

The  
Princeton  
Quartet

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Chicago Literary Club

May 19, 2014

Howard Prossnitz- Norman Cantor

Jim Tomes - Joseph Strayer

Todd Parkhurst- Mommsen's grandfather

Stephen Schlegel- Ernst Kantorowicz

Steve Thomas – Erwin Panofsky

### The Princeton Quartet: Medievalists in Focus

Twenty years ago I read a book entitled *Inventing the Middle Ages* by a somewhat acerbic medievalist, Norman Cantor. This got me interested in that time period and the more I read, the more I felt that current times reflect the past. The book presented the life and works of 20<sup>th</sup> century medievalists, in Europe and North America. The focus of this presentation is the presence of four of these historians, all teaching and working in the same town in the early 1950's.

In the town of Princeton lived these four medievalists of renown, two at the University and two primarily at the Institute for Advanced Studies. One, the chair of history at Princeton, had been brought up at Morningside Heights, the bastion of Columbia University, in New York. The other three were originally from Germany, one the grandson of an influential historian of Rome, and the brother of a Vice Admiral in the German Navy. The other two had achieved academic success in pre-Nazi Germany only to have left because of the Nuremberg Laws. These latter three found equal success in establishing themselves in the United States before 1940.

They were respectively, Joseph Reese Strayer, Theodore Mommsen, Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz and Erwin Panofsky. Their influence on American Academics in Medieval History varied considerably and there was little general intermingling of ideas, indicating how closely situated academics in a specialized field do not necessarily lead to an incremental expansion of ideas. I will deal with each in turn discussing their backgrounds, ideas and general influence. I would doubt that many of the undergraduates at Princeton in the early 1950's were aware of the extent of academic centralization in medieval history, probably greater than that of any period in any University City or town in America.

The first, and arguably the most influential in strict mainline history, was Joseph Strayer. I should preface this by indicating the state of academics in medieval history in the early twentieth century. The Germans had paved the way in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with objective evaluation of medieval treatises. In the late 1890's the English lawyer, Frederic William Maitland, with the publication of a two volume book on English Law up to Edward I, had demonstrated the importance of going to original documents such as tax rolls and other records to establish the foundation of English law. His approach influenced the way 20<sup>th</sup> century historians dealt with medieval history. Rigid academic analyses were also developed in France by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Cantor: Excuse me. It sounds as if you have borrowed the ideas and not a few words from my book, **Inventing the Middle Ages**. As you know, I was a doctoral candidate with Joe Strayer and have provided you with much of this information, Please credit me with that and whatever else you have to say.*

Of course. That was the late Professor Norman Cantor of Columbia and NYU who has indeed provided me with considerable background information for this essay, and from which the relationships and ideas of this small group of medievalists were crystalized in this presentation.

To continue:

By the early 1920's, the United States was still a backwater in this field but was developing under the leadership of Charles Homer Haskins, appointed senior chair in history at Harvard in 1912. He developed the leading professional association for medievalists in the US and probably anywhere else by the mid 20's, the Medieval Society of America. The Haskins medal, awarded annually to a noted academic medievalist, is somewhat equivalent to the Nobel Prize, if not in financial value, at least in recognition of merit within the field. Haskins was influenced by the Wilsonian idea of progressivism: that the application of learned intelligence to government in a previously disordered society could be studied and affirmed in a medieval context. Woodrow Wilson saw a kindred spirit in Haskins and he was one of his

three principal advisors at Versailles. Haskins was at least partially responsible for the emergence of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia as separate states in Central Europe and the Balkans. And so Haskins educated eager young medieval historians and the PhDs proliferated and were broadcast like farm seeds to other influential universities throughout the country.

One of his PhD candidates was Joseph Reese Strayer. His father was a professor at Columbia's Teachers College. However Joe Strayer hated New York, and never mentioned Columbia except with contempt, perhaps because the idea of elitism had declined at Columbia, unlike the other prominent Ivy League institutions. Although he grew up in the Jazz Age of the 1920's, his Protestant rectitude was such that he would tell his students that the Jazz Age was a myth. Strayer became a graduate student at Harvard under Haskins, studying administrative texts of the medieval period and his dissertation, *The Administration of Normandy under Saint Louis*, published in Haskins' *Medieval Academy*, was strongly influenced by Haskins's focus on Norman institutions.

