

Introduction

For so many visitors to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the lure of the fabulous artistic treasures within dominates the experience. Even when waiting for the museum to open on the front steps by Fifth Avenue, the tendency is to people-watch with one's back to Richard Morris Hunt's monumental Beaux-Arts façade, designed in 1895 and completed in 1902 by his son Richard Howland Hunt (fig. 1).¹ I rarely stopped to contemplate the façade beyond admiring its symmetry and classicizing features. Hunt's east front no longer dominates as it once did, since long flanking wings muting its original projection before the rest of the museum were added by McKim, Mead, and White in 1909–10, while the front steps and plaza were reconfigured by Roche Dinkeloo Associates in 1970 and the Koch Plaza was added in 2014. The façade is more of a protective barrier that safeguards the art within and only begrudgingly admits visitors funneling through its doors. Thus I was surprised many years ago when I first noticed medallions with sculpted bust portraits of Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) and Rembrandt van Rijn

(1606–1669) in the spandrels over the entrance, as if they are greeting the museumgoers (fig. 2). Upon stepping back for a broader view, one sees paired roundels of Bramante (1444–1514) with Michelangelo (1475–1564), and Raphael (1483–1520) with Diego Velázquez (1599–1660), adorning the adjoining bays.

In April 1895, just three months before his death, Richard Morris Hunt showed the museum's trustees a drawing that included more sculptural areas but without a fully defined program. Medallions with artists' portraits were, however, part of his plan.² Inscriptions would give the names of Raphael, Michelangelo, Bramante, and Vincenzo Scamozzi (1548–1616), the Venetian architect, together with those of Hunt and his son. By the end of 1897, the program had been reduced to six medallions, three keystone heads of Athena, and four caryatids, which would embody the four branches of art (painting, sculpture, architecture, and music). The sculptor chosen to effect this plan was Karl Bitter (1867–1915), a Viennese artist who arrived in New York in 1888 and soon became Hunt's collaborator.³ The



FIG. 1 Richard Morris Hunt, entrance façade of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1895–1902. Photo: author.

FIG. 2 Karl Bitter, *Albrecht Dürer*, 1898–1902. Limestone. Façade of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photo: author.

contract of July 1898 stipulates “six medallions to represent six of the most celebrated Old Masters, to be selected later.”⁴ The artists were to personify the arts symbolized by the caryatids. Originally, Phidias and Beethoven were considered, but they were subsequently replaced with Dürer and Velázquez when Luigi Palma di Cesnola, director from 1879 to 1904, worried that all six proposed visual artists were Italian. Bitter’s full-size plaster models were placed on the façade for the trustees’ approval in February 1899. The final sculptures were carved in limestone rather than marble as Hunt had originally proposed.

Why were these six artists selected to decorate the museum’s façade? What do they say, if anything, about the institution and its ambitions? The New York program is relatively modest. It is a late example of a practice observed especially throughout the German-speaking lands during the nineteenth century. This was the great age of new art museums, institutions that signaled cultural awareness and, often, political aspirations. Albrecht Dürer played a starring role in this story. He appeared more often than any other Northern European artist as he came to embody the artistic heritage of the German nations. Recognizable likenesses of the Nuremberg master grace or once graced the interiors and/or exteriors of more than thirty museums globally.⁵ Sometimes he stands alone in full length; other times, as in New York, he is presented as a bust. Karl Bitter based his likeness on Dürer’s *Self-Portrait* of 1500 in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich (fig. 3).⁶ He also replicated part of this picture’s inscription: “Albertvs Durervs Noricvs” (Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg). Elsewhere, museums are adorned with painted, carved, and, at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, even tiled episodes of Dürer’s life. Alternatively, he appears in the midst of a historical

allegory. Dürer is the quintessential genius who stands for the brilliance of late medieval–early modern German art and as an inspirational model for nineteenth-century audiences. The story that follows explores the use of Dürer as both historical figure and symbol in the decorative programs of the new art museums that were constructed from the 1820s until the end of the nineteenth century from St. Petersburg and Stockholm to New York and St. Louis.⁷ Most of the museums are in modern Germany and Austria.

From Hero to Genius

The nineteenth-century museums discussed in this book are or once were adorned with portraits of famous European artists. The latter represent the elite practitioners, members of a highly selective canon whom their contemporaries and/or later audiences determined had exceptional creative skills and often praiseworthy character. Whether we label them as heroes, mortal gods (*Dei mortali*), super-artists, geniuses, or simply rare talents, these artists were believed to embody the heights of human potential and creativity. No less than the images of saints adorning churches, these artists' portraits, arrayed on museum façades or in its stairways and galleries, stood as exemplars of the possible as well as models for those striving for personal betterment.

