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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Art Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Autumn, 1968), pp. 27-37

Published by: [College Art Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/775163>

Accessed: 13/06/2012 22:42

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Erwin Panofsky

Wilhelm Vöge: A Biographical Memoir

*Dies haben wir vor den Tieren,
Vor den Göttern voraus:
Unsterbliche wachsen nicht.*

(Vöge)

Who is Wilhelm Vöge? The question was raised in the minds of American readers when Erwin Panofsky's Early Netherlandish Painting appeared in 1953. It was dedicated to Wilhelm Vöge. In 1958 Panofsky answered this question. He published Vöge's scattered essays in Bildhauer des Mittelalters (Berlin: Mann 1958) and prefaced it with the memoir which is here translated.

Wilhelm Vöge was professor of Art History in the University of Freiburg i. Breisgau only from 1908-1916. Panofsky took his doctorate with Vöge in 1914, and kept in touch with him till his death on Dec. 30, 1952. His "Life" of Vöge is based on personal encounters, correspondence and poems Vöge sent him, and on his profound sense of Vöge's value.

The reader senses at once how unusual this piece is among Panofsky's writings in what it tells about himself. His customary sagacity and range of vision is here suffused with a tenderness and warmth which only serves to sharpen his judgment. Time after time come sentences applicable to Panofsky himself: thus what we would say of Panofsky's Early Netherlandish Painting, he says of Vöge's Jörg Syrlin, "it is perhaps the book which comes closest to the often postulated ideal of a total history of art."

The source of Vöge's lack of fame, Panofsky explains, lies largely in his untranslatability. His memoir shares to some extent this quality; all the more credit to him to countenance a translation. "A friend of Vöge is a friend of mine," he said at once when the subject was broached; and read the manuscript with great care and interest and made suggestions to improve its readability no less than its fidelity to the original.

This essay is, so far as I can see, the tenderest and noblest tribute by one great art historian to another.

E. C. H.

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Wilhelm Vöge was born in a decade that produced an astonishing number of art historians, on whose shoulders those of today stand like the dwarves of Bernard of Chartres on the shoulders of the giants:

Emile Mâle was born in 1862,

Karl Giehlow and Adolph Goldschmidt were born in 1863,

Heinrich Wölfflin in 1864,

Bernard Berenson in 1865,

Aby Warburg and Julius von Schlosser in 1866,

Max J. Friedlaender and Campbell Dodgson in 1867.

The names of these men and many of their works are known today in every country. But the name of Wilhelm Vöge even in Germany lives only in a small circle, and in foreign countries (except France, where his love was reciprocated) he is all but forgotten. Cite a study by Vöge to English or American students, and you will have to spell his name; name him as your teacher and you will have to describe who and what he was, though then you may not easily change the subject.

This neglect is explained in part by the simple fact that Vöge retired as early as 1916, at the age of 48, from all public activity, and, as it were, disappeared from the world of the living. But there are also internal reasons. One is his literary style. As certain wines are too sensitive to export, so some authors are untranslatable. Heine is translatable (within limits of basic possibilities), but not Mörike; Musset, but not Verlaine; Balzac and Zola, but neither Fontane nor Stifter. Vöge belongs to the untranslatable. And precisely those of his formulations which will remain with those who have heard or read him defy translation as Daphne refused the embrace of Apollo.

"Die Byzantiner waren Greise, aber sie waren Griechen," he once began a lecture, extemporizing when the screen showed a mid-Byzantine ivory in place of the expected vault of Morienvall (Vöge had picked up the wrong slide box—still they are excellent, let's look at them"). How translate the play on Greise-Griechen? Where is the language that can describe a man of great age with a single word which also alliterates with "Greeks"? (English has only "old man," although it is more dignified than the Italian *vecchio* and the French *vieillard*.) Or—to cite another example: "Das schreitende Stehen—nun wards Wandeln." In what language can one differentiate two forms of relaxed walking—the one bound in meter, the other relaxed in rhythm as in the words: schreiten—wandeln. And how can a sentence of six words be imitated in which four artistic devices—picking up the subject with a pronoun, archaism (*wards* instead of *wurde*), syncope (*wards* for *ward es*), and alliteration—are used with the result a model of pregnant, as well as of natural speech? In Vöge's style, at once poetic and precise, sensitive and witty, creative imagination combines idea

with vision and vision with sound into forms that allow no change. (He was profoundly musical and heard what he wrote, just as he saw what he thought.) It is no accident that his clearest insights often found expression in a poem, his tenderest feelings often in a play on words.

But that Vöge is less "famous" even in his own country than his coevals are, stems from another cause. As his style not only defies translation but even paraphrase, so his scientific method eludes imitation and his professional personality eludes classification. The dimensions of interest and working methods of art historians are usually determined by tendencies which are seldom mutually exclusive but still more rarely completely interfused.

The achievements of Mâle and Giehlow by and large lie in the realm of interpretation of content; Wölfflin's in form analysis; Warburg's (to cite his own words) is an "extension of the limits of art research in substance and space by virtue of which it serves a still unwritten psychology of human expression"; Goldschmidt's in the precise solution of precisely formulated problems and a study of monuments that was at once detailed and comprehensive; Schlosser's in the history of the tradition of art and art literature; Berenson's, Friedlaender's and Campbell Dodgson's in critical connoisseurship.

Vöge's achievement resists such a limitation. As a student at 18 he wrote: "How one descends to the sources—be they codices or works of art—is the secret of all scientific history." And one feels that the sources "sang in his ear." Even his most basic theses grow out of his delving into particulars and not out of generalization; they are "insights," not abstractions—results of what the nominalists opposed to *notitia abstractiva* as *notitia intuitiva*. But precisely because he apprehended every work of art—every piece of music, every poem, and in human intercourse every word and gesture—as a *res se ipsa singularis*, it was all the more necessary for him to contemplate the individual and unique object from every conceivable point of view, in every conceivable light and in all conceivable contexts. Hence his method was as universal as his personal relation to things was individualistic: it combined the connoisseur's sensibility and feeling for the material with the style analyst's interest in form, the exactness of the librarian, paleographer or documentary research man, with the need to interpret of the historian, the psychologist, and the iconologist. Skeptical he was—or to speak with Fontane "rejecting with admiration"—only towards a systematizing or generalizing method which treats the unique work and artist as if they were merely specimens. "Tja, Wölfflin's ihr Heinz," he once said and only he could hit upon the iconoclastic idea of applying this easygoing North German provincialism to the unapproachable man from Basel—"Wölfflin's Henry":

