 558. My translation.

⁷⁷⁷ Unfortunately, there seem to remain no sketches archived in Knackfuß’s estate in Kassel.

Wilhelm I on his visit to the village Hausbergen near the citadel Kronprinz. William I is shown close to the people. Wearing his uniform and standing on the ground, he faces two peasant girls in their best Sunday costume. The girls are handing him an honorary cup of wine,⁷⁷⁸ which he is about to drink, deferently observed by the members of their respective parties: To the right, behind the girls, Mayor Ammel of Ittenheim and Mayor Brumpter of Fürdenheim hold their respectfully drawn hats; and pretty girls sit in a festively decorated horse-wagon surrounded by an expectant crowd. To the left, behind the Emperor, stand Crown Prince Friedrich and General Moltke in their uniforms. Behind them, the acting governor of the Reichsland, Oberpräsident Eduard von Möller, and the General Director of the Railway in Alsace-Lorraine, Geheimrat Carl August Hermann Mebes, as well as the administrative mayor of Strasburg, Bürgermeisterieverwalter Otto Back are followed by three men in civilian clothes on horseback.⁷⁷⁹

Both frescoes evidently try to evoke a mediaeval style. They have the appearance of an odd mixture of illuminated codices and pre-renaissance Italian frescoes: the flat composition limited to the first plane, most figures in profile and placed like pearls on a string, the strong contours, the clear primary colors on a golden background, the inscription on the swinging loops of the banner – all these elements were used to produce a “primitive” style. For today’s viewer, they are eerily prescient of 1940s Technicolor adventure films based on legends of medieval knights.

At the same time, the simple, flat arrangement made the paintings much more readable than most contemporary history paintings. The groups of protagonists were kept clearly apart, composition and color scheme were kept simple, and the staging of the scene on a single plane told an easy-to-grasp story. Last, but not least, the inscription explained the depicted situation to everybody who could read. Knackfuß succeeded in delivering his message to the people, no matter what their educational background, and better yet, on first glance. Given the history of French-German animosities though, it is perhaps not

⁷⁷⁸ According to the legend of fig. 597 in Kriesche, "Die Anlagen der Reichseisenbahnen", in *Strassburg und seine Bauten*, ed. Architekten- und Ingenieur-Verein für Elsass-Lothringen (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1894), 591.

⁷⁷⁹ See Julius Euting, *Beschreibung der Stadt Straßburg und des Münsters*, 6th improved and extended edition (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1890), 91.

surprising that the frescoes were removed immediately after World War I, and the Imperial eagle was replaced by the city arms of Strasburg.⁷⁸⁰

Knackfuß was known for his brilliant knowledge of history and the scrupulous research on which he based his historical paintings. Emperor William II himself much admired Knackfuß for his knowledge of and dedication to historical detail.⁷⁸¹ As Camilla Kaul has shown in her comprehensive dissertation,⁷⁸² Knackfuß had good reasons for singling out Barbarossa as predecessor for the German Emperors and using him for the promotion of national political ideas in the Reichsland.

Frederick I. Barbarossa, born 1122 into the Hohenstaufen dynasty, was elected king in 1152 and crowned Emperor in 1155 by Pope Hadrian IV. He led numerous wars to secure his Imperial power in Germany and Italy, but died in 1190, during the Third Crusade. His attempt to put the Holy Roman Empire under a strong central power and to unite the patchwork of more than 1600 individual states on German ground, most of them very small, made Barbarossa an ideal figure of identification for the German national movement in the early nineteenth century. Because of his sudden death in foreign lands and the lack of information about his burial place, numerous legends had formed around the Emperor, the most important being the Kyffhäuser legend. This tale claims that Barbarossa did not really die, but lay sleeping in a cavern under the Kyffhäuser Mountain and someday would awaken again when Germany needed his leadership.⁷⁸³ The legend spread and gained popularity in the words of Friedrich Rückert's poem "Barbarossa" which he published in 1816 after the Napoleonic Wars.⁷⁸⁴ As the national movement gained force, the sleeping and dreaming figure of Frederick I

⁷⁸⁰ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 115.

⁷⁸¹ William II deeply appreciated conversations with the painter, whom he describes as "a thorough scholar of documents, who used the substance of his research for the invention of his paintings. To this man I owe many valuable insights about my ancestors' actions [...]" See Wilhelm II. (deutscher Kaiser), *Meine Vorfahren* (Berlin: Verlag für Kulturpolitik, 1929), 17–18; quoted in Christa Stolz, *Hermann Knackfuss: Monographie über einen im 19. Jahrhundert in Wissen geborenen Künstler*, *Wissener Beiträge zur Geschichte und Landeskunde*, vol. 12 (Wissen: G. Nising, 1975), 12: 35–36.

⁷⁸² Camilla Kaul, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Kyffhäuser: Bilder eines nationalen Mythos im 19. Jahrhundert* (Köln: Böhlau, 2007).

⁷⁸³ See Kaul, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Kyffhäuser*, 29 ff, esp. 39–48.

⁷⁸⁴ Friedrich Rückert, "Barbarossa", in *Der ewige Brunnen: Ein Hausbuch deutscher Dichtung*, ed. Ludwig Reiners. 3rd special edition based on 2nd revised and extended edition of 1959 (München: C. H. Beck, 1992) For other famous versions of the theme, see e. g. Ludwig Bechstein, *Der Sagenschatz und die Sagenkreise des Thüringerlandes* (Emmendingen: Kesselring, 1837); Werner Bellmann, *Heinrich Heine: Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen*, Revised edition, Universal-Bibliothek Erläuterungen und Dokumente, vol. 8150 (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005), 8150; Monica Tempian, "Ein Traum, gar seltsam schauerlich ...": *Romantikerbschaft und Experimentalpsychologie in der Traumdichtung Heinrich Heines* (Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag, 2005), 120–137.

Barbarossa came to symbolize for all political parties the desire for a unified Germany, be it in form of a monarchy, or a renewed Empire, or even a democracy.⁷⁸⁵

After the failure of the 1848 German revolution, Barbarossa remained popular, and his Italian policies framed the discussion for contemporary political solutions. Frederick I had led several wars in Italy in order to consolidate his Empire. In the nineteenth century the debate circled the question of Austria's inclusion into a unified Germany.⁷⁸⁶ After the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, power among the German states shifted from Austria to Prussia, which came to dominate over the other German states, eventually leading to the unification under Prussian hegemony in 1871. As the Staufer king never symbolized a specific political attitude but stood for a United Germany *per se*, his myth could now be used by the new rulers to legitimate their position. Frederick I Barbarossa was now depicted as the new German Emperor's predecessor, and in consequence, William I was nicknamed "Barbablanca".⁷⁸⁷ Thus, the German Empire of 1871 explicitly tried to appear as direct and legitimate heir of the Holy Roman Empire (*Sacrum Romanum Imperium Nationis Germanicae*), the suffix "of the German Nation" actually being much younger.

The controversy about the actual title for the new office shows how very thin this veneer of tradition was in reality. William I became "German Emperor", rather than "Roman Emperor", which was the official title during the HRE, or "Emperor of Germany", which would have wrongly suggested the inclusion of the German-speaking parts of Austria, which were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The historical references to the HRE during his proclamation thus remained understandably vague. When his son Frederick III inherited the throne in 1888, he originally wanted to demonstrate his succession to the German-Roman Emperors by taking the name of Frederick IV (Frederick III having reigned from 1452 till 1493). Otto von Bismarck as his chancellor prevented this as not conforming to the constitution, and he became instead Frederick III (King of Prussia, German Emperor).⁷⁸⁸

According to Kaul, the Strasburg murals were highly successful, because the Alsatians had their own Barbarossa mythology and a legend similar to the Kyffhäuser – except

⁷⁸⁵ See Kaul, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Kyffhäuser*, 277.

⁷⁸⁶ See Kaul, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Kyffhäuser*, 283ff, esp. 305-307; 437-438.

⁷⁸⁷ See Kaul, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Kyffhäuser*, 349; 438.

⁷⁸⁸ See John C. G. Röhl, *Die Jugend des Kaisers 1859 - 1888*, 2nd revised edition, Wilhelm II. / John C. G. Röhl, vol. 1 (München: C. H. Beck, 2001), 1: 784-785.

that he was said to live under a local mountain or even wander Hagenau castle. Her source is the “Deutsches Kaiserbuch”, a book on “German Emperors and Kings in Strasburg”, published there in 1889 by Hermann Ludwig.⁷⁸⁹ Ludwig not only relates the deep affection of the Alsatians felt for the Staufer king, but also takes the “natural contact” shown between both Emperors and the respective population in Knackfuß’s paintings as proof for the “natural communal inner tribal traits uniting this ruler and this people...”⁷⁹⁰ But this, of course, is circular reasoning: Hermann Ludwig obviously wanted to corroborate his hypothesis, that is, the deep affection of the Alsatians for Barbarossa (and all the following German rulers). But he is doing this by calling upon a painting which not only presupposes the same claim, but at the same time, and with the same reason for nationalist propaganda. There is no evidence that his opinion was really shared by the population, and not even Kaul, despite all the data in her excessively researched book, can give further evidence to Ludwig’s theory. We therefore must assume that he, too, felt the need to convince a hostile or at best reluctant population that the new rulers’ claim for power was legitimate. Barbarossa was a well-known historical figure, but I doubt he was held in the same high regard and for the same reasons in Alsace-Lorraine as in the rest of Germany.