Strayer began teaching at Princeton in the 1930's and by 1938 was the senior medievalist at Princeton. During the early 1940's he became chair of the History department at the University and continued as chair for two decades. The graduate college at Princeton had been described by a visiting Oxford don as Magdalene College, Oxford, as conceived by Cecil B. De Mille.

*Cantor- I thought that was a good analogy. Give me credit for that. Maybe I thought of it and attributed it to an Oxford don to give it élan.*

Thank you again, Professor. Strayer built up a strong history department and by the 1950s, it had more undergraduate majors than any other department because of brilliant undergraduate teaching. Aside from Theodore Mommsen, who was there from 1946-54, the stars included E. Harris Harbison on the Reformation, Gordon Craig on modern German and diplomatic history and Eric Goldman on recent United States history. Strayer himself gave crystal-clear well-organized lectures but was not a showman. He would rarely use specific names, citing for example "an English lord", "the French king", or "an early 13<sup>th</sup> century pope". When asked by a graduate student about this, he responded in fury: "what's the

difference whether it was the damned earl of Leicester or the earl of Gloucester? How did the son of a gun pay his taxes”?

A graduate student wanted to do a report on a conceptual (Thomist) idea of kingship. The student was advised to transfer to the philosophy department because although it was part of medieval history it did not deal with the reading of medieval tax rolls. “The philosophers will never study tax rolls. If we historians don’t do it, nobody will, so we have to do it:”

***Cantor – I was the graduate student and had to spend endless hours going over tax rolls of England and France.***

Professor Cantor, whenever I comment about a graduate student at Princeton, it is understood that I am attributing it to your encounters. Thanks.

Strayer did not relish small talk. During his seminars with graduate students he kept the overhead lights off. Since these seminars lasted up until 5 PM it would get quite dark in the winter. One graduate student had the temerity to ask him why he did this. His response: “So you dummies will not be able to bore us by reading your verbose notes and will have to speak succinctly from memory”.

As an aside, Professor Strayer, you will be pleased to know that this incident was prominently portrayed in a recent short one act play that may someday appear on a side street near Broadway.

He was very strict with his graduate students. For example, he asked one graduate student, we know who, to write a report in 3 weeks on how St. Louis raised money for his crusade. The student worked hard and found 5 documents. Strayer commented that it was not very good since there were 7, one being unpublished, the other published in an obscure journal in Southern France in 1893, but in the Princeton library.

***Cantor: That was me again.***

Professor Cantor, perhaps you would like to proceed with the talk and I can make the side comments.

For faculty recruitment, he would bring in several new PhDs, mainly from Harvard, and these were mostly gone after 3 years unless they showed unusual promise in publications and teaching. However,

those who were cut would get good positions at other institutions due to Strayer's recommendations. The University of Michigan, for example, was known as the Princeton farm club.

His attitude toward the non-tenured faculty was analogous to the meetings of his favorite king, Philip the Fair, with the Estates-General, to disseminate information. The day before undergraduate classes would begin, he would hand out the preceptorial assignments to the non-tenured faculty, almost invariably in fields far from their expertise, to test their adaptability and institutional commitment. Non-tenured faculty who were on the way to the highway, so to speak, would have their mail tossed on the floor under the faculty mailboxes.

As with Haskins by Woodrow Wilson, Strayer was called in by a Princetonian in government, Allen Dulles, who headed the CIA. He was a consultant on Soviet affairs, reading intelligence reports, the assumption being that medievalists were used to drawing conclusions from fragmentary evidence.

Influenced by Haskins, Strayer explored the workings of medieval government. Two of his principal works were *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* and a monumental work on his favorite king, the reign of Philip the Fair. His main focus was on the functioning of medieval administration and royal bureaucracy. In some ways the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries paralleled the New Deal in that able, idealistic young men found well positioned responsibility in government and law, much as the young Ivy League lawyers were drawn into the Washington magnet in the early 1930's. These medieval lawyers set up government legal systems that in some cases stand to this day.

