

Project Group B3

Heroes of Art vs. Heroes of War: Heroization through Art in the Context of War and Peace in the Early Modern Period

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The starting point for this study of the “hero of art” in the seventeenth century was Joachim von Sandrart’s book *Teutsche Academie* (German Academy of the Noble Arts of Architecture, Sculpture and Painting), which not only presents the semantic and iconographic characteristics of the art hero, but also focuses on the interplay between the two ways of presenting rulers: as art patrons and as war heroes. The discourses of German language societies about war and peace, which should be seen in the context of Sandrart’s book, were elaborated on in a paper by the assistant in which she also focused on the heroization of the ruler in the artistic realm. Several examples of heroization in the form of portraits could also be demonstrated at the SFB conference *Imitatio heroica. Hero Likeness in Imagery* and in the corresponding publication.

The conditions for the emergence of the art hero in various semantic and visual forms were thus analyzed. Focusing on Germany (and not, as originally planned, on a European comparison), the transfer and appropriation of the model of the war hero in relation to irenic and artistic heroizations were explored in a diachronic perspective (sixteenth to eighteenth century). It became clear that the images of heroes that emerged via art and war are more interconnected than originally assumed. War, which is one of the leading categories for defining the heroic, was not dichotomously opposed to art. Rather, art contributed to this form of the heroic in many ways: partly by supporting war (with the so-called *ars belli*), partly by acting as an alternative model (according to the adage “art can only blossom in peace”), and partly through the transformation of war into cultural forms (tournaments, ceremonial armor). In the Baroque era, the emblematic juxtaposition of, and harmonization between, weapons and art as priorities increasingly became an inseparable interdependence.¹ The recognized potency of symbolic and general visual effects of greatness, power, glamour, and strength also lent enormous significance to art through the self-presentation of the rivaling dynasties and territorial rulers in the early modern period.² It served as an interreligious language of the heroization of rulers, which can be verified by examples from the House of Habsburg (Maximilian I, Rudolf II, Leopold I, Charles VI) and the rulers of Brandenburg or Prussia, respectively (Frederick William, Frederick I/III, Frederick II). Thus, for the first time, the importance of art was investigated not only with regard to its value for representing heroization, but as the argumentative foundation of the heroism of rulers.

According to the fundamental hypothesis of the hero of art model, heroization through art represented a rhetorical and aesthetical conveyance of virtue ethics, an aesthetic negotiation of power, and a means of stabilizing sovereignty. In other words, it was a strategy for

¹ Brink, C. 2000: *Arte et Marte*, Munich/Berlin.

² Münkler, H. 1995: *Die Visibilität der Macht und die Strategien der Machtvisualisierung*, in: G. Göhler (ed.), *Macht der Öffentlichkeit – Öffentlichkeit der Macht*, Baden-Baden, pp. 213–230; Rabb, T. K. 1985: *Artists and Warfare: A Study of Changing Values in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, in: *Trans-actions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series Vol. 75, No. 6, pp. 79–106; Stollberg-Rilinger, B. 1997: *Höfische Öffentlichkeit. Zur zeremoniellen Selbstdarstellung des brandenburgischen Hofes vor dem europäischen Publikum*, in: *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preußischen Geschichte* N.F. 7, pp. 145–176.

constructing images of leadership that could establish a ruler's heroism, at least partially, independent of his (of her) actual political and military status. This model of heroes thus conveyed a value system of leadership that propagated the patronage of culture as a heroic habitus pattern. The hero of art thus becomes part of "the topos 'de virtute heroica,' a set of tools out of whose elements different and (in individual aspects) contradictory patterns can be assembled."³ The trend toward an openness of the heroic in the seventeenth century and the dominance of its effect outshined the heroic deed itself, which could be translated into fundamental dispositions (virtue, strength, magnificence).⁴ The heroic structure of the majority of the representations of the art hero was thus not formed through action, but achieved through architectural framing (for example, motifs of triumphal arches, or temples), attributes (the club of Hercules, or a lion fur), and the compositional arrangement of pictorial figures (for example, at the feet of rulers on the throne). These representations were therefore less about heroic deeds and more about the agency and narrative of the ruler-hero. Their appearance and mode of presentation therefore set the parameters through which the heroization and heroism of the art hero were shown. Heroic roles based on a dynasty (Hercules, Apollo) and a cyclical model of history (for example, in the combination of ancient and contemporary outfits) were also employed as apparatuses of ideal leadership that manifested themselves as "good governance" and as overcoming the time (and its negative conditions) through the flowering of the arts. The fundamentally idealized representation of rulers and their status as "fixed heroes" invite questions of credibility and acceptance. However, due to a lack of historical sources (in contrast to the many documented reactions to the statues of Louis XIV), these could only be answered in a very peripheral manner by looking at their appropriations and imitations of, and rivalries with, other rulers. What could be said was that the longevity of these iconographies indicated a rather consensual ruler image that was hardly a source of friction and was either compatible or overlapped with other representations and portrayals (see "prince of peace").