Summing up, two things become clear: First, the Prusso-German Emperors expressly wanted to be perceived as successors of the Roman-German Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire. And second, the Holy Roman Empire undoubtedly had ceased in 1806, and the German Empire of 1871 was a fundamentally new and different political construct. This new state focused on the German *Kultur*: it regarded a common language and culture as its main unifying aspect, and thus carried little potential of identification for the former French provinces Alsace and Lorraine. Although the local native language was German, or rather a German-Alemannic dialect, more than two hundred years of French administration had deeply impressed a French culture, especially amongst the upper classes, bourgeoisie and state officers. This was not changed by calling upon Barbarossa. The Kyffhäuser myth held not the same powerful popularity in (French) Alsace-Lorraine that it held in Germany. Strasburgians had not awaited the sleeping Emperor to finally unite them with their neighbors, and so no nationalist patriotism was awakened by the image of the two Emperors side by side.

⁷⁸⁹ Hermann Ludwig, *Deutsche Kaiser und Könige in Straßburg: Blätter aus der Geschichte der Westmark des Reichs* (Straßburg: C. F. Schmidts Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1889).

⁷⁹⁰ Ludwig, quoted by Kaul, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Kyffhäuser*, 524. My translation.

Nevertheless, the message was clear enough, not least because Knackfuß had chosen to depict historical anecdotes that showed both Emperors acting regionally. But unlike the rest of Strasburg station's decoration, these murals would always remain alien in their German national propaganda – which is surely why they were destroyed after 1919.

III.3 Metz Central Station (1874-78): A Strategically Important Railway Hub Within the German Empire

Unlike Strasburg and most of Alsace, the city of Metz and its surroundings belonged firmly to France, both culturally and linguistically. Its annexation after the Franco-Prussian War was therefore not so much motivated by national-political ideas than by its strategic importance as a frontier stronghold with famous fortification. This way, France was weakened on its eastern border, and a potential revisionist war could be fought well outside the German core lands.⁷⁹¹

Hence, the German Empire began immediately after 1871 with the modernization of the forts in Lorraine– and the railways played an important part in the achievement of this goal. The acquisition of tracks of the French Compagnie de chemin de fer de l'Est led to the first national railway of the German Empire, forming a direct railway line from Berlin via Wetzlar, Koblenz and Trier to Metz, and from there to the French border. It was nicknamed “Kanonenbahn” (cannon railway) for its strategic importance.⁷⁹²

It was convenient that Metz's old railway station burned down in 1872 – again it was Jacobsthal who headed the reconstruction beginning in 1874. He designed a rather monumental terminal station in the neo-renaissance style that was reminiscent of the city's numerous gates, and also took up elements from Berlin's famous Anhalter Bahnhof. This type of station architecture was quite conventional at the time, as well as its decoration with traveling scenes in sgraffito technique.⁷⁹³ Murals depicting maps of the region and the railway line's destinations as well as city crests, the names of cities within the German Empire and the Imperial eagles stressed both the new territorial

⁷⁹¹ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 23.

⁷⁹² See for instance André Schontz, *Le chemin de fer et la gare de Metz* (Metz: Édition Serpenoise, 1990); André Schontz, Arsène Felten and Marcel Gourlot, *Le chemin de fer en Lorraine* (Metz: Édition Serpenoise, 1999); Dieter Ziegler, *Eisenbahnen und Staat im Zeitalter der Industrialisierung: Die Eisenbahnpolitik der Deutschen Staaten im Vergleich* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996), 230–237.

⁷⁹³ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 109. Unfortunately, no sketches, drawings or other renderings of this first station's embellishment are known. A note in the DBZ reports that the sgraffito paintings by L. Burger cost 4000 Marks. See Schübler, "Das neue Empfangs-Gebäude auf dem Bahnhof in Metz", *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, 57, July 19, 1879, 288.

order, and Metz's integration into the German Empire, similar to examples shown in chapter 3. Although both the architecture and its decoration was nothing unusual and comparably simple, Jacobsthal's new station building for Metz was appropriate to its importance as a railway hub – considering that the city with its population of 40 000 was still comparatively small.⁷⁹⁴

III.4 Metz Central Station (1904-1908): German National Propaganda in a Culturally French Region

But during the increasing armament under William II at the turn of the century, the military importance of the "Kanonenbahn" quickly grew, and soon Jacobsthal's new structure became insufficient. Therefore in 1902, less than twenty-five years after its opening in 1878, plans for a new, even bigger station were conceived. The competition was decided in favor of the Berlin architect Jürgen Kröger (1856 - 1928).⁷⁹⁵ Instead of Jacobsthal's terminal station solution, Kröger suggested a through station which allowed for non-stop traffic in north-south direction. The building's representative dimensions speak of its projected military usage: for instance, the 300 m long platform hall included extra-wide platforms with ramps that allowed the comfortable movement of 20.000 soldiers including horses, all in compliance with the Schlieffen Plan.⁷⁹⁶

Kröger's design convinced the jury because of its clear ground plan, and the clever balance of building masses: the juxtaposing of the long main building with the ensemble of entrance hall and clock tower resulted in a vision which was especially impressive from a distance.⁷⁹⁷

In the announcement of the competition, no particular style for the architecture had been prescribed, resulting in designs ranging from neo-Baroque to early Art Nouveau styles. Nevertheless Wilcken informs us that William II himself intervened, decreeing that railway station, post office and church should all be build in the neo-Romanesque. Because it referred to the Staufer period of the first Empire, this style was considered

“typically German and better adapted to the political situation of this frontier town which was to be

⁷⁹⁴ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 109–110.

⁷⁹⁵ For details on Kröger see Peter Genz, "Jürgen Kröger: Ein Architekt zwischen Historismus und Vormoderne", *Nordelbingen. Beiträge zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte Schleswig-Holsteins* 72 (2003).

⁷⁹⁶ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 121; 133-134.

⁷⁹⁷ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 121.

germanified. The station gives the impression of an Imperial German castle (Kaiserpfalz); its tower refers to cathedrals situated on the banks of the Rhine River, like Maria Laach or Speyer.”⁷⁹⁸

The building’s combination of Imperial, sacral, and monumental elements (figure 5-68) affirmed the German Empire’s political claims for power in the border region, propagating a feeling of national and military superiority and perdurability that was well understood at the time.⁷⁹⁹ The French population and art critics regarded the station complex for a long time in quite negative terms as a prime example of occupation architecture. Only recently, surely in reaction to the stabilization of post-war Franco-German relations, the city has come to terms with its German heritage – in 1975, the station was declared a historic monument and subsequently, thanks to increasingly unbiased research since the 1980s, several exhibitions, and substantial restoration in the 1990s, the “German Quarter” and the station have become a tourist attraction.⁸⁰⁰

III.4.1 The Imagery of Nationalist Propaganda and its Use of National Mythology

The truly remarkable thing about the new station building in Metz was not the expressive architecture and style, but the exuberant décor: Like their medieval ante types, all the neo-Romanesque capitals of the entry hall and the rich, church-like portal of the vestibule were chiseled with figurative elements. (Figure 5-69) They show aspects of modern infrastructure as well as the people using them. Archaic elements like endless interweaving knots and plaits are snaking around contemporary personae – travelers and citizens of all classes, including the architect (figure 5-70, 5-71) – and examples of modern vehicles and technology. Bas-reliefs depicting dining travelers (figures 5-72, 5-73) adorn the exterior walls of the respective waiting rooms for the different classes. Above all that, the Imperial eagle used to spread his wings, and a statue of Roland (figure 5-74) is guarding the building from the station’s tower. The Emperor’s pavilion is decorated with scenes from ancient battles; lions are crouching at its portal (figure 5-75) above which a window is crowned by a mediaeval knight and his lady (figure 5-82). From the stained-glass window of the Imperial chambers,

⁷⁹⁸ Wilcken, "Strasbourg et l'architecture publique dans le Reichsland (1871-1918)", 179. My translation.

⁷⁹⁹ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 128.

⁸⁰⁰ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 136.

Charlemagne gazes regally down at the visitor, sword and orb firmly in his hands.⁸⁰¹
(Figure 5-76)

Because of the mass of detail, the conventional references to economy, region and infrastructure at Metz are far more elaborate than in the previous structures. In accordance with the stylistic references to Romanesque times, but with a modern feel to it, the jambs of the arch spanning the façade above the entrance gate are adorned with complicated plaits of knotwork consisting of stylized plants entwining figures from all sections and classes of the (traveling) population. Carrying the instruments of their work or trade, there is a peasant (with a goose) and a fisherman wearing a sou'wester (figure 5-77), a mother holds two children by the hand and a fat burgher dries his sweating brow with a handkerchief. An artist, a musician, a postillion on horseback and a priest with an umbrella are represented as well as a woman with a rather aggressive-looking dog (figure 5-78), several craftsmen and, of course, the architect himself. They are all crowned by a man and a woman shaking hands in a gesture of farewell (figure 5-79) at the peak of the vault. Inside, regional and heraldic plants, as well as birds, and railway officials of all kind are carved into the cubic capitals of the pillars. A short transport history is provided by renderings of a diligence stage coach, a locomotive, a steam ship, and a zeppelin. (Figure 5-80)

Wilcken has stressed the quality and hence exceptionally high cost of the decorative embellishment, which was executed by some very recognized artists.⁸⁰² Still, already in 1978, Thomas von Joest has shown in a paper that these motives are much more political than they appear at first sight.⁸⁰³ For instance, through the inclusion of two loaded camels (figure 5-81) the symbols of modern infrastructure receive a political connotation, a smack of colonialism.⁸⁰⁴ According to Joest, these camels, placed in the entrance hall opposite the ticket stalls, refer to the construction of the Baghdad Railway

⁸⁰¹ Sculpture by Robert Schirmer, Berlin. Stained glass windows by Firma Buch, a company in the Berlin suburb of Schöneberg. See Schontz, *Le chemin de fer et la gare de Metz*, 140.