When Wölfflin's *Klassische Kunst* was published, we planted date-kernels, in order to have palms for his entry into Berlin. Then he made his entry; and really,

he is an excellent scholar: only he lacks the *sweetness of the individual*.¹

The peculiar combination of universality and individualism (*Allseitigkeit und Abseitigkeit*), which Vöge expressed as clearly in his thought as in his style, is reflected also in the course of his life. The other great scholars of his period stood either inside or outside the *organized scientific industry*, according to their inclinations and capabilities. But wherever they stood, they stayed: each of them had, so to speak, his geometric locus. Wölfflin and Goldschmidt were and remained university professors; Friedlaender, Schlosser, Campbell Dodgson were and remained museum directors; Mâle, Giehlow, Berenson, and Warburg were and remained private scholars, regardless of administrative, pedagogic or, in Berenson's case, commercial interests. Vöge's career, however, as though fate wanted both to recognize and penalize his multiple capability, fulfilled itself in *peripeteias*. It led him from the university to the museum, from the museum back to the university, and finally into self-chosen "exile" (his own term) in a tiny town in the Harz Mountains. Each transplantation meant a crisis, and each crisis led to inner renewal. But the price was high.

Studies (Hannover, Leipzig, Bonn, Strassburg)

The first five years of his life Vöge spent in his native city, Bremen. Elementary school he attended in Detmold, where his family had settled for about four years. His secondary education he received in the excellent Lyceum II at Hannover, where he made his *matura* in April 1886. He retained all his life the careful, so to speak, well-dressed, speech which is characteristic of the province of Hannover and of the Hansa towns, and which most charmingly contrasted with his very unconventional way of thinking and expressing himself.

Right after his graduation he went to the University of Leipzig. But even then the lectures and seminars of the famous Anton Springer meant less to him than the task Springer assigned to him of putting Springer's "somewhat confused collection of lithographs" in order, and already in his first vacation he was so seduced by the pictures in the Berlin Museum, as to let Leipzig be Leipzig. In the spring of 1887 he went to Bonn for four semesters, and here he decided about his future. Of Bonn he writes: "Carl Justi (not a good teacher, but a heavenly old bachelor, his study papered with books, a charming chamber of antiquities, milk jug, butter dish, ash tray, books and papers, old vases and other heirlooms mixed up in a wild carnival on his desk and cupboard)." In

¹*Translator's note: In conversation Panofsky stressed the high regard in which Vöge and Wölfflin held each other: Wölfflin recommended Vöge's appointment in Freiburg, and Vöge on occasion recommended Wölfflin.*

him Vöge found the most lovable incarnation of the *studiosorum hominum vita*; Henry Thode ("a most charming lecturer, in conversation, of the greatest whimsy and story telling talent") was a still youthful teacher who seems to have treated Vöge more as his colleague than as his student; Paul Clemen "the good comrade-in-arms" (whom Vöge knew from Leipzig) and Aby Warburg were two friends, who remained loyal to him all his life; and Karl Lamprecht, ten years older, author of the *Initialornamentik des Mittelalters*, just shifting at that time from Art History to Economic History, was probably the man who to Vöge was the closest approximation to a mentor.

A group picture of these years in Bonn is worth many a document. It shows the seminar of Thode, then thirty, looking exactly as Vöge described him: "a very elegant gentleman, *comme il faut*, small, of fine build; his passions: art, cigarette, Ulmer Dogge, last but not least 'Daniela.'" Most of the young men (among them Hermann Ullmann, later known for his research on Botticelli and Piero di Cosimo) are to use a phrase of Jean Paul, "without accent." But in two of them one sees marks of genius coupled with those of tragedy. The one is Warburg, saturnine, dark, but sharp and active, standing up in armour to the world and threatened only by his own demon—the other: Vöge, Apolline-light, but introspective and vulnerable, withdrawing from the world, looking upward like a poet.

One day after his twentieth birthday, Feb. 17, 1888, Vöge told his family that under no circumstances would he take the comfortable and undemanding career of a gymnasium professor; he knew that he could live only as an art historian, and he seems to have worked intensively at the time on his doctoral dissertation. For in the autumn of that year we find him—with Clemen—in Munich, where the "material in the Court and State Library most happily suited his purposes" (meaning of course the three manuscripts Cim. 57, 58 and 59, the second of which, the famous "Evangelary of Otto III," forms the very center of his study) and where he remained till the summer of 1889. He finished his work in the spring of 1890, neither in Munich nor in Bonn, but in Strassburg under Hubert Janitschek, under whom Vöge passed his oral exam on Feb. 21, 1891. When he decided to go to Strassburg, it is no longer ascertainable, whether he studied there both semesters of 1889-90 or only the second. All we know is that he saw Aby Warburg again, made friends with the Egyptologist, Wilhelm Spiegelberg, and was given a hard time by his examining professor. "The instructors are charming, on the whole pleasant. But Janitschek hauled me over the coals, especially in architecture."

Vöge's dissertation, *Eine deutsche Malerschule um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends* (published in 1891), was designated by the readers as *libellus amplae eruditione et ingenii acumine conspicuus*. It is more than that. This *libellus*—almost 400 pages, still cited by specialists as "basic" and "penetrating," is not only a model

of *akribia* in style criticism, in historic and iconographic analysis (the footnote about the folding chair, p. 18 ft., has become legendary); it is also a model of exploring the relation between text and picture as well as the phenomena of type transmission and assimilation of motifs; it established, in Vöge's own words, "a higher level of technique arising not from the place, but from the material" and "a real connoisseurship even in this early art."

For the first time a large number of significant, hitherto unrelated, manuscripts was brought together as a "school," and it is of secondary importance that the center of this workshop, long designated as "Vöge's school of painting," which he first was inclined to seek in Cologne, then in Trier, was removed ten years later to Reichenau. The point is that for the first time it was possible to gain "a picture of the life and work" of such a school and especially to prove that the family resemblance of the individual manuscripts was based for the most part not on a direct relation "between one manuscript and another" but on the presence of "a body of material and sketches serving the transmission of motifs." ("There were pattern books" is the lapidary last sentence of the *Libellus*.) For the first time—and today, two generations later, this seems the most significant result—the patient research into "often only tiny problems and tasks" yielded a clear insight into the Ottonian period of art as a phenomenon *sui generis* and *sui juris*, and especially, an ultimately valid definition of its style of painting in contrast to Romanesque and Gothic:

The contour merely separates [the colored parts among themselves] it does not delimit them. Thus we find the garments not at all surrounded by black contours, as they appear regularly in the book painting of the High Middle Ages; only where the garment is adjacent to the nude parts executed in flesh color (in the cut-out neck and sleeves and where the feet stick out from the garment) does this [contour] appear.