Strayer's work on Philip the Fair was derived from 30 years of research. Most of the research was finished by the early 1950's but the book was not published until 1980, 10 years past his retirement and in failing health. His work was influenced by his own involvement in government, primarily with the CIA. To Strayer, a king like Philip the Fair was responsible for the welfare and security of the realm- not that he was about to establish a social security system or Medicare – the medieval peasant wanted royalty to stay away as far as possible. However, Philip was not Woodrow Wilson and FDR, elitist progressives whose statecraft much influenced the thinking of Strayer.

Strayer himself could not be confused with Woodrow Wilson. Strayer was a very neat, square-built stocky man. He lived in a tumble-down house that he rented from the university stocked with unfashionable furniture and K mart type paintings. His office however was neat with books neatly lined up from floor to ceiling, and his desk immaculate, without a layer of documents. He kept his research documents in an old-fashioned wooden filing cabinet and he could retrieve one immediately if necessary. He would usually be chain smoking cigarettes or a pipe. And, no, he had no facility for Wilsonian limericks. Also unlike Wilson, he recognized and promoted talent not only from the WASP element and had several African-American faculty members in his department. Strayer's yardstick was superiority in teaching and prolific and meritorious research productivity, not social status. Strayer died in 1987, well past the time when authority was respected and Wilsonian and Rooseveltian progressivism were in fashion.

*Strayer: Thank you for inviting me from the Valhalla of Medievalists. I hesitate to interrupt your talk but my graduate student has already taken this liberty. He was always complaining that I spent only 40 minutes with him in directing his Ph.D. thesis. It was probably closer to 30 minutes. Haskins was my mentor and I built up the best history department in the United States. Unfortunately, the department later turned into a bastion of leftist ideology with the limelight focused on social protest rather than kingship and statesmanship. Without kingship and dukedom, there would have been no state, only anarchy.*

Thank you, Professor, I understand your displeasure but times have changed and the patrician progressivism in this country when you were influenced by Haskins has dissipated in academia.

The second of our four Princeton medievalists was on the faculty of the University between 1946 and 1954, as previously indicated. He had the misfortune of having the same name, Theodore Mommsen as his grandfather, who had been the greatest German historian of Rome in his time. In addition, his uncle was the sociologist Max Weber. He always felt that he had to live up to his grandfather's reputation and felt that he was a miserable failure. His career ended with suicide on the Cornell campus in 1958 at the height of his career.

*Cantor – Mommsen was kind enough to will me his library, delivered to me by truck several months after his death. I have no information on why he was a suicide. He seemed genuinely happy when I saw him last several months before and was looking forward to a year's leave giving endowed lectures in Europe and the United States. His executor would not provide me with the information from his suicide note.*

Yes, as far as I know, its contents still remain a mystery.

Born in 1905, Mommsen's academic career began just before Hitler came to power and he was a vehement anti-Nazi despite having one brother who became a Vice Admiral in the navy and a cousin, a prominent professor of modern European history, who was a blatant collaborator with the Nazis. Mommsen managed to stay away from Germany in the mid-30's working in Italy. He finally left Germany in 1936 in protest against Hitler's policies and after the Institute he was supported by in Germany failed to continue his support.

He came to the United States, had a brief stay as a fellow at Johns Hopkins, then taught at Yale for several years but was fired along with a number of other nontenured faculty members at the start of WW II and taught Latin at the Groton School during the war. Considering his reputation as a medievalist it was equivalent to having Henry Kissinger teach high school civics. Strayer finally rescued him with a tenured appointment at Princeton right after the war.