⁸⁰² See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 129.

⁸⁰³ Thomas von Joest, "Symbolique de la gare de Metz", *Monuments Historiques*, no. 6, (1978). Joest's unpublished Master's thesis on Metz station of 1979 was the first systematic analysis of the building and forms the groundwork for all subsequent publications, e. g. Schontz, *Le chemin de fer et la gare de Metz*. See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 106f.

⁸⁰⁴ See Thomas von Joest, "Symbolique de la gare de Metz", 46. See also Thomas von Joest, "L'architecture allemande en Alsace-Lorraine : une conséquence de la guerre?", in *La guerre de 1870/71 et ses conséquences: Actes du XXe Colloque historique franco-allemand*, ed. Philippe Levillain, and Rainer Riemenschneider, *Pariser historische Studien* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1990)

line, which was planned to extend the existing Orient Express line from Istanbul to Baghdad. The project, officially headed by the Ottoman Empire, was technically and financially under German control.⁸⁰⁵ Thus, instead of simply celebrating the achievements of modern technology, the décor stresses Germany's imperialistic and colonial efforts in the Middle East.

For Joest, the program does not stop at the “glorification of the Empire's global expansion”, it also represents “the agents charged of its functioning”.⁸⁰⁶ In this view, the otherwise rather innocent figures personifying the different population groups that Berlin sculptor Robert Schirmer (1850–1923) had portrayed in entrance vaults and on cubic capitals everywhere in the building become political statements:

“The iconographic program of the service building is dedicated to the functionaries of the railway: cashiers, porters, telegraphists, and medical doctors; this detour evokes the latest conquests of civilization: telegraphy and medicine within the range of professions.”⁸⁰⁷

As much as the Railways are an “essential instrument for maintaining the national order”,⁸⁰⁸ the uniformed Railway officials are policing this order, by exercising political control over the people exemplified in the décor. But it does not stop there: Above the entrance to the Imperial pavilion on the southern corner of the building, the “forces of expansion (War and Industry)” are represented by a woman with spindle and cog-wheel who is paired with a mediaeval knight in arms beneath the outspread wings of an eagle.⁸⁰⁹ (Figure 5-82) Their interlocked gaze reminds Joest of the complicity of industry and warfare on which William II Imperialistic “*Weltpolitik*” was based.⁸¹⁰

Wilcken, far from denying political intentions, argues for a somewhat less aggressive stance of the program. For instance, he interprets the mediaeval couple as “image of an

⁸⁰⁵ For details on the Baghdad railway project, see Shereen Khairallah, *Railways in the Middle East, 1856-1948: Political and economic background*, Arab background series (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1991); Franzke, Jürgen, and Helmut Dollhopf, eds., *Bagdad- und Hedjazbahn: Deutsche Eisenbahngeschichte im Vorderen Orient* (Nürnberg: Tümmel, 2003). and Peter Heigl, *Schotter für die Wüste: Die Bagdadbahn und ihre deutschen Bauingenieure* (Nürnberg: Selbstverlag, 2004).

⁸⁰⁶ Thomas von Joest, "Symbolique de la gare de Metz", 46. My translation

⁸⁰⁷ Thomas von Joest, "Symbolique de la gare de Metz", 46. My translation.

⁸⁰⁸ Thomas von Joest, "Symbolique de la gare de Metz", 46. My translation.

⁸⁰⁹ Ragon informs us, that “after 1919, French Lorraine contented itself to efface the German eagle which was to be replaced by Metz's coat of arms”. See Ragon, *L'architecture des gares*, 65–66. We shall see that there were further acts of iconoclasm concerning the station's décor.

⁸¹⁰ Thomas von Joest, "Symbolique de la gare de Metz", 46.

idealized mediaeval community – the guarantee of peace under the protection of the arms.’’⁸¹¹

Considerable changes during the design process of the program show that Wilcken’s restraint has a point: for instance, in a 1905 design (figure 5-83), the couple consisted of two armed knights in the same pose, guarding the crown of the Holy Roman Empire – as a far more blatant reference to the German Empire’s alleged heritage, this couple’s message would have been much more aggressive and its use – with regard to foreign affairs – unwise. The change served to tone down the meaning of the decoration into something more palatable for a French audience.

Another example is the décor of the vestibule’s gable peak: Kröger placed there a six meter high Imperial eagle beneath the crown of the German Empire flanked by Lorraine’s two most important industrial branches: Mining and Steel Industry.⁸¹² (Figure 5-84) While this was outspokenly pro-German and maybe offending to a loyal French citizen, the original design (figure 5-85) had envisaged a young Emperor enthroned and wearing the Imperial crown of the Holy Roman Empire, flanked by Navigation and Industry as the pillars on which the new Empire rested.⁸¹³ Compared to this early design, here, too, the executed sculpture plays down the German Empire’s pretensions as successor of the Holy Roman Empire and roots the program more firmly in the region of Lorraine.

III.4.2 The Myth of Roland: Both a Symbol of Imperial Jurisdiction and a Brave Defender against Barbaric Aggressors

A third example for the moderation of the executed décor (compared to the respective original designs) is the statue of the mediaeval hero Roland (a knight with his sword drawn and held upwards) that is placed to the right side of the main entrance, attached to the tower. (Figure 5-74)

The myth of hero Roland, allegedly the nephew, closest friend, and paladin of Charlemagne, had become famous through the medieval *chanson de geste*, his popularity spreading from France over Germany to Italy and all of Western Europe. Similar depictions to the one in Metz had become very common in Germany especially

⁸¹¹ Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 131.

⁸¹² Again, the Imperial eagle and the crown were replaced in 1919 by Lorraine’s coat of arms and a knotwork ornament respectively. See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 135.

⁸¹³ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 132.

between the fourteenth century and the seventeenth century, and remained popular until the twentieth century. They were predominantly erected in Free Imperial Cities, or cities aspiring to this status, in the North and North-East of Germany, their manifold meaning often changing over time.⁸¹⁴ Most often, a Roland statue designated a city's market rights and its ensuing prosperity. But because of Roland's fidelity and closeness to Charlemagne, he also very commonly symbolized the direct affiliation to and jurisdiction of the Emperor in Free Imperial Cities, unimpeded by surrounding territorial rulers. As Joest has pointed out, "this image of Imperial protectorate was even more justified as Alsace-Lorraine did not have the same status as the other federal "Länder", but was directly attached to the Emperor."⁸¹⁵

Thus, the Roland statue on the railway station in Metz is a strong political symbol, effectively arguing for Lorraine's close affiliation to the German Empire. Without doubt the message was not perceived as subtle. But the original plans for the statue would have been indeed even more offensive to French-feeling citizens, because, initially, the statue was planned as sculpture of St. George slaying the dragon. Because both are attributed with the slain dragon, St. George and St. Michael, the archangel and patron saint of the German Empire were often used interchangeably.⁸¹⁶ In the context, it was felt that a victorious St. George/St. Michael/Germany and a vanquished Dragon/France would have met with the opposition of the population. Therefore the statue was rededicated into a Roland, allegedly by personal order of the Emperor himself.⁸¹⁷

When William II decided in 1908 to change the offending St. George into a Roland as the less offensive symbol of German rule in Lorraine, he also ordered the artist, Freiburg sculptor Gustav Adolf Witte, to provide it with the portrait features of General Gottlieb Graf von Haeseler (1836-1919) (figures 5-86, 5-87), who had been the first

⁸¹⁴ For the historical/legendary figure of Roland see for instance Steinsieck, Wolf, and Egbert Kaiser, eds., *Das altfranzösische Rolandslied: Zweisprachig* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1999); Konrad, Carl Wesle and Peter Wapnewski, *Das Rolandslied des Pfaffen Konrad*, 3rd revised edition (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985); Gerard J. Brault, *Song of Roland: An Analytical Edition: Oxford Text and English Translation* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978). For details on Roland statues see for instance Pötschke, Dieter, ed., *Vryheit do ik ju openbar ...: Rolande und Stadtgeschichte*, 1st edition and printing (Berlin: Lukas, 2007); Dietlinde Munzel-Everling, *Rolande: Die europäischen Rolanddarstellungen und Rolandfiguren* (Döbel (Saalkreis): Stekovics, 2005); Renate Rössing and Roger Rössing, *Rolande in Deutschland*, 1st edition (Rostock: Hinstorff, 2004).

⁸¹⁵ Thomas von Joest, "Symbolique de la gare de Metz", 47. My translation.

⁸¹⁶ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 132f, esp. footnote 676.