It can't be expressed better, nor has it been expressed better since.

Wanderjahre (France and Italy)

With the publication of his dissertation, whose factual significance and linguistic originality was recognized at once, Vöge at 23 had proved himself a master in the study of manuscripts and since the preface announced a "series of further essays on the art history of the 10th century," it was to be expected that he would restrict his activity for some time to the field of his first work. But this was not so. Except for a few shorter articles and reviews, which are addenda and corrigenda rather than new starts, Vöge never came back to pre-Romanesque book illumination. His further labors were essentially devoted to the study of High and Late Medieval sculpture, and one may surmise that this reorientation is immediately connected with the impressions that Vöge received in Strassburg.

Neither in Leipzig nor in Bonn or Munich had he had occasion to see really significant post-classical sculpture. In Strassburg, the Münster alone—not to mention other buildings, collections, and the surroundings—displayed before his eyes the unfolding of medieval sculpture from the turn of the twelfth down to the sixteenth century, in the most beautiful examples to be found in Germany. Many years later he dedicated a beautiful sonnet to the Ecclesia- and Synagogue group in Strassburg, and he was always drawn back to Nicolaus Gerhaert and “Niclas Hagnowar.” But first, in keeping with his motto, “he went down to the sources.” After his year of military service (during which he read the proof of his *Deutsche Malerschule*) he went for the first time to France.

This stay was decisive; it lasted more than two years, and made him intimately familiar with the art, language and spirit of France, made him friends with Adolph Goldschmidt, and acquainted with such eminent French scholars as Gaston Maspéro, Eugène Müntz, Camille Enlart, Paul Vitry, Albert Marignan, and the “vehement Courajod”; the result was his second *opus majus*: *Die Anfaenge des monumentalen Stiles im Mittelalter* (published in 1894.)

This second book, whose theme by the summer of 1892 was fixed—at least to the extent of taking “Chartres as its point of departure” is no less accurate, learned, inexhaustible in new observations, and successful in discovering the connections of schools, than the first. But it is more readable, more disciplined and more inspired—not only *amplissima eruditione et ingenii acumine conspicuus*, but also if one might say so *compositionis elegantia et sermonis nitore effulgens*. In part this comes from no longer dealing with manuscripts (in this field the word is always in danger of being drowned in an ocean of library call numbers and folio numbers) but from the fact that Vöge had found himself. “I inaugurate a new life. All misery is lifted from me, to speak with the prophet. My real ‘period of genius’ commences.” Thus he had written in charming self-irony, but only half in jest, to his mother the day after his doctoral examination. His second book is really “full of genius”—insofar as it contains insights whose validity is independent of all facts.

The first of these insights—so basic that one is apt to forget to whom we owe it—it is that the Gothic draped figure not so much stands as floats or sways (“in their entire length grown together with their shaft, these statues, with their feet on fragile consoles, sway between heaven and earth”) and that it has “not in any wise entered into the service of the architecture, but merely seems to have fled into its protection.”

The second insight is that the masters of the Royal Portal at Chartres already had a “personal relation to nature” and that their capability of “reawakening a traditional configuration to new life,” shows not only in their physical appearance, but also in psychological expression (an observation recently developed further by Wilhelm

Köhler²). What is new here [i.e., in contrast to the figures at Arles]

is not the portrait character, the physiognomy, but the lively, typical beauty, the masters’ sense for the law of living form; the youthful feeling for life which is, as it were, at the cutting edge of their chisels. How the expression of the heads has changed in their hands! In place of the senile grumpiness, the melancholy distraction, the violent self-restraint, there appears the powerful tension of masculine energy, the impeccable male [evidently a writing error for female] beauty, the laughter of youth The bodies tell us the same The modeling of the breast and body is flat, but not like a board, without understanding. . . . The hands and feet are of a soft, living roundness.

The third—and most important—thing Vöge has taught us is that the style most beautifully represented by the Royal Portal at Chartres signifies not the end of Romanesque, but the beginning of Gothic art: that the figures on the pillars as they stand before us at Chartres are not “herm-like, frozen forms of tradition, but the witnesses of a complete change.”

Always taken from a rectangularly shaped wedge-stone placed diagonally, and in arm and attribute seeking to keep as it were in touch with the surface of the stone these figures nonetheless have become genuine statues “worked free from the shaft connected with them,” different in kind from what preceded them, but only in degree from what comes after:

How numerous are the threads that tie this older great school to the later Gothic! The principles of arrangement, both in decorating the individual portal, and in unifying it into a system, subsequently remain the same How long the jamb statue has been retained after this! The shaft loses in importance as compared to the figure, but is still present. It becomes a stand, but it is still there. Even if the statue, released from the pillar, has found its place in a niche of the wall as an independent figure, this was nothing but the final development of principles announced already in the older school, viz., on the one hand, of integrating the figures more completely with the architecture than had been the case at Chartres, and, on the other hand, of giving it a more monumental base.

In short, this older school

formed not only the foundation, but the first floor of the grand structure of medieval statuary in France towering far above all others In attracting the most important artistic energies on Gallic soil, combining and fusing the forms and figures of the Southern prov-

² W. Köhler, “Byzantine Art in the West,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, I, 1941, p. 95 f.

inces with the architectonic tendencies, the decorative capability, the independent vision of nature peculiar to the Northern [provinces], it raises itself above all older Romanesque schools of France and thereby of medieval Europe.

In comparison with these insights which are still valid today—later summed up in the splendid sentence “the further development brought the flowering of the bud-like art of Chartres . . . into classic greatness,”—it matters little whether Etampes is earlier or later than Chartres; whether the main sources for the treasure of motifs of the new proto-Gothic style are to be sought in Languedoc, in Provence, or in Burgundy (essential is that all these sources are “Southern,” i.e., in root and being they belong to Mediterranean art); or whether the sculptures of Arles are subsequent to those of Chartres instead of being their models, as Vöge assumed. Precisely the fact that according to the present-day view, which is presumably correct (though the case is not closed and a reopening is said to be in the offing), the chronological relations between the two special cases, Arles and Chartres, is the reverse of what Vöge believed it to be, makes his insight into the stylistic development all the more admirable. Even if the Royal Portal of Chartres preceded the facade of Saint Trophime by a generation rather than a mere decade, even then the monument that is more recent in time would remain the older in style, and the one that is older in time would not only remain the more recent in style, but—and this is the decisive point—the revelation of a new principle of art. Regardless of all questions of dating and dependence, Vöge has established, once and for all, what the nature of the new style—i.e., the Gothic in contrast to the Romanesque—really is, and when and where it first appears.