As Edgar Zilsel remarked, it is a normal human reaction to admire individuals who have exceptional physical skills, leadership qualities, or spiritual gifts.⁸ Societies have long visualized their heroes or honored them in song and verse. Pliny the Elder praised the first public library in Rome, established in the first century C.E., where painted and sculpted portraits of authors were displayed

beside their books.⁹ Petrarch's *De Viris Illustribus*, with its biographies of notable Roman statesmen and generals, inspired Altichiero's now-lost cycle of paintings in Francesco Carrara's palace in Padua. The 1379 dedication of the picture cycle extols the thirty-six full-length portraits: "[You] have given them outward expression in the form of most excellent pictures, so that you may always keep in sight these men whom you are eager to love because of the greatness of their deeds."¹⁰ Similar cycles of *uomini famosi* became popular in civic and private palaces. Randolph Starn notes that Renaissance Italians, "by transforming the imagery that they had inherited, . . . reappropriated the figure of the hero to display the claims of their own power, ideology, and art."¹¹ Such programs anticipated the portrait series on museums, theaters, libraries, and other public buildings in the nineteenth century.¹² In *De re Aedificatoria* (1452), Leon Battista Alberti praises the ancient practice of erecting public sculptures of mortals who "deserved lasting commemoration for some distinguished reason." He adds, "Still others felt that effigies of those worthy of mankind's praise, and deserving to be commemorated along with the gods, should be set up and displayed in sacred places, so that future generations, when paying their respects, might, in their zest for glory, be incited to follow such example."¹³ One contemporary funerary program honoring local artists, including Giotto and Brunelleschi, was established in Florence Cathedral in the fifteenth century.¹⁴ Vasari incorporated portraits of Michelangelo, among other artists, together with personifications of the fine arts, in the frescoes of the Chamber of Fame (1542) in the Casa Vasari in Arezzo and in the Sala Vasari (1561–69) in his house in Florence.¹⁵

The divine artist (*divino artista, Deus artifex*) as an idea and appellation has classical roots. Plato

describes Homer as “the best and most divine of all” poets.¹⁶ In 1550 and 1568 Vasari referred to Michelangelo’s and Raphael’s creations and their persons as divine.¹⁷ He begins his life of Raphael by opining that “the possessors of such rare and numerous gifts as were seen in Raphael of Urbino, are not merely men, but, if it be not a sin to say it, mortal gods.”¹⁸ Even earlier, in an ekphrasis of the engraving *Melencolia I*, published in *Elementa Rhetoricae* of 1541, Joachim Camerarius praises “Albrecht Dürer, the most accomplished artist, from whose divine hand [*diuina manus*] many immortal works still exist.”¹⁹ The artist’s hand is compared with the hand of God, which is often depicted in scenes of the creation of the world.²⁰

What makes an artist divine, however, is less easily defined. Dürer stressed invention and imagination, divinely bestowed gifts, as distinguishing features of the great artist. In his draft for a handbook on painting (*Food for the Young Painter*) of 1512, he writes, “Acquiring the art of painting properly is difficult. . . . For it comes through inspiration from on high. . . . Many centuries ago this great art of painting was highly esteemed by mighty kings, and they enriched excellent artists and held them in great worth, for they deemed such ingenuity a creativity in the image of God himself. For a good painter is inwardly teeming with figures, and were it possible that he might live for ever, he would always, from out of these inner ideas of which Plato writes, have new things to pour forth in his works.”²¹ He considered being inventive, being so full of figures, as godlike.²²

In Dürer’s case, suggestions about the divinity of the artist are raised by his *Self-Portrait* of 1500 and its reception (fig. 3). Many have remarked upon its visual correspondence with frontal depictions of Christ as *Salvator Mundi* or as *Man of Sorrows*.²³

In place of Christ’s blessing hand, the Nuremberg master has substituted his own creative hand, the one that painted the portrait in “undying colors.” In 1842 Jules Michelet may have been among the first to write about this resemblance; however, in his *Christ and the Adulterous Woman* of 1637, Georg Vischer had modeled Christ upon this portrait of Dürer.²⁴ Was Dürer claiming divinely inspired creativity or, more simply, a personal form of devotional *imitatio Christi*? In 1500 Conrad Celtis, perhaps moved by this portrait, composed four epigrams praising Dürer: “As another Phidias, a second Apelles you come to us.”²⁵ The last poem compares him with Albertus Magnus (ca. 1193–1280), then celebrated as the greatest German philosopher. Celtis ends by remarking that both men deserve the name “Albrecht the Great,” since “God created equal the genius [*ingenium*] of each of them.”²⁶