⁸¹⁷ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 132f.

commander of the XVI. army corps in Metz from 1890-1903.⁸¹⁸ His shield depicted the escutcheon of the German Empire. It is probably due to his position of an officer, which resembled more that of a knight that Haeseler was chosen rather than one of the Reichsstatthalter (governors), who had been representing the Reichsland since 1879, or one of the governing Secretaries of State at the Ministry for Alsace-Lorraine. But Haeseler's portrait is also the reason why this statue's history of iconoclastic rededication went on.

When Lorraine was returned to France in 1919, the new government was not content with replacing the coat of arms on the shield – the German Imperial Eagle – with the crest of Lorraine. Additionally, the head of the statue was exchanged, now showing a helmed and moustached knight that is variably described as “Gallic” (Wilcken) and “grim looking [...] Germanic warrior on a conquering campaign” (Hudemann).⁸¹⁹ Twenty years later, when the Germans occupied the city again during World War II, they detected a resemblance of the new head to the French Marshal Foch, so that they scaffolded the offending statue during an official visit of Gauleiter Josef Bürckel on September 20, 1940. In 1942, they reconstructed the original head of Haeseler, and again exchanged the escutcheon with the double cross of Lorraine, this time for arms of Metz. (Figure 5-88) It is unclear if it was known at the time that French resistance leader General Charles de Gaulle was using the Lorrainian cross as the symbol for the *Résistance* in London. It was only consequential that after 1945, Haeseler's head was again exchanged for the head of an armed knight. This time, the city crest stayed, obviously because it was not perceived as offensive, even though the Nazis had placed it there.⁸²⁰

This perpetual iconoclastic controversy has confused interpreters of the Roland at Metz Station. The decapitation of Count Haeseler, of course, has been seen as the celebration

⁸¹⁸ See Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 133. For details on Haeseler see Hans-J Kreker, *Feldmarschall Gottlieb Graf von Haeseler* (13.01.2009); available from <http://www.militaermuseum-brandenburg-preussen.de/Templates/Artikel%20Feldmarschall%20Gottlieb%20Graf%20von%20Haeseler.html>; Internet; accessed April 06, 2009.

⁸¹⁹ Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 135; Hudemann, Rainer, and Manfred Schmeling, eds., *Die Nation auf dem Prüfstand: La "Nation" en question. Questioning the "Nation"*, VICE VERSA. Deutsch-französische Kulturstudien, vol. 3 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), 3: 186. See also Rainer Hudemann, *Roland-Statue am Bahnhof Metz* (25.10.2002); available from <http://www.memotransfront.uni-saarland.de/hm/9x61.htm>; Internet; accessed April 06, 2009, where he refers to further unpublished research of his doctoral student Annette Maas, whose dissertation on “War Monuments of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71 in Alsace and Lorraine, 1870-1940” is still in progress.

⁸²⁰ See Hudemann and Schmeling, *Die Nation auf dem Prüfstand*, 3: 186.

of disempowerment of the German regime. In the same spirit, the new head was interpreted as a French appropriation of the theme. But it seems unlikely that the new head was supposed to turn the statue of Roland into a depiction of a barbarian German warrior symbolizing the military expansionism of the German Empire. There is no reason to assume that this was a part of common history that Lorrainians particularly wanted to remember at the time.

It is also important to note that here like elsewhere in the station's embellishment great care was taken to ensure that the population could relate to and identify with its symbolism. And the French had their own strong relation to Roland: After all, the hero stands at the center of *The Matter of France*, the mediaeval cycle of heroic deeds that forms the core of French literary history.⁸²¹ While it never gained the same popularity and influence as the *Song of the Nibelungs* in Germany, the *Song of Roland* was regarded a National Epic in nineteenth century France, Léon Gautier's modern translation of 1872 almost immediately becoming mandatory reading in schools.⁸²² The publication of this translation so shortly after the lost war might be coincidental. But with Roland's defeat at Roncevalles at the heart of the story and Charlemagne's revenge on the Saracens as its "happy ending", the epic was regarded as the first expression of French national conscience and thus probably considered very suitable reading under the circumstances...⁸²³

Still, the figure of the French literary Roland embodied a different set of values than in the German tradition. The Prussian officer denoting closeness to the German Emperor thus became by his decapitation a French defender of the city against barbarian forces.

⁸²¹ Egbert Kaiser, "Nachwort", in *Das altfranzösische Rolandslied: Zweisprachig*, ed. Wolf Steinsieck, and Egbert Kaiser (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1999), 391–392.

⁸²² Kaiser, "Nachwort", 392. For details, see Christian Amalvi, "La Chanson de Roland et l'image de Roland dans la littérature scolaire en France de 1800 à 1914", in *Actes du Colloque de St-Jean-Pied-de-Port*, 12. August 1978, ed. Pierre Hourmat (Bayonne: 1979)

⁸²³ Franz Rauhut, "Das Rolandslied und das werdende französische Nationalgefühl", *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 182 (1942).

III.4.3 The Myth of Charlemagne: The Father of Europe and a Common Ancestor

Another myth that the French could easily relate to was the figure of Charlemagne (742-814).⁸²⁴ In the Metz station of 1908, he is depicted in a grand stained-glass window in the Emperor's waiting room on the first floor. (Figure 5-76) It shows Charlemagne gloriously seated on his throne in Aachen/Aix-la-Chapelle. The first Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire is holding the symbols of his power: a sword in his right, the orb in his left hand. The frontal view of the long bearded face stands in the tradition of both *vera icon* and royal portraiture. The composition is flat, graphically ornamental, with a subdued color scheme that accentuates architectural elements in the background in yellow, the rim of the Emperor's cloak in green, and the tassels on his pillow in red. The missing depth of the composition and the frontal depiction are again reminiscent of mediaeval window traditions and yet witness also the influence of the contemporary art nouveau style. Although the window is very impressive, it must be noted that it was not – unlike the frescoes in Strasburg – accessible to every visitor of the station. Rather, it was only William II, his family, guests and entourage, who could admire the view.

Still, it is conspicuous that in Metz, unlike in Strasburg some 30 years earlier, the mediaeval Emperor called upon to legitimize the Second German Empire is no longer Barbarossa, but Charlemagne. Of course, Charlemagne's biography strongly connects him to the city of Metz: The somewhat dubious Carolingian dynasty lists both Arnulf and Chlodulf, bishops of Metz, amongst his ancestors; his second wife Hildegard and

⁸²⁴ See Theodor Schieffer, "Karl der Große, Kaiser", in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, ed. Rochus Freiherr von Liliencron (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1875-1912) For detailed information on Charlemagne in English see a. o. : Alessandro Barbero, *Charlemagne: Father of a Continent* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004); Matthias Becher, *Charlemagne* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne*, with the collaboration of Sidney Painter (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1960); Francois Louis Ganshof, *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy: Studies in Carolingian History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971); Aileen Lewers Langston and James Orton (Jr). Buck, *Pedigrees of Some of the Emperor Charlemagne's Descendants* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co, 1974); Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Charles Oman, *The Dark Ages, 476-918*, 6th edition (London: Rivingtons, 1914); Sidney Painter, *A History of the Middle Ages, 284-1500* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1953); Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (New York, NY: Norton, 1939); Antonio Santosuosso, *Barbarians, Marauders, and Infidels: The Ways of Medieval Warfare* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004); Bernhard Walter Scholz, *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories*, with the collaboration of Barbara Rogers (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1970); Jeff Sypeck, *Becoming Charlemagne: Europe, Baghdad, and The Empires of A.D. 800* (New York, NY: Ecco/HarperCollins, 2006); Derek Wilson, *Charlemagne: The Great Adventure* (London: Hutchinson, 2005).

his son Louis the Pious are buried there in the Saint Pierre aux Nonnains Basilica; and another son, Drogo, became bishop of Metz in 823.⁸²⁵

But more important, unlike the Holy Roman Empire of the Stauffer and Habsburg dynasties, which later bore the suffix “of the German Nation”, the Frankish-Carolingian Empire of Charlemagne is at the bottom of both German and French national history. So Charlemagne, who was seen as founding father of both France and Germany, was the ideal figure with whom all concerned parties, French and Germans, could identify.⁸²⁶

All in all, the reference to their mediaeval predecessors is not a surprising feat of the Prusso-German Emperors, but rather a staple of national propaganda in the age of nation building. Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out that a reference to *tradition*, even if it was an *invented* tradition, played an important role in unifying the often widely dispersed parties under a common banner.⁸²⁷

But as the Strasburg reference to the Barbarossa myth came of a mostly German tradition, placing the Staufer Emperor at the heart of the German national movement, the reference to Charlemagne in Metz is much more cunning: Idealized in his role as *Pater Europae* (Father of Europe)⁸²⁸ the reference to Charlemagne could be used as pretext to legitimate the Imperialistic policy of William II. But Charlemagne being also the first French king Charles I., the French population could easily identify with him. The use of Charlemagne as figure of identification was so effective that after 1919, the new French government of Lorraine was content to leave the window alone.

III.4.4 “Battle of Teutoburg Forest” and “Battle of the Huns”: Two Legendary Battles Offering Examples to the German Military

Less plurivalent than the reference to Charlemagne and Roland are the depictions of famous battles on the lateral façade of the Imperial pavilion, beneath the Charlemagne

⁸²⁵ See Bernhard Simson, "Drogo von Metz", in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, ed. Rochus Freiherr von Liliencron (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1875-1912)

⁸²⁶ See Matthias Becher, *Karl der Grosse*, Original edition, 5th revised printing (München: C. H. Beck, 2007), 118ff; Dieter Hägermann, *Karl der Grosse*, 1st edition (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2003), 133ff.