His preface to *Anfaenge des monumentalen Stiles* bears the date: “Rome May 1894.” After conquering France, so to speak, Vöge had gone to Italy and he returned only at the beginning of 1895. The early spring he spent in Florence, where Adolph Goldschmidt (“dear Adolph-David” Vöge had baptized him because of his work on the Utrecht Psalter and the Albani-Psalter) proved a good guide to the collections as well as to “cheap and good trattorie.” Late spring and summer—the latter, as always in Italy, much too hot—Vöge spent in Rome; autumn and winter—the latter, as always in Italy, much too cold,—especially in the smaller cities of Tuscany (including Siena, Lucca and Pisa); New Year’s Eve again in Florence.

Many of the new impressions pouring into Vöge came from “travel acquaintances with whom I am at last in immediate contact.” But soon he shifted from reception to production. By July he is engaged on a “paper about the style of Michelangelo” and by September he is turning over in his mind a plan for a “little book.”

This little book, printed in 1896, is Vöge’s *Raphael*

und Donatello, a new example of his uncanny gift for drawing out of facts then either insufficiently known, or differently evaluated, conclusions that are far-reaching and indisputably correct. The newest and most monumental of all Donatello books concludes its discussion of the reliefs on the high altar at Padua: “What Wilhelm Vöge said about their effect on the *Stanze* may be incorrect in detail, but remains true in principle: the *Miracles of S. Anthony* are the true ancestors of the *Mass of Bolsena*, the *Expulsion of Heliodorus*, and the *Burning of the Borgo*.”³

The basic significance of this insight—the insight that “*abyssus abyssum invocat*,” of which the revision of the “classic” Cinquecento to Donatello and Masaccio is only an especially significant example—is expressed in the unforgettable closing sentences, which sound especially prophetic today when the idea of continuity in all sciences must be revised in favor of the principle of complementarity:

The idea of the organic development of art and our interpretation of genius are not, I think, in conflict. For it is precisely in the greatest minds that the evolution presents itself; the others hardly count. Over the heads of the rest these hand each other in golden vessels the inspiring drink.

The “paper about Michelangelo” was never published, possibly because Vöge’s relation to Michelangelo was too personal for him to set it down “in cold print,” as the excellent English expression goes. But its theme is known, and this knowledge justifies the assumption that here too Vöge intuitively anticipated the results of newer and newest results: Michelangelo and the Pisani. He seems to have seen at the end of the past century what only the next generation was first to proclaim: that Michelangelo not only, as Vasari already knew, looked back beyond the Late Quattrocento to the Early Quattrocento, but also—and especially in his way of reacting upon classical antiquity—harked back, across the entire 15th century, to the very founders of the Renaissance movement.

The theme “Michelangelo and the Pisani” was the subject Vöge chose for his inaugural lecture in Strassburg. Georg Dehio, since 1892 Janitschek’s successor, recognized Vöge’s significance at an early date. He reviewed very favorably *Die Anfaenge des monumentalen Stiles* and seems (to judge from a letter by Vöge of Dec. 12, 1894) to have suggested his habilitation. Vöge’s inaugural address was given May 4, 1896. But his first lecture course significantly dealt with “French Sculpture,” and before the semester began, Vöge had gone to France again, this time especially to Reims. “I would like to devote an essay to the sculpture here,” he wrote to his sister March 18; and

³ H. W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, Princeton, 1957, II, p. 187.

how he kept this promise to himself the reader of this book⁴ can see from his essays about "Gothic Drapery and Movement," "Gothic Rhythm," the "Pathfinders of Nature Study about 1200," and "The Sculpture of Bamberg Cathedral." The cathedral of Reims—"the monument" he called it—never ceased to occupy him, and in his last publication ("Donatello greift ein reimsisches Motif auf," *Festschrift fuer Hans Jantzen*, Berlin, 1951, p. 117 ff.) he reverted to it as if to take farewell.

Berlin

Vöge's teaching in Strassburg lasted only two or three semesters. As early as Nov. 5, 1897, the newspapers reported his being called to the Berlin Museums, where he took up his official duties in the following year. The person who called him (after having made contact with him during his work on the *Anfaenge des monumentalen Stiles*) and was to become his man of destiny, was Wilhelm Bode.

To give up a promising university career in favor of an assistant to the director of a museum was then—and probably is now—unusual. It meant a shift from relative independence to fitting into a bureaucratic hierarchy and abandoning a way of life that may not always be "free as Arcadia" yet is, on the whole, "more free from peril than the envious court." Vöge, however, even as a young student attracted by the Berlin pictures more forcibly than by the Leipzig lectures, could not resist Bode's fatal magnetism—the less so, since he was, after writing three books within a few years, in a state of exhaustion which he, like many productive natures, was inclined to regard as stagnation. Historian and research man though he was, he was no less an art lover than a scholar and welcomed the prospect of a more immediate relation to the objects than is possible to the "academic man."

The academic person is seldom permitted to live with the things as one lives with one's own household goods. He is tempted, and as a teacher, to a degree obliged, to place the individual work of art in "contexts" and "developmental processes" instead of putting himself in relation to its uniqueness; and as far as the individual artists are concerned, he is inclined either to concentrate on the "great masters" or, taking the opposite course, to concentrate his interests upon certain personalities, schools or "spheres of influence" primarily because he would like to be able to say, like every small-town person of a window in the local courthouse, "This hole is my hole."

The museum man, however, as custodian and compiler of inventories, has the obligation to treat each object entrusted to his care with equal respect—and yet, as

connoisseur and collector, he has the right to fall in love with it. During his "museum period" Vöge availed himself of this personal right as enthusiastically as he fulfilled his official obligation faithfully.