The Monumenta Institute for Research in the Middle Ages had been founded in Berlin early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Supported first by the Prussian and then by successive German governments it produced scholarly editions of medieval records. It was the earliest European institute or educational institution to evaluate medieval records in an objective manner. Mommsen worked for the Institute in the early 1930's after his PhD in medieval history from the University of Berlin. His work in the Monumenta was mostly in Italy working on medieval archives until his funds were cut off, possibly by Nazi government pressures

because of his attitudes toward the Third Reich. In the late 30's at Johns Hopkins and Yale he published scholarly studies on the medieval and renaissance periods until he was terminated at Yale. Eventually at Princeton after the war he got to know Erwin Panofsky and became reacquainted with Kantorowicz whom he had been close to in Germany. His office was weirdly circular in the old university library. He would sit in an easy chair, stroking his dachshund, chain-smoking cigarettes, and talking endlessly with students, especially graduate students, assisting them with intimate family and sexual problems. He would visit them at their apartments carrying wine and flowers. Twice a day he would visit the Graduate History study room to see whether his students were working and contact them if they were absent. He would spend hours listening to his large collection of long-playing records. He was very deferential with his friends and colleagues and even intimidated by brilliant accomplished reports by his students. He was however, a brilliant lecturer but never lost his heavy German accent. He would appear at the front of the room, slouching with thick glasses, puffing his cigarettes and encouraging his students. His time was otherwise spent in frequent trips to Manhattan to attend concerts and art galleries. His collection of medieval and renaissance studies was finally published in 1959 by the Cornell University Press a year after his suicide.

*Mommsen: Let me put a word in for my grandson. Because of his suicide he could not get into the Medievalist Valhalla but I know that he is doing well in the valley of expectation and sends his regards. He was always under my shadow since I was considered the greatest Roman historian of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Young Theodor was often greeted by people with honors thinking that he was me although I had been dead for years. No wonder he had this family baggage attached to him. As you indicated, his mother was the sister of Max Weber. He added Ernst as a middle name so that he would not be confused with me. In the Internet I often appear when information is requested about him. Unfortunately, his brothers and a cousin were open collaborators with the Nazis in Germany and my grandson had contempt for them. He had contempt for them. It was tragic for him. Perhaps this was partly responsible for his eventual suicide.*

Thank you, Herr Doctor, for your thoughts. Although Theodor Ernst Mommsen did not achieve the success of the other members of the quartet, he had some brilliant essays on Medieval and Renaissance Studies published posthumously.

One of his last tasks when he died in 1958 was a translation of *Imperial Lives and Letters of the Eleventh Century*, Completed by his colleague Karl Morrison, one of his graduate students. The political and ideological struggles of that century were among his earliest and most durable interests. At Princeton and Cornell, he devoted seminars with his graduate students to this struggle. The imperial biographies translated involved the deeds of Conrad II and Henry IV, Salian Holy Roman Emperors at that time.

After Mommsen died, in his library, among some old books was found some very emotional letters from Ernst Kantorowicz, our third quartet member, an old friend from pre-Nazi Germany whose friendship had revived when Kantorowicz joined the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study in 1951 when Mommsen was still at Princeton University. Kantorowicz, known as “Eka” to his close friends and associates, as a young man in Heidelberg had written a brilliant history of Frederick II [“the wonder of the world”] who died in 1250, published in 1928 with a swastika on the cover, actually a reverse swastika that was an Oriental symbol, but nevertheless. This, the book, presumably not the swastika, elevated Eka to a chair at a German University at a precocious age, unusual. This was especially unusual since Eka was Jewish and during the early years of the third Reich, because of his reputation, he was protected by no less an official than Hermann Goering, who admired his book on Frederick, and by some of his aristocratic friends who were now high up in the Nazi party until things got too hot and Eka left for England in 1938. He was born in 1895 and lived until 1963, spending the last 12 years of his life at the Institute of Advanced Studies writing long articles with very long canon law footnotes.

Although Jewish, Eka came from a wealthy family of merchants in Prussia and as a youth had Junker friends that included Counts and Margraves. He moved easily with the German aristocracy. He was conservative in politics, so much so that he joined the Freicorps at the end of World War I, whose expertise was shooting Communists who were trying to overthrow the country at that time. Kantorowicz gravitated to Heidelberg in the mid-twenties because of his interest in medieval history and because of

two prominent medievalists there who specialized in German imperial history. Eka in his work followed the German tradition of *Geistesgeschichte*, an emphasis on spiritual and cultural history, emphasizing the spiritual forces rather than material and social forces the central concern. In other words, history was seen as a Wagnerian opera rather than a sociological tract.