⁸²⁷ See Eric Hobsbawm, *The invention of tradition*, 2nd edition; reprint, Canto (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁸²⁸ This title seems to be contemporary and is first mentioned in the Paderborn Epic. See Joseph Brockmann, "Karolus Magnus et Leo papa", in *Karolus Magnus et Leo papa: Ein Paderborner Epos vom Jahre 799*, ed. Joseph Brockmann, Studien und Quellen zur Westfälischen Geschichte (Paderborn: 1966).

window: two bas-reliefs show the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest (“Hermannschlacht”) (figure 5-89) and the Battle of the Huns (“Hunnenschlacht”) (figure 5-90) respectively.

The legendary defeat of the Roman general Publius Quinctilius Varus and three of his legions by the rebelling forces of Cherusci leader Arminius in 9 A. D. is abbreviated by depicting the upper bodies of two fighting figures ensnared by Celtic knotwork: to the left, there is a Roman soldier in heavy chainmail, three eagles on his shield, hauling back his sword for a strike. To the right, we see the naked back of a young Germanic warrior with braids over his ears, who pulls back his short spear, shielding himself against the attacker.

The story of Arminius’ victory over the Romans formed a staple in the national mythology of nineteenth century Germany.⁸²⁹ Similar to Barbarossa, the figure of Arminius/Hermann was adapted and used to represent the ideals of freedom and German unification, and became a symbol of conservative German nationalism after 1871.⁸³⁰

The relief of the Battle of the Huns refers to the sacking of Metz by the Huns on April 7, 451 A. D. and the ensuing Battle of the Catalaunian Plains on June (or September), 10 of the same year: In the last major military operation of the Western Roman Empire, the combined forces of Flavius Aetius and the Visigoth Theoderic I. forced the troops of Attila’s Huns and his allies to withdraw. The battle was considered the last victory of

⁸²⁹ For more information for the Battle of the Teutoburger Wald see John Frederick Charles Fuller, *A military history of the Western World: Vol. 1: From the Earliest Times To The Battle of Lepanto* (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1987), 239–254; Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A new history of Rome and the Barbarians* (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). For details the ongoing discussion about the actual site of the battle see a. o. Tony Clunn, *The Quest for the Lost Roman Legions* (Spellmount: Savas Beatie LLC, 2005); Adrian Murdoch, *Rome’s greatest defeat: Massacre in the Teutoburg Forest* (Stroud: Sutton, 2006) (both arguing for Kalkriese); Peter Oppitz, *Das Geheimnis der Varusschlacht* (Kelkheim: Zagara-Verlag, 2006) (defending the Paderborn theory); Peter S. Wells, *The battle that stopped Rome: Emperor Augustus, Arminius, and the slaughter of the legions in the Teutoburg Forest* (New York, NY: Norton, 2004).

⁸³⁰ For instance, Heinrich von Kleist’s play “Hermannschlacht“, published 1808 but not performed until 1860, was increasingly popular. Heinrich von Kleist, *Die Hermannsschlacht. Drama in fünf Akten: Drama in fünf Akten*, Neue Bearbeitung nebst Einleitung von Rudolf Genée, Reprint: Heilbronn: Kleist-Archiv Sembdner 2009 (Berlin: Lipperheide, 1871); For a history of the play’s reception see a. o. Andreas Dörner and Ludgera Vogt, *Literatursoziologie: Literatur, Gesellschaft, politische Kultur* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), chapter 8; Wolf Kittler, *Die Geburt des Partisanen aus dem Geist der Poesie: Heinrich von Kleist und die Strategie der Befreiungskriege* (Freiburg i.Br.: Rombach, 1987); William C. Reeve, *Kleist on stage, 1804 - 1987* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), chapter 6; Winfried Woesler, “Kleists und Grabbes Literarisierung der Hermannsschlacht“, *Heilbronner Kleist-Blätter* 14; Further literature on the cult around Hermann/Arminius include Gesa von Essen, *Hermannsschlachten: Germanen- und Römerbilder in der Literatur des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag, 1998); Wiegels, Rainer, and Winfried Woesler, eds., *Arminius und die Varusschlacht: Geschichte, Mythos, Literatur*, 3rd revised and extended edition (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2003).

the Western Roman Empire, although the fight ended undecided, with great losses on both sides. Although Attila was able to withdraw, (only to renew his attacks on the Roman Empire later), the battle undoubtedly had damaged his reputation of invincibility.⁸³¹

For a long time considered by historians like Gibbon⁸³² and Creasy⁸³³ one of the most important battles of Late Antiquity, the famous battle is today but little anchored in popular knowledge. That could be the reason why both Joest and Wilcken interpret the Battle of the Huns, quite in analogy to the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, as a quintessentially *Germanic* battle: Arminius defeated the Romans, just as Theoderic defeated the Huns. Joest even goes so far to recall that legend has turned the Hun king Attila into Etzel, who was killed after his wedding to Ildiko/ Kriemhild at the end of the Song of the Nibelungs.⁸³⁴ Wilcken believes that the battles “Arminius versus the Romans and the Germans versus the Huns, [were] possibly metaphors of the situation at that time, referring to the encircling of the Reich by Russia and France.”⁸³⁵

While this reading fits the interpretation of the station’s décor as a rather blatant message of German superiority and Imperial expansion, it must be noted that the Battle of the Huns does not, in fact, show any Germanic warriors. Rather it depicts a half naked Hun, complete with vaguely Asian features and a ponytail, brandishing a spear under the protection of a short shield and fighting yet another Roman, who seems to have lost his breastplate but nevertheless swings back his sword to valiantly attack the enemy with a backhand.

If this was really a depiction of Germanic victories over invaders and oppressors, the figure of the Roman would incorporate his Visigoth allies – who were, after all, Roman vassals – and the German Emperor would be identifying his cause with Imperial Rome defending herself from Eastern Barbarians. This makes sense if we consider that

⁸³¹ For more information on the Battle of the Catalaunian Fields see a. o. Fuller, *A military history of the Western World*, 282–301; Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*; Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen and Robert Göbl, *Die Welt der Hunnen: Herkunft, Geschichte, Religion, Gesellschaft, Kriegführung, Kunst, Sprache* (Wiesbaden: VMA-Verlag, 1997); Gerhard Wirth, "Katalaunische Felder", in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, ed. Norbert Angermann, Robert-Henri Bautier, and Robert Auty (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2002), 5.

⁸³² Edward Gibbon and David Womersley, *The history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 1994).

⁸³³ Edward Shepherd Creasy, *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World: From Marathon to Waterloo*, Dover Books on History, Political and Social Science (New York, NY: Dover, 2008 (1851)).

⁸³⁴ See Thomas von Joest, "Symbolique de la gare de Metz", 49.

⁸³⁵ Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, 38: 129. My translation.

William's II politics were not only actively imperialistic, but also quite racist – especially concerning Asia. On several occasions he cautioned against “The Yellow Peril”⁸³⁶, a term he allegedly coined in 1895, the same year Herman Knackfuß executed an allegoric pen lithography titled “Peoples of Europe, protect your most sacred possessions” (figure 5-91) after the Emperor's design.⁸³⁷

On the other hand, it is possible that the “Good Guys” aren't the Romans after all, but the Huns. There are two points supporting this thesis. One is the geometrical position of the two bas-reliefs on both sides of the central window, beneath Charlemagne. The Battle of the Teutoburg Forest features the Roman soldier on the left, the victorious German on the right side. One would expect the second Battle to mirror this composition rather than to parallel it, thus placing again the “hero” near the center. As the Hun warrior is depicted to the left, it would be he rather than the Roman officer who is the significant figure of identification. Indeed, William II considered the Huns under Attila important examples to the German military forces.

On July 27, 1900, he had given a speech to the troops that he was about to send to China as part of the Eight-Nation-Alliance to suppress the Boxer Uprising. The speech became notorious under the name “Hunnenrede – Speech of the Huns”, because of the Emperor's exhortation for ruthless warfare. Allegedly he said:

“You shall fight against a well armed power, but you shall also take revenge, not only for the death of the ambassador, but for that of many Germans and Europeans as well. If you meet the enemy, you will beat him. You will not give pardon, you will not take prisoners. Who falls into your hands shall be into your hands. Like thousand years ago the Huns made themselves a name under their king Attila, a name that still lets them appear formidable in the tradition, so shall be affirmed the name

⁸³⁶ For the term “Yellow Peril”, or in German “Gelbe Gefahr” see f. i. Ute Mehnert, *Deutschland, Amerika und die "gelbe Gefahr": Zur Karriere eines Schlagworts in der großen Politik, 1905 - 1917* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1995); Sebastian Bischoff and Frank Oliver Sobich, "Vom Gelehrtenvolk zur Gelben Gefahr: Deutsche Imaginationen über ChinesInnen bis 1919", *iz3w. Zeitschrift zwischen Nord und Süd*, no. 305 (March/April 2008). The term was also widely used in Britain and the USA, mainly propagated by the novels of M. P. Shiel. For more information see Hashimoto, Yorimitsu, ed., *Primary Sources on Yellow Peril: Collection of British Novels 1895-1913* (Tokyo: Édition Synapse, 2007).

⁸³⁷ See Stolz, *Hermann Knackfuss*, 12: 32.