In 1900, only two years after entering the "Section for Christian Sculpture," Vöge published his *Beschreibung der mittelalterlichen Elfenbeinwerke* prepared for by a short research trip to Constantinople, and in 1910 a work three times as large, his *Beschreibung der deutschen Bildwerke und die der andern cisalpinen Laender*, a masterpiece of cataloguing which in a revision twenty years later could be supplemented, but neither corrected nor essentially changed. In addition he devoted himself not merely to the continuation of earlier studies, but to the working out and the preparing of many new ones. From his own point of view, perhaps the most important result of his years in Berlin was that his familiarity with the individual object sanctioned what was, as it were, slumbering in him since his student days and encouraged him to the discovery, exploration, and loving appreciation of such masters as, with few exceptions, he would hardly have reckoned among the "greatest" at the time of his *Raphael und Donatello*, masters who nevertheless possessed in special measure, what he himself later called "the sweetness of the individual." Of this kind are those artists (all of them sculptors) towards whom Vöge began to turn in his "museum period" and to whom he later added other more or less kindred spirits: the "powerful" (as Dürer would have called him) Ottonian ivory carver to whom we owe the Thomas diptych in Berlin; the charming master of the Oppenheim Madonna; the tender but forceful Konrad Meit of whom Dürer wrote "he had seen none his like"; the incomparable Nicolaus Gerhaert von Leyen; the "manly" Niclas Hagnowar; the brooding Anton Pilgram; and at the very last Jörg Syrlin whom Vöge truly brought back to life.

Thus the ten years Vöge spent in the service of the Berlin Museums belong actually and potentially to the most fruitful and probably also to the happiest of his existence. He had his mother come to live with him, led an immensely industrious but rewarding life, above all because of the rich musical life of the great city; and even the Prussian officials' naive superiority which he encountered on occasion among his colleagues, amused him more than it annoyed him. He used to tell with pleasure how Oskar Wulff, who was distinguished not only by inclinations to theorizing but also, by a gorgeous Baltic accent, and whom Vöge had asked for a book about perspective and its history, handed him a little elementary introduction meant for industrial art students and remarked: "For your needs that might do (Das dierfte fier Ihre Zwecke jeniejen)."

But at the end of these good years came a tragedy Vöge never got over: his quarrel with Bode. Despite the almost unbounded veneration he gave to this man—and never denied him regardless of bitter experience—it was

⁴ *Wilhelm Vöge, Bildhauer des Mittelalters. This book contains the complete bibliography of Vöge's works and also Panofsky's footnotes to this memoir of which only two are incorporated in this translation.* Translator's note.

written in the stars that there must come a break between the domineering and unscrupulous condottiere nature of the “well-known director general” and the vulnerable “assistant” who wanted sympathy but was not susceptible to pressure. What led to this breach, presumably nobody knows today, but it is certain that Vöge after ten years of service and immediately after completion of his monumental catalogue in 1908 (published only in 1910, Bode’s preface is dated 1909) was not promoted to the curator of his section, but passed over in favor of Karl Koetschau, who by comparison was quite insignificant. There was only one answer: immediate resignation. It was no wonder that such an experience permanently shattered the nervous system of a man, who had, when still in school, described himself as “somewhat sensitive” and had always suffered from “moodiness” and “spells of weariness.” Intellectually and psychically Vöge mastered this experience. Noble and loyal as he was (“against the *πάντα ἂν ῥεῖ* of the philosopher,” he wrote in a letter Jan. 3, 1948, “we have a dam in loyalty: in the human capability of putting ourselves at any possible moment in any possible place, and thus also into that which has gone by”), he was able to look back upon his relation to Bode in a sonnet in which there was no trace of bitterness; what remained was sorrow, gratitude, and understanding.

Bode und ich

*Wie ein Gebirge, das, in klaren Zügen
Von eines Meisters Händen ausgehauen,
Die Ferne schön verschweben macht im Blauen,
Standst lang du vor mir jenseits aller Rügen.*

*Lang zagte ich ob meinem Ungenügen,
Wagte von ferne nur dich anzuschauen.
Da riefst du mich aus meines Lebens Stauen
Zu deiner Fülle, deiner Frische Krügen.*

*An schroffen Wänden klomm ich nun empor,
Genoss, als dein Gehülfe, deine Weite,
Erkannte des Gebirge’s hart Gesicht.*

*Ich stieg zu steil; verlor das Gleichgewicht,
Stürzte hinab.—Nun gürtet dein Gebreite
Auf’s neu die Ferne mir in blauem Flor.*

Freiburg

Whatever Bode’s reasons for his action, in one respect it was a *felix culpa*: had he behaved differently, Vöge hardly would have found his way back to the university, and he never would have, as he expressed it, “joined up with youth.” Pushed out of his place at the museum, he accepted, in the same year of 1908, a call to Freiburg-im-Breisgau to a chair in Art History especially set up for him. He took up his duties the following year.

In Freiburg, Vöge had to “begin at the beginning”—to use a pretty English phrase—: “When we appeared on the scene, there was, so to speak, nothing here but thirty volumes of the *Repertorium* and a bust of Schiller.” But

in amazingly short time he had not only raised the chair at Freiburg to one of the most highly respected in Germany (in 1914 he declined a call to Frankfurt), but he had also assembled a collection of photographs, periodicals and books—especially publications of drawings—which was eminently usable and had a very special atmosphere.

The seminar for Art History at that time was housed in the Bertholdstrasse, running along a clear little stream, in the so-called “Old Library”: a long, unadorned, yellow-brown Baroque building with rust-red roof tiles, which now, as Vöge wrote later, “has been leveled to the ground or rather pounded into it.” The seminar room itself was very long, and each of the older students sat, like Dürer’s Saint Jerome, at a window table placed at right angles to the wall, from which he could observe in summer the life of flowers and insects in a rustic garden. Far in the back a small creaking stair led to Vöge’s *sanctum*, which he could reach only by passing, morning mail in hand (there were no assistants or secretaries) all of these window-tables. I shall never forget, how on one such occasion he held up a dainty letter, still unopened, like the oriflamme, and called to me in passing: “She calls me Paul!” Much later “she” turned out to be a lady student, who wanted to study in Freiburg, and did for one or two semesters, though Vöge never forgave her the “Paul.”