The words *ingenium*, “ingenuity,” and “genius” share the same Latin roots: *gignere*, *generare*, or *genere*, meaning originally “to father, beget, or give birth.”²⁷ Rudolf Steiner, writing in 1900, observed, “Genius is all about creating, producing, propagating. . . . In essence, ingenuity is intellectual procreation.”²⁸ *Ingenium*, as used in the early modern period, often conveys the notion of an innate talent, something that springs from one’s imagination or creative powers rather than one’s training.²⁹ This was one of several words used to convey the idea of inspiration and may not have been precisely synonymous with our modern sense of genius.³⁰ According to the Grimm brothers’ *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, the first volume of which was published in 1854, the word *Genie* was defined already in the sixteenth century as “the genius in us, an innermost divine voice in the heart, which can reveal the secret to us.”³¹ Köhne observes that a fundamental change

in the concept of genius occurred at the end of the seventeenth century, when it went “from a quality that one possessed to something one was, [marking] the historical turning point at which human beings began to see themselves as self-luminous, possessing a luminosity of the mind that radiated charisma and impact in the world.”³² In 1790 Immanuel Kant had declared that “a genius was naturally endowed with the talent that gives the rule to art. Because innate creativity comes from nature it is nature—through genius—that determines the principles of art.”³³ Increasingly, genius was less about the specific actions and works of the persons said to be geniuses and more about their inner lives, the “tension and power of [their] thinking, feeling, and striving.”³⁴

Descriptions of Dürer’s inner life even before his death in 1528 and up to the present stress his piety, his virtuousness, his industry, and often his melancholic temperament. Camerarius remarks, “The nature of the man is never more certainly and definitely shown than in the works he produces as the fruit of his art.”³⁵ Nevertheless, since an artist’s character was often inferred from his art, Dürer remains tied to his *Melencolia I* (1514), his elusive allegory about the relation between melancholy and creative inspiration.³⁶ Erwin Panofsky claims this engraving was “a spiritual self-portrait of the artist.”³⁷ Although melancholy is now recognized as depression, classical writers and their early modern cousins, from Marsilio Ficino (1489) and the Florentine Neoplatonists to Robert Burton (1631), associated this temperament with creativity, specifically with bouts of exceptional insightful frenzy (*furore*), which, if not contained, threatened madness.³⁸ Artists, writers, and musicians, among others, often cultivated a melancholic image especially during the Romantic period, when it was believed to be one of the defining traits of the genius.³⁹ As Jan Białostocki



FIG. 3 Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait*, 1500. Oil on board. Alte Pinakothek, Munich. Photo: bpk Bildagentur / Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen München / Art Resource, New York.

has discussed, there was ample nineteenth-century literature, often of non-German origins, extolling the melancholic Dürer.⁴⁰ The Nuremberg master’s own work demonstrates his understanding of Ficino’s writings. Camerarius describes the artist

as given to “pleasantness and cheerfulness” rather than “a melancholy severity [and] a repulsive gravity.”⁴¹ In his *Commentary on the Soul* (1548), Philipp Melanchthon writes positively about tempered melancholy, such as the “well-known heroic melancholia of Scipio or Augustus or Pomponius Atticus or Dürer,” which “is the noblest, and stands out for its fine qualities of every sort, ruled as it is by a temperate mixture, and arises from the favourable position of the stars.”⁴² Although Dürer has been so closely associated with melancholy across the centuries, it is surprising that none of the dozens of portraits of the artist adorning nineteenth-century museums represents him overtly as a melancholic.