Eka came to write his work on Frederick II because of the circle of friends that he belonged to headed by a poet and visionary named Stefan George. This circle of friends consisted mostly of aristocratic young men who were looking to explore a revival in nationalism and for a charismatic leader to bring Germany back to its revival after the impoverishment of the country after being beaten in the War and for them the vulgar attributes of the Weimar republic. It is unlikely that they thought that an Austrian corporal would fit the bill of the Wagnerian figure that would revive the country. Eka was assigned by Stefan George to write a biography of just such a figure to stir the German Volk. Thus he set about doing it and produced a sensational book with the swastika on the cover. Eka explained away the swastika as an oriental symbol of peace; as I had indicated, it was a reverse swastika – he had earlier gotten a PhD in Oriental economic history- but the symbol did no harm to the sale of the book and Hermann Goering had been quite impressed by it – the content of the book that is. Because of the book and the almost 300 pages of appended scholarly notes, he acquired a chair at the University of Frankfurt and, after having to leave the institution in 1935, worked in Berlin through 1938, untouched by the Gestapo.

A British academic friend finally convinced him that his life was in danger and got him a visa to England in 1938 where he spent an unhappy year at Oxford acting as a German aristocrat, always dressed immaculately as if he was going to a high end soiree while his fellow dons wore tweeds and baggy trousers. In other words, he didn't fit in. Also, his family fortune had been dissolved by the Nazi regime and he needed to make a living. He landed on his feet. He saw an advertisement for an appointment at the University of California at Berkeley to teach medieval English constitutional history. He applied without a background but the senior historian responsible for finding someone to fill the position was delighted to get Kantorowicz, who by that time had some reputation in medieval history.

Eka was advised by an enterprising clerk at Blackwell's to read Maitland's two volume *History of English Law* which provided him with the background.

From 1939 to 1950 he lived a mostly serene life at Berkeley, occupying a house on the bay, gathering a large group of graduate students around him, drinking wine, and discussing medieval Latin texts word for word with them on long evenings. Unlike at Oxford, his aristocratic bearing and singsong intonations his continental clothes and his erudition were a great success among his students. At the same time, he published arcane well indexed work in the medieval professional literature, went faithfully to the meetings of the Medieval Academy at Cambridge, Mass, and eventually received the Haskins Medal.

In 1950, at the time of loyalty oaths in the McCarthy era, Eka lost his job at Berkeley because he refused on principle to sign a loyalty oath, so that the erstwhile right wing Freicorps member who had assisted in shooting Reds and who attempted to glorify the nationalist German philosophy was considered a left-wing security risk. However, he had befriended J. Robert Oppenheimer while both were at Berkeley in the early 1940's and Oppenheimer, who was head of the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies, secured his appointment at the Institute. Down the street, Strayer was quite frosty to Kantorowicz, hating his style, his quasi-Nazi past, his mannerisms and his scholarship. Eka had an old friend in the Princeton history department, Ted Mommsen- who had worshiped Kantorowicz for 30 years. Occasionally Eka was invited to Mommsen's apartment to discourse to a group of university graduate students on his Roman canonical scholarship with emphasis on Dante's *De Monarchia*. His home was down the street from Einstein's (the latter died in 1955) and he lived a fairly reclusive life, no longer having the students around him that he had had at Berkeley, for the Institute was a home to faculty without students.

Until his death in 1963, Eka worked on a massive study on the theology of medieval kingship. He published a book in 1957 entitled *The King's Two Bodies*, that is his natural body and his political body. His thesis was that this concept came out of Roman, Byzantine, scholastic and humanistic traditions, not out of common law.