The material collected provided the basis for identifying a series of types of iconography in which the ruler patron was depicted as Apollo or Hercules musagetes at the center of a throne scene, surrounded by the arts paying homage, allegorical attributes, or personifications – or the ruler patron was shown as traveling on the path of virtue to Mount Parnassus, or having already reached the gods of Olympus. This emphasis on a similarity to the gods was far more frequent than an identification with Alexander, whose role the ruler could also assume as a hero of art. The *imitatio heroica* – either through adaptation in a portrait, attributes, or semantic epithets, or through theatrical and religious means of presentation – could function as a compensation, prospectively, or "representatively."

The multifaceted motif of *arte et Marte* became a key theme for the project groups B2, B3, and C2 and resulted in the joint workshop "Krieg, Kunst und Wissen" (War, Art, and Knowledge) (2014). The project group also profited from a lecture by and conversation with Naïma Ghermani on the theme "Der Fürst als Held: Rüstkammer und Porträts in Rüstung in Deutschland (um 1560 – um 1630)" (The Ruler as Hero: Armory and Portraits in Armor in Germany (c. 1560 – c. 1630)) in 2013. In January 2015, a lecture by the project assistant at the workshop "Sammlungen im Spannungsfeld von Gelehrsamkeit, *Meraviglia* und heroischer Repräsentation" (Collections in the Tension between Scholarship, *Meraviglia*, and Heroic Representation) also dealt with the theme of war and peace.

The perspective of the "hero makers" was also discussed in the monograph by the assistant. Furthermore, the heroic potential of collections of art is being put in a larger context in another

³ Disselkamp, M. 2002: Barockheroismus. Konzeptionen politischer Größe in Literatur und Traktatistik des 17. Jahrhunderts, Tübingen, p. 51.

⁴ Disselkamp, M. 2002: Barockheroismus. Konzeptionen politischer Größe in Literatur und Traktatistik des 17. Jahrhunderts, Tübingen.

comprehensive work by the assistant that will continue beyond the project group's duration. This work will profit from the intensive, fruitful, and inspiring conversations with the visiting scholar Prof. Ulrich Heinen in the winter semester 2013/14 and his project "Heroische Körper. Rubens' Anatomiestudien als Beitrag zum heroischen Stil des internationalen Barock" (Heroic Bodies. Rubens' Anatomy Studies as a Contribution to the Heroic Style of the International Baroque).

From an art historical perspective, the theme of the art hero is also conducive to political iconography, which has only recently been revived as a relevant method.⁵ That the focus of the project group's research can also relate to the relationship between rulers and artists was also demonstrated in an evening lecture by the group's assistant at a conference in Wolfenbüttel (2014) on "Fürst und Fürstin als Künstler. Herrschaftliches Künstlertum zwischen Habitus, Norm und Neigung" (Ruler as Artist. Lordly Artistry between Habitus, Norm and Affinity).

Publications by the Project Group

- Posselt-Kuhli, C. 2017: Kunstheld versus Kriegsheld. Heroisierung durch Kunst im Kontext von Krieg und Frieden in der Frühen Neuzeit (Helden – Heroisierungen – Heroismen 7), Würzburg.
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- Posselt-Kuhli, C. 2015: Kunst und Krieg – Semantiken der Inszenierung des „Kunsthelden“ am Beispiel des „Armamentarium heroicum“, in: helden. heroes. héros. E-Journal zu Kulturen des Heroischen 3.2, S. 45–57, DOI: 10.6094/helden.heroes.heros./2015/03/04
- Posselt-Kuhli, C. / Schreurs-Morét, A. [et al.] 2015: Künstlerhelden? Heroisierung und mediale Inszenierung von Malern, Bildhauern und Architekten, Merzhausen.
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- Posselt-Kuhli, C. / Willis, J. 2015: La Gloire du Val-de-Grâce ou l'artiste en héros chez Molière et Pierre Mignard, in: *Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature XLII*, 83, pp. 409–441.
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- Posselt-Kuhli, C. [forthcoming]: Minerva als weibliches Rollenmodell – Antikenrezeption als „imitatio heroica“, in: Baumann, U. / Laureys, M. / Vössing, K. (ed.): *Heroinnen und*

⁵ Erben, D. / Tauber, C. 2016: *Politikstile und die Sichtbarkeit des Politischen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Veröffentlichungen des Zentralinstituts für Kunstgeschichte in München 39), Passau.

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Schreurs-Morét, A. 2016: Vom Gerangel im Künstlerhimmel: Die „Apotheose Joachim von Sandrarts“ (Federzeichnung von 1682), in: Aurnhammer, A. / Bröckling, U. (eds.), Vom Weihegefäß zur Drohne. Kulturen des Heroischen und ihre Objekte (Helden – Heroisierungen – Heroismen 4), Würzburg, pp. 119–144.

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