The Romantic era granted unusual authority to artists. Friedrich Schlegel claimed, “What human-kind is to other life forms on earth, so the artist is in comparison to other human beings.” Novalis (Georg Philipp Friedrich von Hardenberg) exclaimed, “The artist stands above other human beings, like a statue on its pedestal.”⁴³ For writers, beginning with Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder and Ludwig Tieck, Dürer occupied the peak of German art as he, in their imagination, personified all of the pious virtues they longed to see in a Christian artist. Whether we consider him hero, *divino artista*, superartist, or genius, however, matters less than the broad, centuries-long recognition of his exceptionality. Dürer embodied the glory of past German, indeed Northern European, artistic greatness and, just as importantly, served as a model for a new century of German artists aspiring to find their own creative identity. In his *Appeal to Painters of the Present Day* (1804), Friedrich Schlegel laments the current state of German art: “When we consider the infinite number of great compositions which Raphael produced, although snatched away in the bloom of age and the zenith of his fame, or the iron industry

of the genuine Dürer, displayed in his innumerable creations of every kind, executed on the most various materials, although to him also a long term of years was denied, we shrink from comparing our own puny period with the vast proportions of that majestic epoch.”⁴⁴ Concurrent with this celebration of artists, dozens of public monuments honoring Martin Luther, Johann Sebastian Bach, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, among others, were erected in marketplaces, parks, and other prominent sites during the nineteenth century.⁴⁵

Dürer, the Canon of Famous Artists, and the Great Age of Museums

Although the museum portraits of Albrecht Dürer offer a fascinating case study for his *Nachleben*, or posthumous reception, he is inevitably accompanied by one or more other renowned masters drawn from an evolving canon of “worthy” artists. Which artists were included and how did this membership change over the century? How and by whom were these artists selected? Does the frequent proclaiming of a canon of past artists convey doubts about the current state of the visual arts? Answers to these questions are tied to the rise of art history, with its biographical emphasis, as a discipline in the nineteenth century. Certain masters were celebrated for their achievements, their character, and their broader impacts on the history of art. Dürer was literally the face of German art, yet he was lauded as well for his piety and work ethic.

The nineteenth century witnessed the rise of new museums across Europe and especially in the German-speaking lands. Princely collections, such as those in Munich, Dresden, and Vienna, were housed in sumptuous new buildings. Political

rivalries and ambitions helped fuel this phenomenon. The three initial museums on the Museumsinsel in Berlin exemplify Prussian efforts to demonstrate the growing cultural profile of their capital. Cities, local art societies, and even art schools erected museums. From the Glyptothek (1816–30) and Alte Pinakothek (1826–36) in Munich onward, it became fashionable to decorate these new museums with portraits of artists, often joined by allegories. The resulting programs hinted at the richness of the collections. Yet even by the loose attribution standards of that time, most museums could not claim to own art by Michelangelo or Raphael. Dürer was better represented in these collections because of the availability of his prints. Often these decorative programs were less about ownership than about pedagogical goals. Just as museums began to organize their galleries chronologically and by schools (e.g., Italian or, more specifically, Florentine or Venetian painting), their decorative cycles frequently provided an abbreviated history of art. Specific masters embodied a time and place, as Rubens embodied the Flemish Baroque, and Titian, the Venetian Renaissance.

Using Dürer as my example, I shall explore the messages and narratives of these museums. Paintings (including frescoes), sculptures, and even tiles were employed in these campaigns. Dürer's portraits appear or once appeared on portals and façades, in entrance halls and around grand staircases, and in loggias, ceremonial rooms, and galleries. Sculptures range from larger-than-life-size statues to busts to relief portraits. Some paintings detail episodes of the Nuremberg master's life and myth or include him in a grand narrative about the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, or the Reformation. As part of a broader cycle, he can be shown alone or in the company of other artists, the choice of whom often bears

specific meanings. Sometimes he is the sole German master. Later he is often joined by Hans Holbein the Younger (1497–1543) or the brass sculptor Peter Vischer the Elder (1455–1529). Interestingly, artists such as Albrecht Altdorfer, Hans Baldung Grien, Hans Burgkmair, Lucas Cranach the Elder, Matthias Grünewald, Tilman Riemenschneider, and Martin Schongauer, now considered central to the development of German art around 1500, rarely figure in these museum cycles, if they figure at all. The choice of which older artists to include mirrors the texts of general surveys of German art of this period. Among his contemporaries, Dürer is frequently paired with Raphael because each was considered to represent the apogee of art on his side of the Alps. They often hold hands or warmly greet each other.