***Kantorowicz: May I please have a word. Let me elaborate on how I came to write this book. It had a long germination and in fact derived from discussions with Max Radin, an academic colleague, to***

*whom I dedicated the book, and with whom I had long discussions while still at Berkeley. In 1945 I showed Max a document published by the order of Saint Benedict, a religious order that incorporated itself. I was unaware that in America all religious institutions could be organized as limited liability corporations. From this, we had further discussion about another single member corporation, the English Crown in the sixteenth century, the legal foundation of the king and the two bodies he represented, the corporate and mortal body. I analyzed this concept for fifteen years before writing the book while I was at Princeton.*

*As to my German aristocratic sing song manner and overdressing, this did not prevent a large influx of young American academics to come to Germany in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to learn from us, including Professor Strayer's mentor at Harvard, Charles Homer Haskins.*

*As for Strayer, he hated my style and mannerisms and would always greet me formally and then head to the other side of the room.*

*Cantor: I'll vouch for that.*

Thank you gentlemen- I don't want to get into personalities and since Professor Strayer is in this room, he might want to make a remark.

*Strayer: I don't wish to comment.*

Parenthetically, an analogy to *The King's Two Bodies* was described in an essay entitled *Punk Culturalism* published in 1999 in which Elvis Presley's transfiguration from youth to adulthood was described as "the brash sexy body of his youth, which broke down the racial segregation of musical styles, and the bloated corpse found on the floor of Graceland".

In the late 1940's while still at the University of California, Eka would conduct informal seminars for his graduate students in his home over the course of many evenings and in a year analyzed Dante's *De Monarchia*, a treatise of 120 pages. Each phrase would be a key to a discussion of the political and social traditions of medieval Europe, expanded to Roman history and ancient Asia. As previously indicated, he continued to do that at Princeton. A member of his seminar group recalled his method of teaching. As each student prepared formal questions for his responses, Eka would prepare a note card with relevant

texts and scholarly discussions relevant to the topic. Not infrequently, he would refer the student to *The King's Two Bodies*, not the text itself but the footnotes, which he felt were the true repositories of his learning. It should be noted that his early book on Frederick the Second initially had no footnotes and one senior German academic considered him a nonscholar who did not do detailed research. However, in response to this, as I mentioned previously, Eka published 300 pages of dense and obscure information consisting of footnotes. Perhaps that early criticism still rankled him.

The concepts of German cultural idealism in medieval studies that Kantorowicz expounded have been replaced in Europe by more socialistic attitudes based upon individualism and psychological insights, sometime called the New Left. As we shall mention, this has brought about a schism in medieval criticism in the United States between the New Left and the formalists who emphasize traditional hierarchies and patristic influences.

The fourth historian, Erwin Panofsky, perhaps has had the widest influence in his area of the iconography of the Middle Ages. The study of art of the Middle Ages in the area of art history and as a reflection of that period has burgeoned since the 1930's. It is generally described under the rubric of formalism, or the interpretation of specific images in medieval art by traditional standard images, or formulas of representation and description. It emphasizes this formulistic motif not only in art but also in medieval literature, marginalizing individual creativity and discovery. In other words, individual creativity of that period is subsidiary to the traditionalist, standardized motifs in understanding the representation of art forms. In this context, slight changes in iconographic forms may reflect significant alterations in ideology, for example, the clothing of Jesus, his position in regard to the Virgin Mary, the gestures of the Disciples. Even the changes in location of animals and birds may have some significance. Formalist art research in addition to literary research involving medieval times had been replacing purely political contexts within the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Formalist iconology (or iconography), the terms are frequently interchanged, was fostered in Germany after the first world war in an institute in Hamburg, run by Aby Warburg, scion of a banking family who

was a prodigious scholar. In 1929, because of the possible accession of Nazism, the institute was moved to London. Into that institute in the early 1920's came Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968), who had been teaching art history at the University of Hamburg, becoming a full professor by 1925. He became of a protégé of Warburg but remained in Germany until 1933 when he was evicted from the University.

He received this information while in New York via a long cable in German, sealed with an inscription sealed with a green strip with the inscription "Easter greetings from Western Union".