Altogether Vöge accepted, as far as can be ascertained, fourteen doctoral dissertations. The number seems low; but in view of his policy of turning away rather than attracting candidates and the fact that all those promotions were crowded into the years from 1910 to 1915/16, it is remarkably high. More remarkable, however, is the variety of the papers in subject and in character. Vöge was not the one to “give” his students “themes,” let alone restrict them to certain fields or methods. Always ready to point out interesting problems and to help with counsel and criticism, he was no less ready to let students go their own ways and to withhold his judgment till their work was done. Therefore there never was a Vöge-school in the same sense as there was a Goldschmidt-, Wölfflin-, Clemen-, or a Vienna-school. There was only Vöge the teacher and—without his wanting or knowing it—Vöge the mentor. No one knows this better than the writer who, matriculated as *studiosus juris* in his first semester, was taken by an older, initiated friend—Kurt Badt, whose kind act remains unforgotten—to a lecture by Vöge about Dürer’s *Rosenkranzfest* and the drawings connected with it; “*et confestim ceciderunt ab oculis ejus tamquam squamae.*”⁵

The following dissertations were accepted by Vöge and are printed (some titles refer to the “Teildruck” which was to be made available to the University).

⁵ Translator’s note: *This sentence and the subsequent paragraph are taken over from Panofsky’s footnotes 47 and 46.*

Dr. jur. Ignaz Beth, *Die Baumzeichnung in der deutschen Graphik des XV. u. XVI. Jahrhunderts*. Strassburg 1910.

Alfred Kuhn, *Die Illustration des Rosenromans*, Freiburg, 1910.

Hans Rupe, *Beitraege zum Werk Hans Burgkmairs des Aelteren*, Borna 1912.

Friedrich Winkler, *Der Meister van Flemalle und Rogier van der Weyden; Studien und Untersuchungen zu ihren Werken und zu ihrer Entwicklung*, Strassburg, 1913.

Kurt Badt, *Grundlagen zu einer kritischen Biographie des Malers Andrea Solario*, Leipzig, 1913.

Erich v.d.Bercken, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Farbengebung in der venezianischen Malerei*, Parchim, 1914.

Helmuth Theodor Bossert, *Der ehemalige Hochaltar in Unserer Lieben Frauen Pfarrkirche zu Sterzing in Tirol*, Innsbruck, 1914.

Johannes Neuber, *Ludwig Juppe, ein Marburger Plastiker am Ausgang des Mittelalters*, Marburg, 1914 und 1915.

Ludwig Thormälen, *Der Ostchor des Trierer Domes; Ein Kapitel aus der Architekturgeschichte der ehemaligen Kirchenprovinz Trier im 12. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1914.

Erwin Panofsky, *Die theoretische Kunstlehre Albrecht Dürers* (Dürers Ästhetik), Berlin, 1915.

Walther Greischel, *Die sächsisch-thüringischen Lettner des 13. Jahrhunderts; Eine Untersuchung ueber die Entstehung und die Herkunft ihrer Typen*, Magdeburg, o.J. [1914].

Walter Lehmann, *Die Parabel von den klugen und toerichten Jungfrauen; Eine ikonographische Studie mit einem Anhang ueber die Darstellungen der andern Parabeln Christi*, Berlin, 1916.

Dorothea Stern, *Adam Kraft*, Strassburg, 1916.

To be added is a dissertation that was never published, but was especially valued by Vöge himself (letter of Aug. 17, 1951). It was accepted in 1914; the author—well remembered by the writer—seems to have fallen in World War I: Heinrich Schwab, *Beitrage zur Ornamentik Albrecht Dürers*.

As his students in Freiburg knew Vöge, he was a man in his forties, very much the gentleman, betraying both in figure and gesture the former light-cavalry man (he had served in the Braunschweig Death's Head Husars). He was one of those who long look younger than they are, so that strangers, when he opened the door of the seminar, begged him to announce them to "the Professor." And he kept into old age his charming smile, reflecting both a skeptically superior humor and—I know no other term—a childlike innocence. Only his eyes showed that he slept little.

He lived, as in Berlin, with his mother, and many of his qualities—or, if one prefers, eccentricities—may have had their course in his never having known his father or his father's father, but having as child and as student always lived in a prevailingly feminine environment. Among his peculiarities—along with a characteristic distaste for the first person singular, which caused him to speak of himself as "we" or "Vöge"—was a pronounced hypersensitivity of all sense organs ("we wanted to squeeze his connoisseur's hand," he once said of a particularly unsympathetic colleague, "but all we had was five warm little sausages") and a frightening courtesy in dealing with ladies. Members of the seminar in the summer semester of 1914 will recall with pleasure a scene that was enacted when a young, pretty and very elegant American lady, who, like many summer visitors, wanted to have heard all the Freiburg greats, came by mistake into Vöge's privatisimum and took a seat in the first row. Any one else would have pointed out her error and advised her to attend the regular lecture. Vöge could never have done that. Without taking any notice of the young lady, though perhaps inspired by her presence, he quietly began a discussion on the Freiburg Foolish Virgins; then suddenly he turned to her and asked, with a slight bow, "Gnädiges Fräulein, would you be so good, when was Dürer born?" Whereupon she fled.

Vöge and his mother lived in a kind of patrician style, with beautiful furniture and a "bric-a-brac of small bronzes, and little specimens"—which incidentally, included a "little Madonna with hand on cheek" now in the possession of the Freiburg Art History Seminar: "Paris, beginning of 13th century, bought on the Ile de Paris, which she perhaps had never left." Even the Mid-Victorian reception room, which Vöge himself never took seriously ("Please be seated on the red plush!") had dignity and charm. It was a hospitable but not sociable house, for Vöge was too much himself to fit into any group.

Vöge was no more a typical professor than he had been a typical museum official. Of his colleagues the only ones who were close to him were those who stood apart, as unconventional citizens of the world, men like Walter Friedlaender whom he had invited to establish himself as a *privatdozent*, the Romanist, Otto Lenel, the very intelligent university librarian, Emil Jacobs. Most of the others found his gloomy spells uncanny, his allusions and "apercus" (a favorite term of his) too subtle, his little malicious asides ("tja, if one has gotten that important . . .") not always intelligible. What could one do with a colleague, who started a semi-official letter, with "What I wanted to say,"—and who answered a quite official request from a ministry of education, inquiring whether a certain art historian deserved a call to a certain chair, in this way: "since X is professor in A, there is no reason why Y should not be named professor in B" ("and then he got there")?

All the more beautiful and free was Vöge's relation to his students. He gave them all he had missed in his own student days; above all he never held back his own ideas and discoveries "as quite often far more important scholars, for example, old Justi, did, who were quite unscrupulous about taking their young listeners' time without telling them anything." Vöge's young listeners knew or felt what he had to offer them. They have kept the sound of his voice, as it says in the Makamen of Hariri, "in unshakableness" in their hearts.