Several cycles, especially those after about 1850, juxtapose Dürer and his early modern contemporaries with nineteenth-century German painters, sculptors, and architects. The greatness of the age of Dürer is credited for inspiring the new “Renaissance,” or vibrant rebirth, of German art shortly after 1800. With just a few exceptions, these programs make no reference to German art and artists during the long interim separating Dürer and Holbein from, later, Christian Daniel Rauch (1777–1857), Peter von Cornelius (1783–1867), and Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781–1841). Munich, Berlin, and other towns abounded with pride in the achievements of these and other modern masters. Nationalism, an especially complicated and often fractured subject before the unification of Germany in 1871, was an underlying catalyst or motivating factor.⁴⁶ Not surprisingly, several of the modern artists honored in these programs were involved in designing and/or embellishing the new German museums. These projects involved many of the century's most famous masters, including the architects

Schinkel, Leo von Klenze, Gottfried Semper, Carl von Hasenauer, Friedrich August Stüler, and Johann Heinrich Stark; sculptors Rauch, Ludwig Schwantaler, Ernst Rietschel, and Ernst Julius Hähner; and painters Cornelius, Friedrich Overbeck, Wilhelm von Kaulbach, Moritz von Schwind, and Hans Makart. Hosts of lesser-known masters, often with local and regional reputations, were also engaged in these projects, which were highly coveted and often lasted a decade or longer. Competitions were sometimes used to select the artists and architects.

Audience and Intentions

The museums discussed in this book vary in ambition. Some are huge in scale and others much more modest. A few are national institutions in capital cities. Several are princely collections displaying the cultural refinement of their noble patrons. Still others have regional or local significance. Nevertheless, they share certain pedagogical goals and a growing awareness of their audiences. There have been sharply different opinions about who should have access to museum collections. Historically, a princely gallery was private and intended primarily for the enjoyment of the noble family and some members of the household. Artists and other “suitable” visitors were admitted under certain circumstances. The appropriateness of some visitors depended on their social class and level of education. These restrictions would change significantly over the course of the nineteenth century. The British Museum in London, which opened in 1759, offered a more inclusive model. A German visitor, Karl Philipp Moritz, in 1782 remarked, “The visitors were of all classes and both sexes, including some of the lowest class; for, since the Museum is the

property of the nation, everyone must be allowed the right of entry.”⁴⁷ Admission was free for all. In contrast, the Altes Museum in Berlin in 1829, the year of its opening, charged visitors ten groschen.⁴⁸ Munich’s Alte Pinakothek remained free until 1910, when a fee of one mark (roughly equal to five euros) was first levied, though the museum was free twice a week. The number of visitors would climb sharply over the nineteenth century. In 1870 the Gemäldegalerie in Dresden recorded around 100,000 visitors; the Nationalgalerie in Berlin had more than 250,000 visitors in 1879. At peak hours the museums were often overcrowded, which impacted the viewer’s experience, the air quality within the galleries, and the condition of the objects. The Nationalgalerie initially limited admissions to five hundred visitors at any given time.

Some museums controlled access by restricting when one could visit. By being open only a few hours during the week, some institutions essentially excluded visitors from the lower classes who did not have flexible working schedules. For example, in 1839 the Royal Saxon Painting Gallery, the predecessor of the Gemäldegalerie, in Dresden, announced that it was open from nine in the morning to one in the afternoon during the workweek but only to decently dressed (“anständig Gekleidete”) visitors.⁴⁹ Thus clothing rules were another way of excluding the poor. Czar Nicholas I (r. 1825–55) required men to be attired in uniform or tailcoats and women in court dresses before being admitted to the Hermitage in St. Petersburg.⁵⁰ Initially they had to obtain tickets from the Ministry of the Imperial Court. Stepan Gedeonov, the Hermitage’s director from 1863 to 1878, obtained permission from Czar Alexander II (r. 1855–81) to allow free entry to all who wished to visit the museum. Some constraints, however, were practical, such as opening for only a

few hours around midday, especially in the winter, because of the galleries were long illuminated solely by natural light. Fortunately, during the course of the nineteenth century most museums became more welcoming to all social classes of visitors. Leo von Klenze, architect of the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, remarked, “It is far better for the nation to pay a few additional attendants in the rooms, than to close the doors on the laboring classes, to whose recreation and refinement a national collection ought to be principally devoted.”⁵¹

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a lively debate, especially in Berlin, about the role of the museum.⁵² At that moment Berlin had no public museums, but planning discussions were underway that eventually resulted in Schinkel’s Altes Museum (1823–30). Was the purpose of a museum and its art to be a “Bildungsschule des Geschmacks” (an educational school of taste)? That is, should it be a place for instruction of the broader laity rather than exclusively a place for gratification of individuals who already understand art? Or was it to be a setting for a more humanistic self-education through the close examination of fine art? The German concept of *Bildung*, or education, includes learning as a means of personal cultivation and character formation.⁵³ Many believed that museums could be tools for morally uplifting the citizens. Schinkel adopted the motto “Erst erfreuen, dann belehren” (First delight, then instruct). He felt the goal of a museum was to provide the public the opportunity for moral enlightenment.⁵⁴ In 1807 the Prussian culture minister Karl, Freiherr vom Stein zum Altenstein, wrote that art exemplifies the highest expression of humanity.⁵⁵ Since it is the purpose of the state to elevate its citizens, this task is uniquely suited to the fine arts and science.