He had already been a visiting professor at NYU's Institute of Fine Arts and with his connections in the United States; he became the first appointee in Humanities in the School of Historical Studies at the Institute of Advanced Studies. He also taught at NYU and Princeton University, developing probably the most distinguished departments of art history in the country. As he wrote, he had the privilege of coming to the United States as a guest and not a refugee.

By 1917, Princeton University was developing a collection of Christian iconography. In the early 1920's in the United States appeared two important works, A. Kingsley Porter's *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, which was a sweepingly novel approach to the chronology and diffusion of twelfth century sculpture in Europe, and two works by other American authors, an essay on the location of an enigmatic and Carolingian School in the Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis, and an exposition of the sources of medieval style that reduced the complexity of medieval art to several currents. Over the next decade Princeton had launched a large program of manuscript publication in the areas of Early Christian, medieval, and Byzantine art. This was the milieu in which Panofsky found himself in the early 1930's.

Panofsky spent much time in New York in that period because of his affiliation with NYU. At the end of prohibition he found the atmosphere in the city that of "cozy dissipation", but he was "bewildered, electrified, and elated" by the atmosphere. He found that material on medieval painting and book illumination could be available for exhaustive study here, perhaps more easily than abroad. He was surprised that he could order material from the New York Public Library without an introduction from an embassy or two responsible citizens vouching for him. He was astonished by the amount of interest and

activity over here in the art historian's world, by the countless exhibitions and discussions and lectures at art institutes and the homes of the wealthy.

He felt that American art historians were able to study the past without a national or regional bias. He was stimulated also by what he termed contact with "Anglo Saxon positivism" with its distrust of abstract speculation.

In addition to his work at the Institute of Advanced Study, he was largely responsible for the development of the Institute of Fine arts at NYU, brought about principally through the efforts of refugee scholars.

By the mid 1940's he stopped teaching regularly and concentrated on art history research at the Institute of Advanced Study with numerous public lectures at colleges throughout the country over the next 20 years, accumulating 15 honorary doctorates and nine medals for scholarly excellence in Medieval and Renaissance studies. In appearance he had changed considerably from his days in Hamburg when he was described by a colleague as having a "distinctly romantic physiognomy. A thick mustache (almost Nietzschean) covered his upper lip, and long whiskers descended in front of his ears, throwing into prominence his luminous eyes and high forehead over which the black hair was pretty long...". By the 1950's he was well-dressed, clean-shaven and freshly groomed.

In addition to his focus on medieval and Renaissance iconography he was a film buff, especially of the silent variety, and in the 1940's published a pioneering essay on the iconography of film, which may have been the stimulus for cinema studies on college campuses. Among his many lecture tours was a circuit through New Jersey towns and villages in the 1940's showing Buster Keaton films and explaining their imagery. His two sons went to Princeton as undergraduates. One was first in his class, the other second. The former was called by his classmates "the clever Panofsky", and the latter, "the stupid Panofsky".

His philosophy of art could be summarized in the following quotation: "In a work of art, 'form' cannot be divorced from 'content'. The distribution of color and lines, light and shade, volume and planes, however delightful as visual spectacle, must be understood as carrying a more-than-visual-meaning". However, he was concerned whether such symbolism reflects established tradition, with ideas

demonstrably alive in the period, and the relevance of symbolist interpretation with both the historical position and the tendencies of the artist.

Among his works were *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, and *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*. In the first book on Gothic architecture, he draws a parallel between the 13<sup>th</sup> century Gothic cathedral and the format of syllogistic exposition of St. Thomas Aquinas. The question arises as to how this association is justified. For example, were the architects trained in scholastic disquisition or was there a commonality in the culture of the period that would lead to Gothic architecture and syllogistic logic of Aquinas? This is not answered in Panofsky's study.

Panofsky remained a brilliant speaker at numerous universities and institutions and continued to collect his honorary degrees.

*Panofsky: If I may, I would like to interject a comment on the historical process as related to art. The Hegelian notion that the historical process unfolds in a sequence of thesis, antithesis and synthesis appears equally valid for the development of art. For all stylistic progress, that is, each discovery of new artistic values must first be purchased with a partial abandonment of whatever has already been achieved. Further development aims at taking up anew that which was rejected in the initial onslaught, and making it useful to the altered artistic purposes.*

Thank you, Dr. Panofsky. I assume that relates to the changes in iconography or iconology. What is the difference in these terms?