Germany in China in such a way that never again a Chinese dare to look at a German disdainfully.”⁸³⁸

As a testimony of colonialism, imperialism and open racism, this speech was later used to infer the brutality of German military forces during World War I. Especially British and American propaganda took up William’s comparison to Attila, making “the Hun” a derogatory term for the German troops. This negative use of the term is not contemporary though, but came up a good fifteen years after its invention. At the time of Metz Station’s construction in 1908, it can safely be assumed that to the German military, Attila and his Huns were regarded as an example to aspire to.

IV German National Mythologies Targeted to French-identified Population in Annexed Regions

The railway stations of Strasburg and Metz were both build by the *Reichseisenbahnen* in Alsace-Lorraine, the first national railway company completely owned and controlled by the new German Empire. It seemed obvious to use these highly frequented public spaces to accustom the population of the annexed *Reichsland* with German national consciousness. Even tough they were built some thirty years apart, both railway stations boldly assert a continuous German reign in Alsace and Lorraine since the Middle Ages, but they differ vastly in the success of their arguments. Their success is defined by their degree of acceptance with their targeted audiences which in turn can be measured less by contemporary critique than by successive iconoclasm.

In Strasburg, all arguments stem from the successful phrase book of Prussian expansion and the German national movement’s rallying cries. Thus, the rather conventional statues of Agriculture and Industry are politicized by the context of heraldic ornaments (oak leaves etc): future economic prosperity is supposedly guaranteed by the new German rulers. More specifically, Hermann Knackfuß’s frescoes of Frederick II. and Wilhelm I. refer to a national myth deeply rooted in German conscience and much referred to during the process of German unification in the nineteenth century. Within the borders of “Old Germany”, his reasoning would undoubtedly have been very successful, as is proven by the praise his opus receives from its Prussian critics. No such praise is known

⁸³⁸ Bernd Söseemann, "Die sog. Hunnenrede Wilhelms II: Textkritische und interpretatorische Bemerkungen zur Ansprache des Kaisers vom 27. Juli 1900 in Bremerhaven", *Historische Zeitschrift*, no. 222 (1976), 349. My translation.

from a native Alsatian though. Despite the missing testimonials, the Alsatian population was sure to understand the less than subtle meaning of the frescoes. Alas, they would not evoke the same amount of national pride. In a region that had belonged to France, and that had been influenced by France and its culture for more than three hundred years, the implied reasoning (a continuous German reign in the region) did not ring true. In short, Strasburgians did not share the underlying values and semantics of the political topos-pair “Barbarossa-Barbablanca” in the same way “Old Germans” did. Thus, they remained unconvinced by the argument, but not unaffected. Its continuous offence was removed in 1919.

Thirty years after the construction of Strasburg Central station, in the new Metz station, it seems as if the audience’s French cultural imprint was taken much more into consideration. Especially in comparison to the original, *not* executed plans for decorative details, the message was often subdued and slightly adapted to make it more palatable to an audience that despite their language still in parts felt French. Rather than forcing German national mythology on the French-Lorrainians, all images started with a French national myth and then gave it a German twist.

So Roland, symbolizing the closeness to the Emperor in Germany, was also a French national hero and defender of (Christian) civilization against (heathen) barbarians. And no longer the Stauffer king Frederick I. Barbarossa was evoked as a predecessor, but the Frankish king Charlemagne. Although the *pater Europae* possibly hints at the *Kaiser*’s expansionist intentions, it seems to be more important that both German and French national mythology consider him the founding father of their respective Empires. And even the “Battle of the Huns” could be re-appropriated in an anti-German reading of the myth: the French as Romanic people would then be fighting alongside the “civilized” Romans.

The decoration still contains German national propaganda, but the argument no longer presupposes an audience sharing the same beliefs, values, or the knowledge and interpretation of national myths. By actively trying to reach a “culturally alien” audience, the argument becomes both more intricate and more successful. Knackfuß’ Strasburg frescoes “disappeared” – or less euphemistically: were destroyed – when the station was transformed during modernization works after World War I,⁸³⁹ the Metz

⁸³⁹ See Théodore Rieger et al., *Strasbourg Architecture 1871-1918: 1871-1918*, Collection Art Alsace (Illkirch-Graffenstaden: Le Verger, 1991), 92; Patrick Hamm, *Strasbourg au début du siècle: Promenade*

window depicting Charlemagne is still there. Because Lorrainians could identify with many of the myths, they were more susceptible to “swallow” their German twist. Later, it was easy to ignore the double meaning and focus on the “true” French interpretation of the narratives. Only the statue of Roland suffered several acts of iconoclasm, due to the inclusion of Commander Haeseler’s portrait in the sculpture. But it was only Haeseler’s head that was removed, not the representation of Roland as such – thus, as a whole it could be argued that the statue was de-germanified.

In an act of making peace with its past, the Metz station, and the whole quarter surrounding it, was declared “Monument historique” (historic monument) in 1975, and in 2007, the city of Metz even applied for listing the Imperial Quarter as UNESCO world heritage site.⁸⁴⁰

V National Mythologies as a Tool in Campaigning Nation States

Historically, the two railway stations serving as examples in the first part of this chapter (Cincinnati Union Terminal and Johannesburg Park Station) were constructed almost simultaneously and opened to the public during the Era of the Great Depression in the early 1930s. But them being contemporaries, both stations mark very different phases within their respective nation building processes. As nation building depends on many different factors, many of them very specific to time, place and actors, it is rather difficult to draw conclusions about an abstract, general system of nation building.⁸⁴¹

But if nations are treated as a major ideological belief system, there are a few major turningpoints to be identified, in analogy to the process of institutionalization turning sects into churches described in the fundamental essay by Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge.⁸⁴²

illustrée dans les vieux quartiers (Strasbourg: Éditions du Rhin, 1989), 171; Wilcken, "Strasbourg et l'architecture publique dans le Reichsland (1871-1918)", 180.

⁸⁴⁰ See Hudemann and Schmeling, *Die Nation auf dem Prüfstand*, 3: 186.

⁸⁴¹ “Nation building” is an academic field much studied by historians, political scientists and sociologists. Few of them agree even on the definition of “nation”. I do not assume to know something they do not, nor would I like to trespass on their field. The basic opinions I formed on the matter rely heavily on Hobsbawm, *The invention of tradition*; Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, Revised edition (London: Verso Books, 2006).

⁸⁴² Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, "Of Churches, Sects, and Cults: Preliminary Concepts for a Theory of Religious Movements", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 18, no. 2 (1979).

There, the difference between “church” and “sect” lies mainly in their acceptance of and by their surrounding societies: thus, for instance Roman Catholicism is not disputed in places like Italy, where it therefore forms a “church”, but in high competition with other denominations, for instance in protestant England or most parts of the USA, its influence shrinks to that of a mere “sect”. One of the most important points in Stark and Bainbrides argument is that the religious group’s belief system is always at a certain degree in tension with the surrounding society, thus allowing for a sort of scale ranging from “low tension = church” to “high tension = sect”. Religious groups can be placed anywhere along this scale, and in time their position may change with their acceptance of their surrounding society. A “cult” is defined as in acceptance similar to a “sect”, but its ideas come from an alien culture (for instance, Roman Catholicism in Japan).

Stark and Bainbridge admit that “an articulate minority demands the definition of religion be broad enough to include scientific humanism, Marxism, and other non-supernatural philosophies.”⁸⁴³ While the authors distance themselves from theories that lump religious and non-religious movements together, because “it seems reckless to lump together phenomena commonly thought of as religious and irreligious and argue that there are no significant differences between them”⁸⁴⁴ we do not need to be so scrupulous: The proposed scale can in my opinion safely be applied to the development and acceptance of a national conscience by the nations population, the better to judge the intensity of necessary nationalist campaigning, described by Hobsbawm, independently from the status quo of its political formation. Based on the research by Hroch, Hobsbawm points out the uneven development of national consciousness among the social groupings and regions of a country. He divides the history of national movements (in Europe) in three phases:

A: purely cultural, literary and folkloric; no particular political or even national implications

B: militant national pioneers begin to campaign the idea

C: nationalist programs acquire mass support

and states:

⁸⁴³ Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, "Of Churches, Sects, and Cults: Preliminary Concepts for a Theory of Religious Movements", 117.

⁸⁴⁴ Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, "Of Churches, Sects, and Cults: Preliminary Concepts for a Theory of Religious Movements", 119.

“The transition from phase B to phase C is evidently a crucial moment in the chronology of national movements. Sometimes, as in Ireland, it occurs before the creation of a national state; probably very much more often it occurs afterwards, as a consequence of that creation.”⁸⁴⁵

Transferred to our examples, the embellishment of Cincinnati Union Terminal would be the affirmation of an accepted “church” i. e. a fully developed and politically established nation, while the landscape cycle of Johannesburg Park Station would be still part of a “sect’s” campaigning process to form a “(white) South-African nation” out of a very heterogenous population.

On the other hand, Strasburg and Metz would be examples for the campaign of a “cult”, since the national conscience they are trying to convey is both in high tension with its surroundings and in strong competition with another, older, and in the provinces of Alsace-Lorraine better established national culture – that of France. Although they all share a nationalist message, the different narrative means to achieve their goal of conveying their message depends on these differences in status.⁸⁴⁶

According to rhetorical theory, much of the success in “getting the message across” depends on the “orator”⁸⁴⁷ adapting his message according to the circumstances, tailoring to his audience: a well-meaning, friendly audience that shares the same values needs less persuading and different arguments than a hostile and inimical one. Additionally, every orator has to take into account their audiences specific habits of perception, apperception and thinking, without being able to ever control them completely.⁸⁴⁸

⁸⁴⁵ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 12.