In his lectures all that distinguished Vöge's writings was heightened and transfigured by the magic of his living speech, his smile, his witty improvisations. He prepared them most carefully, but the pains he took were recognizable only in the incredibly rich, detailed references to earlier literature, which were enough to last for a lifetime. As soon as Vöge really began to "talk,"—be it on Gothic architecture and sculpture, on Dürer, on the beginnings of Early Netherlandish painting (one of "his better" lecture series, he who was never satisfied with himself, would recall forty years later)—the energy he had spent on preparation turned into sheer light. In the presence of the object, even though it appeared only on the screen, there was renewed in him, if one may say so, the bliss of a first encounter, but never was emotion allowed to win out against the intellect. To give a characteristic example: while Vöge was summing up the development of the Gothic capital, he recalled the *Formprobleme der Gotik* by Wilhelm Worringer which had recently appeared—a book which he of course could not agree with, but still found strangely disturbing and which he often mentioned privately without ever discussing it in class. He first described how the variegated Romanesque capital forms were crowded out by the relatively uniform but very original and meaningful bud-capital ("tender and firm at once, like the young Gothic style itself"), and then he went on about as follows:

But soon the bud would open and the uniformity give way to an infinite variety. Ivy, wineleaves, colt's foot, cress—have you ever eaten cold chicken with *cresson* in Paris?—all the modest plants of the kitchen garden were permitted to spread themselves on the majestic system of Reims. This art a recent author calls "abstract."

In his seminar, Vöge preferred discussion to formal presentation; his students learned more from him, and he learned more about them, if no paper intervened. And where criticism became necessary, it was clothed in charming irony, never insulting but always to the point: "You know the terminology—I almost think you know it too well"; or "you think intelligently, like the Greeks—omitting all the connecting links."

Even as examiner he remained the *buon maestro* (the "holde Meister," he would have translated it), who

knew the strong and weak points of his students better than they did themselves. Far from "hauling his doctorends over the coals," he let them know that once the dissertation was accepted the oral exam need not be taken tragically. He forbade them to work for it the day before, and ordered instead a farewell climb of the Münster.

The duties of his Freiburg professorship left Vöge little time for literary activity; even the publication of his famous inaugural lecture, "The Pathfinders of Nature Study about 1200" was delayed for several years. The return into the Southwest German territory brought him abundant impressions and suggestions, awakening to new life and enriching his Strassburg memories and his museum experiences, but immediately crystallized only in part. The Freiburg Münster gave him material for a fine essay published in 1915; the neighborhood of Strassburg and Colmar had been felt two years before (1913) in a first rewarding essay about Nicolaus Gerhaert and Nicolaus von Hagenau. But it was more important than Vöge's long stay in the center of a circle including Ulm and Konstanz, gave direction to his entire future production. Except for the essays on Donatello and Reims all his later works, among them the two books about Niclas Hagnower and Jörg Syrlin, dealt with the sculpture of the Alsatian-Upper Rhine-Swabian sphere.

Ballenstedt

The years in Freiburg, like those in Berlin, ended in a catastrophe; this one the more severe, as it came from the inside. At the outbreak of World War I Vöge had reached the age that is in itself dangerous for fragile natures. Students and doctors-designate were scattered to the winds. One of his most gifted art historians, Ernst Mörder, fell in 1915. And for a patriotic man, who in his youth had composed sonnets on Bismarck and later was to dedicate a book to the memory of two war victims (one of them Mörder), but who also was second to none in his familiarity with French art and language, the very thought of a German-French war must have been heartrending. The picture of the Cathedral of Reims in flames—*his* cathedral—pursued Vöge for a long time in his dreams.

All this led to a new and long nervous disturbance causing a catastrophic insomnia, so that Vöge as a "man without sleep" decided in 1916 to resign his professorship. He sought health in a sanatorium, which not only did not improve his condition, but, as he wrote more than 30 years later, became "the most terrible experience of his life":

I was brought to the condition of an animal that has gotten into a trap, a condition in which one can neither live nor die and from which there is no other way out than that, which the Stoics recommend.

What helped him, so far as he could at that time be helped, was the sea. It strengthened him physically, nour-

ished his imagination with images, and most important, it revealed itself to him as a symbol of fate, as a simile of the same powers, playing unfeelingly with their creatures, which, he thought, had destroyed him. A beautiful poem, not by accident “approximating antique form” gives moving expression to this modd.

Am Strande

Rückwärts flutende See, Bildnis des ebbenden Lebens,

Eh' auf den Sand du es setzt, spielst du mit dem Geschöpf.

Spielt immer wieder ihm zu die frische, seidige Welle,

Sprühst ihm, Grausame, noch etliche Tropfen des Glücks.

Und es wiegt sich hoffend noch einmal dem Leben entgegen,

Das, berauschenden Zugs, es aus dem Busen dir sog; Bis du, hinter dir lassend ein Zwerggemäuer von Muscheln,

Tang und Holz, entschwebst, ihm noch zu gleissen von fern.

Und das wie eine Rose geblüht in smaragdenen Wellen,

Auf dem geriefelten Sand liegt es mit glasigem Blick.

That Vöge had found it possible thus to apprehend his fate and master it poetically, meant that he was on the way to overcome it. He found the strength to begin his life anew a third time. But it was a life in solitude. The scene of this new life was Ballenstedt: a county seat (Kreisstadt) with a charming location at the northeast foot of the Harz Mountains with excellent air (Vöge has withdrawn into a climate”), a few good old houses and a Baroque castle rising on a bluff, which contained a small library and a few collections, and from whose park one enjoyed a beautiful view of a countryside full of fruit trees and flowers.