*Panofsky: Iconography is merely a description and classification of images as ethnology is a description and classification of human races. Iconology is the discovery and interpretation of symbolic values of art forms.*

Thank you Dr. Panofsky. Oh, Professor Cantor has a comment.

*Cantor: Dr. Panofsky will agree with me that a year before his death he acknowledges in a letter that the distinction between iconography and iconology, which a generation of graduate students in art history had to commit to memory no longer meant anything significant.*

*Panofsky: I don't know how you came to see that letter but I would agree that the terms now seem virtually interchangeable.*

Thank you both, for clarifying a mystifying nomenclature.

Thus we have four outstanding medieval scholars in mid-century in the town of Princeton, with varied interests and attitudes, which had a significant influence on medieval studies. Aside from the four discussed here, the University's medievalists at the time included E. Harris Harbison on late intellectual medieval history, Kurt Weitzman on Byzantine art and civilization, E.A. Lowe, an outstanding medieval paleographer and D.W. Robertson, Jr on medieval literature.

With the aging and death of these scholars, other scholars, notably less traditionalist in their attitudes, took over the history department at the University with emphasis on society as a whole as opposed to kingship and aristocracy. One notable example was Natalie Zemon Davis, on the history faculty, whose influence was such that she was given the Presidency of the American Historical Association. Her work on 16<sup>th</sup> century France was focused (with admiration) on socially irrational and anti-statist behavior. This was at the time of the New Left and the social protest of the 1960's. As Joseph Strayer commented previously, the History Department turned left.

Although I focused on the town of Princeton, there are at present at least 94 North American Colleges or Universities that specialize in medieval history in their history departments. Among others, NYU's Institute of Fine Arts has a collection of Medieval Iconography as extensive as Princeton's, thanks largely to Panofsky and other German exiles of the 1930's. Outside of the University setting, a microfilmed copy of almost a third of the Vatican medieval collection is available in St. Louis, Missouri from funds provided by the Knights of Columbus. The Hill Monastic Manuscript Library in Collegeville, Minnesota has 73,000 medieval books.

To name a few stars during the time we have seen, roughly from the 1950's to the 1980's, we might include the aforementioned student of Mommsen, Karl F. Morrison, holder of a research chair at Rutgers who preserved the traditions of German idealistic culture in medieval studies. What might be called a "left-wing or "new historicist" critic of medieval literature was Lee Patterson, head of the medieval studies center at Duke University who wrote that " there is a Middle Ages of the Right and Left , and they entail allegiance that govern most if not all the critical work at the present time".

Currents of conceptual characteristics of the Middle Ages thrived at various institutions. Neo-Thomism, the theory that medieval culture focused on synthesis and unity was propounded by historians at Fordham University and the University of Chicago. Some of the Post-Modern critics of medieval literature, liberating the text from its historical traditions, included E. Talbot Donaldson of Yale, Charles Muscatine of Berkeley and Robert Hanning of Columbia, who emphasized personal feeling and psychological insights. We might also mention Durant Waite Richardson, Jr, professor of medieval literature in Princeton's English Department who disdained the liberal humanism and psychological insights and emphasized traditional hierarchies in medieval literature that were derived from patristic traditions from Augustine and others. Finally, we have to shine some light on Marie Borroff at Yale who produced a marvelous metrical translation of the medieval poem *Pearl*, an allegorical elegy for a dead child, probably one of the three greatest Medieval poems in the English language, the others being *Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Beowulf* and the poetry of Chaucer. The University of Toronto's Institute of Medieval Studies has a large collection of papal material. Carolyn Walker Bynum, formerly of Columbia University, perhaps the leading feminist medievalist of the period, delved into the cross-gender quality of twelfth-century religious writing with her book *Jesus as Mother*.

Thus, the light of medieval history is reflected from the prism of contemporary medievalist's thoughts. From seers and pundits, we may read different futures, and from historians, evolving pasts.

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