⁸⁴⁶ As we are dealing with persuasive communication via images, it will be helpful to fall back on elements of rhetorical theory. Knape defines rhetoric as communication theory concerning issues that can only be decided on principles of probability and consensus. See Joachim Knape, *Allgemeine Rhetorik: Stationen der Theoriegeschichte*, Universal-Bibliothek, (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2000), 13. Rhetorical communication thus is always persuasive, follows a goal, and adapts to its targeted audience. See Knape, *Was ist Rhetorik?*. Knape also postulates that basic elements of rhetorical communication can be translated to images (Bildanalogietheorem). See Knape, "Rhetorik", 138.

⁸⁴⁷ According to Knape, the “orator” is the communicator behind a message. The orator does not necessarily have to be a definite single person as such, rather, he can be a fragmented orator consisting for instance of a combination of patron, teacher, artist and the medium itself, all of them influencing the intended message and leading to gain, loss or change of information. Knape, "Bildrhetorik: Einführung in die Beiträge des Bandes", 15–16.

⁸⁴⁸ Knape speaks of low or high “rhetorical resistance” that has to be overcome. See Knape, "Bildrhetorik: Einführung in die Beiträge des Bandes", 16.

A successful nationalist campaign, as proposed by Hobsbawm and Hroch, must therefore be adapted once it transforms from phase B (nationalist pioneers, as in Johannesburg and Alsace-Lorraine) to phase C (mass support, as in Cincinnati), as well as consider its cultural acceptance (shared (European) values in Johannesburg; different cultural acclimatization in Alsace-Lorraine). National mythologies are an important argument in this communication, but like any argument they can be used in different ways.

Often, a community of people who share for instance a language, a cultural heritage or an ethnic origin begin to define themselves as a distinct group, a “nation” that they want to represent in a political formation, the nation state. This was for example the case in nineteenth century Germany, and also in eighteenth century America – except that the cultural differences between the South-West (French-Hispanic) and the North-East (Anglo-Saxon) were never really amalgamated. In the late nineteenth century, these differences were severely aggravated by the influx of several immigration waves from Europe, and only overturned after the traumatic experience of the Civil War, which almost tore the young nation apart. Having overcome this trial, the USA forged a set of commonly shared myths that firmly held the different (white) ethnic groups together, one of the most important being the Frontier myth including the Indian wars, the Farmer’s westward expansion, and the urbanization and industrialization aided by railways.

In the early stages of national campaigning, the myths vary but focus on features that unite the different groups and underline “typical” national characteristics, while at the same time differentiating them from other, “untypical” groups that supposedly are not part of the same nation.

For instance, in nineteenth century Germany, national mythology focused on language, literature and cultural achievements as well as perceived common historical roots in the middle ages and Germanic times. Due to the religious schism and subsequent political division after the Reformation, when the political ruler decided about the religious affiliation, religion did not play a strong part in the process of German nationalization. In the United States of America, the myths focused on all-white experiences like the Indian Wars to include all European ethnicities – language or religion was therefore less important than factors like race. Until today, one of the strongest allegations against political opponents is to accuse them of „un-American behavior“.

All in all, in the early stages of national campaigning, no single group has gained the exclusive power of defining, what exactly defines the nation in question. Its notion is still loose and undetermined, and many different myths try to control its ultimate meaning.

The next stage of the campaign comprises the institutionalization and solidification of the nation. Usually, but not necessarily, this phase coincides with the creation of political facts like the foundation of a nation state and implementation of governmental structures.

Usually, according to Münkler,⁸⁴⁹ the different and varying myths that had led to the foundation of the nation (like the very versatile Barbarossa-myth⁸⁵⁰) are reduced to one invariable interpretation. Henceforth, this one “true” version is put forward and monumentalized (“verdenkmalt”): pictures - paintings, statues, architecture – even certain landscapes (Kyffhäuser Mountain) become literally national icons, with a single, “official” meaning - at least for a certain time. This iconization hijacks the myth and impedes differing interpretations, thus stabilizing the young nation by putting forth a homogenous image.⁸⁵¹ Alas, an iconized myth can no longer be flexibly adapted to target different audiences – it then loses its argumentative power, as we have seen in Strasburg.

In South Africa in the early 1930s, Afrikaner and British history begins to focus on mutual experiences (like the settlement of the inland after the Great Trek) and common future interests of the white minorities (like the colonization of Namibia or the exploitation of mineral resources) rather than their belligerent history.

Regional or even local variations of a myth become only possible again *after* the sovereign hegemony of a nation is firmly established, and its defining characteristics are accepted by all its members. If the nation is large enough, it now becomes possible and maybe even necessary for the population to break down their sense of belonging to smaller entities like religious affiliation or ethnic heritage, but these only form subdivisions of their overarching national conscience. Therefore, the German take on

⁸⁴⁹ Herfried Münkler, *Die Deutschen und ihre Mythen*, 1st edition (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2009).

⁸⁵⁰ For its many different usages see above and esp. Kaul, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Kyffhäuser*.

⁸⁵¹ Thus, sometimes one influential group establishes their version of National Character as the true and only one, and sometimes, the result is an odd example of proportional representation by region. For instance, it is Prussian discipline and values that are deemed “typical German”, but Bavarian costume and customs.

the Frontier myth in Cincinnati Union Station is acceptable as a variation of a well-known theme, because it bears no truly digressive interpretation of the American Frontier or Cincinnati's history – just a more romantic point of view. And in Metz, an audience questioning the presupposed assumptions of a shared cultural heritage can be addressed using variations of their own myths, delivering them with a German twist.

Summary

Architecture does a lot more to a building than finding the simplest form to a function. Besides function, architecture deals with size, proportion, materials, space and a canon of forms, both organic and geometrical. For centuries and millennia, ornament – including figurative ornament – was an equitable and adequate part of architecture’s equipment. For the historicist styles of the nineteenth century, architects used to help themselves from a treasure trove of forms and traditions and applied them to old and new building types, sometimes to recreate past splendor, sometimes to express new purposes.

Railway stations serve as good examples. Today they are often judged solely with regard to their infrastructural function as traffic hubs, but contemporaries appreciated them as prestigious expressions of the achievements of the Industrial Revolution. Railway stations became the exemplary building type of the industrial middle-classes. They are the contribution to the urban sphere of a new, self-confident class of engineers and entrepreneurs. The “railway barons” often were amongst the first generations to literally work their way up thanks to a comprehensive yet practical education. Naturally, they wanted to design “their” public space just as representative as the other monumental buildings – city halls, museums, theaters, or opera houses – which were offered for public use by the “traditional” upper and upper-middle classes. Thus, architects made a point of including often rich embellishment into their design for the passenger buildings.

Concerning the selected subject matter, there are surprisingly few differences between **national** (or nationalized) **and private railway** companies, although there seems to be a tendency that the more openly political messages are to be found in stations whose construction was supervised by a national service (e. g. Milan Stazione Centrale, chapter 3; South-Africa, Alsace-Lorraine, chapter 5). Yet, private companies would equally employ national imagery if it was regarded necessary, advisable or profitable within the specific socio-cultural or political climate: thus, the London and Birmingham Railway –one of many British players– rather cockily put up a statue of “Britannia” in London Euston station (chapter 3); the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad ordered to outfit Washington Union Station with statues of “American

virtues” appropriate to a terminal serving the capital of the United States (chapter 1); and the seven railroad companies constructing Cincinnati Union Terminal⁸⁵² allowed the mythologized Indian Wars to underline the “advance of (Western) civilization” (chapter 5).

Nevertheless, despite the common topics, most of the more elaborate station programs successfully strove to relate to specifically **local circumstances**, in order to deliver unique and even idiosyncratic messages that helped embedding the station within the specific urban fabric.

Thus, with regard to content, station embellishment focuses on the economic, technologic, and politic achievements of the railway age, and the celebration of the actors who had driven these achievements: resourceful civil engineers, far sighted entrepreneurs, courageous politicians emerge as agents of an ambitious new social class in civil society that successfully secures its place amongst the former elites.

In terms of **form**, the craving for acceptance by the more established social arbiters explains the confident use of representational codes as embodied by allegoric décor, expensive material, generous handling of space, and – less often – artistic prestige. Chapter 1 therefore detailed the socio-historical background of railway architecture and investigated how the mind-set and value system of the middle-classes (especially in terms of class and gender) is mirrored within station décor. Relying on sociological theories by Simmel and Bourdieu it was argued that social upstarts (including the industrial middle-classes and their entourage) copied the long-established norms and codes of the upper classes, rather than confidently employing new (avant-garde) forms of cultural expression, in order to be accepted by the existing social elites. Nevertheless, the subject matter was heavily imbued with values reflecting middle-class notions of class and gender.⁸⁵³ This thesis was taken up several times in later chapters to serve as an analytic tool, in order to better understand the historico-cultural implications of a

⁸⁵² The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad; the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad; the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railway; the Louisville and Nashville Railroad; the Norfolk and Western Railway; the Pennsylvania Railroad; and the Southern Railway.