In this idyllic—too idyllic—little town, whose population seemed to consist primarily of retired military officers, Vöge hid from the world. The first nine or ten years, during which he published not a line (which does not mean that he did not work) were the hardest. The more he recuperated physically, the more he began to feel his existence in “Ballenstedt an der Getel” as a “blind alley,” even a “captivity,” from which he was unable to free himself. His friends and former students visited him, as often as it was possible for them and seemed desirable to him, and on such occasions found him as kind, malicious, and witty as ever. But he resisted all attempts to lure him to freedom with private or official invitations. He suffered from a sort of geographic agoraphobia, which kept him from venturing beyond Gernrode, Quedlinburg, or Halberstadt, and at most permit-

ted him to seek on the estate of his sister not far from Hannover what he wittily called “the diversions of country life.” Even when he had (about 1924 or 1925) spontaneously uttered a desire to escape his isolation Ballenstedt for a while, and when, with the help of his old friend Aby Warburg, preparations had been made for a stay in beautiful Blankenese, his luggage had to be unpacked and his ticket returned at the last moment. Towards the end of the twenties a noticeable improvement set in. In 1927—strangely the year his mother died, July 9—Vöge published the essay about Konrad Meit and Anton Pilgram, with which his *ultima maniera* began. In 1930, for the first time since the Berlin catalogues, he published a real book, *Niclas Hagnower* (he had mentioned it in a letter of February 7, 1928 as a “work about the Early Works of the Isenheimer,” already in preparation); and then, in quick succession, the essays on the Strassburg epitaph of Nicolaus Gerhaert von Leyen (1930), the Berlin Sebastian group (1931) and the works of sculpture produced by German Medalists (1932). Soon he was able to break out of the magic circle that had banned him to Ballenstedt and its surroundings, and to undertake new research trips to his beloved South Germany. A preliminary result was the essay on the master of the count of Kirchberg (published in 1938); then the definitive, his last and grandest work, the book about Jörg Syrlin, which could only be published in 1950.

Vöge once called himself the “man of intervals.” But for the interval between 1938 and 1950 he could not have held himself responsible. In 1933 National Socialism had come to power—“the philosophy of brain softening we ran after”—and this led with inexorable necessity to a second world war, which Vöge, as a sonnet against Hitler shows, anticipated with terrifying clearness.

The outcome of the war gave Vöge at the age of 77 two blows, which might have broken many younger and more robust men: his Syrlin book, already in print, was destroyed by fire during the occupation of Berlin; and he himself, in what he later called half jokingly the occupation of Ballenstedt, became subject to the communist regime that was set up in East Germany.

His living quarters were so cold that in order to warm up a bit, he had to run about his dining table “like a wild animal” (a situation characteristically recalling to his mind the “Circulez, Messieurs” of the Parisian *agents de police*). There was almost nothing to eat, his little three-room apartment was occupied for months by eight persons: a young husband with dropsy, who died in Vöge’s house and whose wife meanwhile gave birth to a second child; two eternally whimpering little girls; a second woman with another little girl; and “another lady in the bathroom.”

Many a more robust person would have broken down under these circumstances. But in Vöge, as so often in finely organized natures, the utmost sensitivity was

combined with that quality—the quality of the Toledo blade—which can best be described as “resilience”; and he succeeded in mastering all his troubles.

In overcoming cold and hunger (relieved somewhat by supplementary rations allowed him as scholar, and by packages, for which he “avenged” himself with carefully selected return gifts) he was aided by considering, “that a thought which has long troubled us has become a reality, the wish dream that even to the poorest boy the way must be open to the fulfillment of his inmost calling.” And the misery of sharing his quarters he overcame, *mirabile dictu*, with *Verseschmieden*, hammering out verses:

In trying to describe in some sonnets the situation I was in, I got calm. When the sonnets were done, I had gained the feeling that the whole business *now* no longer concerned me.

Nevertheless he longed for freedom. He planned to move to the West Zone, and a number of younger friends and admirers tried to smooth his way. But it was not to be.

As far as the Syrlin book was concerned, Vöge managed, in defiance of all tricks of fate, to publish it in 1950. He fortunately had saved duplicates of the first proofs. With unspeakable trouble he succeeded in reassembling the photographic material and in reconstructing a text that was brought to Berlin “in relays”; here loyal friends, especially Erich Meyer and Friedrich Winkler—*olim discipulus, semper perenne amicus*—supervised the printing which paper rationing and bureaucratic regulations made discouragingly difficult. But the possibility of completing the wearisome preparations in Ballenstedt—as the possibility of carrying on any research at all during the postwar period—this Vöge owed to the fact that even in old age it was given to him to find a new friend (one might almost say a disciple), who was devoted to him with the enthusiasm of youth, and who remained loyal to him to the end, even beyond the end. This was Dr. Friedrich Bellmann, who transferred in 1947 from Freiburg to Halle and there served in the Denkmalamt; Vöge called him his ἀγγελος, not merely as the “messenger” who fetched the necessary books (including “volumes *in folio*” from Halle and Leipzig, but also as the “gracious helper” who stood by him as the angel stood by the evangelist Matthew.

As if by a miracle the Syrlin book was thus preserved to posterity. The “second volume” of a work that was to have three parts is, if you will, a torso. But it is a torso which, like that of the satyr by Praxiteles in the Louvre, still appears as something complete and perfect. As a monograph of the Ulm choir stalls, intended to be placed between a discussion of the “Syrlin-problem” as such and a third volume treating “in the main only the ground plan of the great Ulmer Altar,” this second part (“Stoffkreis and Gestaltung”) was from the beginning planned as an independent work. And here all that was

present in abundance in former books, but had not yet, so to speak, quite coalesced without a seam (the iconographic and documentary discussion had still tended to hide in notes and appendices) is now fused into a complete unity. Vöge’s *Jörg Syrlin*, in which the most telling description of visual data is united with the most learned textual analysis, the most far-reaching investigation of thematic contexts with convincing portrait identifications, is perhaps the book that comes closest to the often postulated ideal of a “total history of art.”

Has the life that came to an end on December 30, 1952 also remained a torso? And was it a happy or an unhappy one? Both questions are wrongly put. Few have so often been interrupted in their rise, but few have attained such a height. Few have had to suffer so much, but few have been loved so dearly. And if Vöge was often inclined to regard his existence as an incomplete and unfulfilled one, he went to rest in the certainty that just this incompleteness and unfulfillment—positively turned, the capability of growing to the last breath—was a grace from heaven. A “little monologue during the days of starvation,” composed in June 1945, which Vöge added to a letter of October 20, 1949, contains these lines:

*Dies haben wir vor den Tieren,
Vor den Göttern voraus:
Unsterbliche wachsen nicht.*

To this thought Vöge reverted again and again in his last years. Thus in a letter of June 26, 1948:

Shortly before his death Clemen wrote, he could not say how much he envied me for still having a larger scholarly work in hand; he himself wrote only on his memoirs. I answered, he ought not to envy one who in his old age still had to make up his pensum.

And more than a year later (October 20, 1949):

I have understood only in these evil days, what it means to the individual, to be able to say in old age: I am still searching, I am still growing.

He who could feel thus in his eighty-second year, was—despite everything—a darling of the gods.

Princeton, New Jersey, April 1958