In 1828 Schinkel and Gustav Friedrich Waagen, the influential art historian, and, beginning in 1832, the first director the Berlin Museum (Altes Museum), wrote, “In our opinion the noblest and main purpose of the museum is to awaken—where it still slumbers—the public’s sense of visual art as one of the most important branches of human culture, and—where it has already been awakened—to provide it with suitable nourishment and the opportunity for ever-greater refinement. This should take absolute precedence over any other purposes that may concern different classes of human society.”⁵⁶ Waagen remarked, “The first and highest purpose of a museum is the spiritual education of the Nation through the promotion of the perception of beauty. Only the second purpose is historical.”⁵⁷ For Waagen, beauty was a means for educating the lower classes (“unteren Klassen”). Leo von Klenze described his Glyptothek in Munich as more of an institution for the nation than for the student artist, a place suitable to lead art into life and to mingle with the living.⁵⁸ The goals of bolstering the public’s education and morality through contact with fine art were repeatedly articulated during this era.⁵⁹

How a museum might achieve these goals also engendered disagreements. Quatremère de Quincy, who hoped to succeed Dominique-Vivant Denon as director of the Louvre (the former Musée Napoléon), argued “the élan that brings beautiful things into bloom”—that is, the intrinsic beauty of certain works of art—was threatened by the new museographic obsession with chronological and didactic displays. He warned of “killing art to turn it into history.”⁶⁰ Masterpieces, as the highest expression of artistic creativity, were believed to offer the greatest educational and moral benefit. Others opted for gallery or exhibition displays surveying

a school or period of art.⁶¹ Over the course of the nineteenth century, the more historical approach came to dominate, though never wholly at the expense of the aesthetic experience. The inclusion of portraits of Dürer and other leading artists on and in the new museums celebrated the greatest masters who by their very presence physically embodied the sweep of history.

Albrecht Dürer on the Museum

The chapters that follow offer a detailed, though not exhaustive, examination of the cultural and political dynamics that prompted the rise of new art museums and the unique role accorded Dürer in their artistic programs. The ordering is loosely chronological. Chapter 1 considers how the secularization of monasteries and Napoleon's systematic looting of Europe's artistic treasures around 1800 prompted a new and increasingly focused appreciation of older German art as a manifestation of German national identity. The concerted collecting efforts by the Boisserée brothers and Ferdinand Franz Wallraf of Cologne exemplify attempts to preserve this vulnerable patrimony. Why Dürer? This question must, of course, be answered, since his very inclusion on so many museums reveals he played a unique role within German national identity. Chapter 2 explores the artist's self-fashioning, including his self-portraits and ubiquitous AD monogram, and his early posthumous cult. Around 1800 writers and artists championed Dürer as the embodiment of German genius. This celebration of his life and art peaked in 1828 in the many elaborate jubilees associated with the three hundredth anniversary of his death. Together these discussions provide a foundation for understanding the different roles and

settings accorded to the Nuremberg master as new museums began to arise.

Chapter 3, on the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, and chapter 9, on the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, present detailed case studies for the origins and the culmination of this decorative practice. In different ways, Dürer is singled out within the contexts of Bavarian and Habsburg cultural politics. The Alte Pinakothek almost immediately inspired programs of varying ambition across the German-speaking lands and far beyond. Its architecture and its use of artist portraits, including Dürer's, became the prototypes for a host of new museums. The rich diversity of iconographic programs and artistic solutions is addressed in the intervening five chapters. Many of the museums under discussion were severely damaged or wholly destroyed in World War II. For instance, the Alte Pinakothek and Berlin's Neues Museum in Berlin have lost virtually all of their original decoration. One must rely on old photographs and other primary sources to revive these once-grand cycles. In other cases, our knowledge sadly remains incomplete. Nevertheless, what emerges from these museums is the profound admiration accorded Albrecht Dürer throughout the nineteenth century.