⁸⁵³ The classic intersectional category would include race; yet ethnic or racial diversity plays only a subordinate role in the examined station décor. In Western Europe, the topic arises rarely and solely in the context of imperialism and colonization, for instance in the relief depicting “International Trade” at Amsterdam Centraal station façade (chapter 2). An analysis of selected examples focusing on station art in former colonies (for instance in British India) might possibly reveal more nuanced information. Where the question arose, it has been examined in the context of the specific subject matter (Cincinnati Union Terminal North, Johannesburg Park Station; both chapter 5).

specific station's program (for instance for Cincinnati Union terminal in chapter 2, which is studied under intersectional aspects; or the analysis of the Paris Gare de Lyon ticket mural in chapter 3, as well as all of chapter 4).

On the other hand, the translocation of certain codes –such as the use of allegories in the US, outside the context of European tradition– could sometimes lead to unexpected difficulties. Chapter 1 related that in Europe, the invention of allegories had over centuries been at the heart of academic art education. Patrons, clients, and artists were steeped in a tradition of humanist education that playfully employed a large “vocabulary” of allegoric codes stemming both from ancient Greek and Roman mythology, Christian theology, and the new creations often connected with the name of Cesare Ripa. Just like in poetry, the artists aimed at finding a witty and tasteful way to combine the established “vocabulary” (or “neologisms”, to retain the metaphor) into powerful inventions of their own. Yet, the close examination of the sculpture group “The Glory of Commerce” (New York Grand Central Terminal, chapter 1) showed that, what would have been considered a banal and well-worn rip-off in Paris, could shine as singular and ingenious accomplishment in the New World. At the same time, architect Daniel Burnham and his sculptor Louis Saint-Gaudens both understood that the architectural “grammar” of the French Beaux-Arts architecture needed sculptural embellishment to accentuate façade and roofline, but –from a European perspective– utterly failed at combining the “words” into a coherent “syntax”.⁸⁵⁴

Stylistically, station embellishment is as varied as can be expected, considering the long time range and wide geographical distribution of the sample group. Temporally, the dissertation looks at examples from the 1850s, when the railway was firmly established as medium of freight and mass transport, until approximately World War II, when the rise of the automobile led to a decline in both railway industry and railway architecture. Geographically, examples focus on England and Western Europe as well as the United States of America as the driving forces in railway engineering and the first nations to systematically build a railway network. For most of the examined time period, Africa, Australia, and Asia were either colonized or governed by middle European powers, or at least dependent on a transfer of Western knowledge and industry (South America). Examples of station embellishment from those areas will

⁸⁵⁴ Unfortunately, the sample group in this dissertation is too small to ascertain if the US brand of Beaux-Arts architecture as such misunderstood the European traditions of the allegoric codes, or if it rather developed an idiosyncratic American “dialect”.

therefore fall under the category of “same same but different” – similar topics expressed with a local flavor. If you decide to employ the national heraldic animal to illustrate the importance of a national or nationalized railway company, the animal – lion, or tiger, eagle, or condor – might change, but the principle remains the same.

The urge to situate a railway station firmly within the surrounding city and within a growing network of tracks, both regional, national and transnational, was studied in chapter 3. This chapter, too, mirrors most extensively the large diversity of stylistic forms and expressions found to communicate the décor’s message – inscription, symbol (city crest), allegory, map – as well as the variety of the used materials – sculpture, mosaic, intarsia, mural, stained-glass-window, ceramics⁸⁵⁵ – and the adjustment of the intended message to the specific needs and self-conception of the station’s principal – national or private company, focusing on freight trade, passenger transport, or (inter)national politics.

In terms of **quality**, station embellishment is just as diverse, even if most of it can be summed up under the heading of traditional, established, academic art. Although art historians of the past hundred years have focused on the achievements of the avant-garde (so much so that today we have sometimes difficulty to appropriately place their works within the much larger output of the academies forming the background that lets them shine) this does not automatically equal “bad art” – and neither boring, uninteresting art.

Usually, the craftsmanship is decent even if the artwork is rarely original. On the contrary, considering the low prestige of architectural embellishment, there are many examples of station décor that exceed expectation, especially in the realm of sculpture. Whenever architects obviously aimed to impress, they hired well-trained and well established artists whose obvious talent and successful careers would add to the building’s prestige: Jules Félix Coutan (New York Grand Central Terminal, Chapter 1) was professor at the Académie des Beaux-Arts; Karl Bitter (Philadelphia Broad Street, Chapter 2), later became president of the National Sculpture Society; many of the thirteen sculptors working at Hittorf’s Gare du Nord in Paris (Chapter 3) had been

⁸⁵⁵ Very soon it became clear how dangerous the soot and steam of the engines was to “traditional” art forms like al fresco or oil painting. Artists preferred more durable materials that were easy to clean. “Classic” painting was usually restricted to the decoration of rooms shielded from the engines’ pollution, such as waiting rooms or buffets.

awarded the distinguished Prix du Rome of the Paris Academy. The painter Jakob Hendrik Pierneef, hired to paint a landscape cycle for Johannesburg's Park Station (Chapter 5), is considered the most important national artist in South African history, while the achievements of Winold Reiss (Cincinnati Union Station, chapters 2, 3, and 5) had been neglected by art historians for a long time. Yet, his stupendous mosaic murals were instrumental in saving the station from destruction.

On the other hand, there are just as many examples of station décor revealing an artist's obvious difficulty at the realization of an otherwise good idea, such as Louis Saint-Gaudens (Washington Union Station, chapter 1) or Eduard Roskam (Amsterdam Centraal Station, chapter 4). And last but not least, there are examples of exceedingly bad craftsmanship turning out nevertheless very interesting information – not aesthetically, but from a historico-cultural point of view (Paris Gare de Lyon ticket mural, chapter 3).

The variable quality of the examples also justifies the **qualitative approach** of the bulk of this dissertation. While each chapter aimed at illustrating the chronological order of the selected examples, it soon became clear that the attempt to create a comprehensive catalogue would not only be nearly impossible, but quite possibly also yield less information. After all, each station's architecture, including the architectural embellishment, was exceedingly dependent on the idiosyncratic circumstances of their locale, their socio-political and historical situations, and the specific actors involved: client, constructor, architect, and artist. A railway station built in an already highly industrialized nation like France, Belgium, or the Netherlands, would be fitted with quite different subject matter than would be appropriate for a contemporary station building situated in a still mainly agrarian environment like East Prussia or Australia. Both images would be influenced by the degree in which self-perception and wishful thinking of the surrounding society diverged from socio-political and economic realities.

Chapter 5 shows in how many different ways a similar message (in this case: asserting national mythologies in order to campaign nation building) was communicated via station embellishment. The angle depended on the specific political and historical circumstances of the nation in question: where stood the process of building those nations – was it still at the beginning (like in South Africa or Alsace-Lorraine)? Or was the idea of a nation already firmly established (like in the USA)? Equally influential

was the position of the orators/artists within the new nation: did they visualize a *fait accompli* from the detached point of view of an outsider (like Reiss in Cincinnati), or were they active members of the campaign (like Pierneef in Johannesburg)? And what was the alleged opinion of the potential audience/viewers: would they agree with the messages conveyed by the station's visual propaganda (like the people in Cincinnati or Johannesburg), or did they still have to be convinced (like the French citizens in the suddenly German region around Strasburg and Metz)?

Station embellishment is representative art. As such, the dissertation has preferred viewing representational depictions over mere ornamental forms and patterning. Vegetal décor like leaves or fruits (both stylized and natural) were mainly considered in contexts where they achieved a heraldic or otherwise symbolic meaning, or complemented a larger theme (for instance, regional crops and agriculture). Unsurprisingly, the decorative programs all tend to justify and even glorify the social, technical, and political achievements of the industrial revolution, of the railway companies and their complementing industries, and of the actors involved. They all communicate an equally positive outlook for the future, betraying a strong belief that the ongoing progress is both inevitable and will further advance society.

In the attempt to visually substantiate this uplifting message, artists employed images from the past (e.g. Amsterdam Amstel station, chapter 2), the present (e.g. Paris Gare de Lyon façade, chapter 1), and the imagined future (e.g. Philadelphia Broad Street station, chapter 2), although, naturally, none of them bothered too much with historical accuracy. Rather, there is a strong propagandistic element present, and much of the implied brilliant future relied on wishful thinking (e.g. Königsberg station, chapter 2). Depending on the formal and stylistic criteria, the hopeful assumptions of these messages is more or less obvious: due to their higher degree of abstraction, allegories and symbolic personifications were easier to unmask as non-factual prophecies than depictions applying a more realistic style. Non-allegoric naturalism lent an unsubstantiated aura of authenticity to the images of artists like Winold Reiss (Cincinnati Union Terminal, chapter 2) or Peter Alma (Amsterdam Amstel station, chapter 2) although they were just as selectively constructed as the most elaborate allegory.

In 1849, Ruskin complained that railroad stations deprived people of the “temper and discretion which are necessary to the contemplation of beauty”, and that therefore there

never was “more blatant nor impertinent folly than the smallest portion of ornament in anything concerned with railroads or near them.”⁸⁵⁶ Today, the public can be grateful that architects inside and outside of Great Britain ignored the influential critic. Instead, station embellishment all over the world helps travelers willing to take the time to appreciate and be reminded of the technological, political and cultural achievements of the Railway Age.

⁸⁵⁶ Ruskin, *The seven lamps of architecture*, 115–116.

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