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Herman Paul

Virtues and Vices in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities

Explorations of a Discourse

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Introduction: A Rhetorical Approach to Scholarly Virtues and Vices

Abstract: What are scholarly virtues and vices and why do they matter to historians of the humanities? This introduction argues that virtues and vices (objectivity, loyalty, dogmatism) were key terms in an evaluative discourse on which scholars drew in articulating their standards of scholarly excellence. Also, they used this idiom in assessing the achievements of others, most notably in book reviews or scholarly debates. With the example of Goethe philology in German literary studies around 1900, the introduction discusses three different ways in which this discourse can be studied. It argues that a rhetorical approach is the most fruitful of these, as it helps historians grasp not only the referential aspects of scholars' language but also its performative dimensions (the things that scholars did with words).

Keywords: epistemic virtues, scholarly virtues, epistemic vices, scholarly vices, history of humanities

One neglected aspect of nineteenth-century scholarship, especially but not exclusively in fields associated with the *Geisteswissenschaften*, is scholars' persistent habit of discussing academic standards in terms of virtues and vices. Judging by letters of recommendation that high-profile scholars like Adolf von Harnack wrote for their students, it was common practice in nineteenth-century academia to regard virtues like industry, thoroughness, and loyalty as markers of talent or accomplishment.[1] Regardless of whether students were really as loyal and thorough as letters often claimed, the dominance of virtue terms in the genre testifies to the importance that nineteenth-century scholars attached to personal qualities that teachers

1 Katharina Manteufel, "A Three-Story House: Adolf von Harnack and Practices of Academic Mentoring around 1900," *History of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2016): 355–70, at 362–64.

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and researchers brought to their jobs. Likewise, obituary writers often went to great length in stylizing deceased scholars as paragons of virtue. The classical scholar Rudolf Schöll is but one example of an author who was posthumously commemorated by his colleagues as a "sharp-minded researcher" who "in exemplary fashion" had "combined meticulousness with sharpness of judgment."[2] In a less panegyric register, book reviewers did not hesitate to invoke scholars' virtues and vices as explanations for merits and faults of the books under discussion. It was common for reviewers not only to evaluate the arguments or evidence put forward in a monograph but also to assess authors' character traits as displayed in their writing, even if this could easily degenerate into ad hominem polemics.[3] A case in point is Edward Augustus Freeman's 1864 attack on James Anthony Froude's *History of England*:

> There are doubtless incurable defects in Mr. Froude's own mind. [...] He lacks that calm and judicial intellect, that love of truth at all hazards, which distinguishes Bishop Thirlwall and Mr. Hallam. He has not the stuff in him which could ever guide him to their unfailing accuracy and unswerving judgment.[4]

Such accusations were bad enough for an established scholar like Froude but even worse for people at the fringes of their fields, such as women and scholars from confessional minority backgrounds. How could female students ever hope to join the academic community if male gatekeepers declared that women by their very nature lacked the virtues required for real scholarly work?[5]

2 [Wilhelm von Christ], "Rudolf Schöll," *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philologischen und historischen Classe der k. b. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München* (1894): 149–52, at 150–51. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

3 Sjang ten Hagen, "Evaluating Knowledge, Evaluating Character: Book Reviewing by American Historians and Physicists (1900–1940)," *History of Humanities* 7, no. 2 (2022): 251–77.

4 [E. A. Freeman], "Froude's Reign of Elizabeth (First Notice)," *The Saturday Review* 17, no. 429 (1864): 80–82, at 81. On ad hominem polemicizing in nineteenth-century scholarly discourse, see Lutz Danneberg, "Dissens, *ad-personam*-Invektiven und wissenschaftliches Ethos in der Philologie des 19. Jahrhunderts: Wilamowitz-Moellendorff *contra* Nietzsche," in *Kontroversen in der Literaturtheorie/Literaturtheorie in der Kontroverse*, ed. Ralf Klausnitzer and Carlos Spoerhase (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 93–147.

5 As, among others, the philosopher Adolf Lasson did in *Die Akademische Frau: Gutachten hervorragender Universitätsprofessoren, Frauenlehrer und Schriftsteller über die Befähigung der Frau zum wissenschaftlichen Studium und Berufe*, ed. Arthur Kirchhof (Berlin: Hugo Steinitz, 1897), 162–67, at 164, 166.

As these examples suggests, virtues and vices played more than ornamental roles in nineteenth-century academic life. Invoked as scholarly ideals, performance criteria, or entry requirements for newcomers to the profession, they touched on weighty matters, few of which were limited to particular fields of study. Throughout the *Geisteswissenschaften*, but often also beyond them, in the realm of the *Naturwissenschaften*, scholars invoked categories of virtue and vice to explain what personal qualities teachers and researchers needed to live up to their vocation.[6] It seems pertinent, therefore, to examine what this language of virtue and vice entailed. How did scholars use it? What functions did it serve? How widespread was it? And why have historians of nineteenth-century scholarship neglected it almost entirely?

Admittedly, this neglect has not been total. Recent years have seen the publication of more than a few studies seeking to map the changing meanings of concepts like curiosity, impartiality, objectivity, precision, speculation, dogmatism, and prejudice.[7] Perhaps the best-known of these studies is Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison's *Objectivity* (2007), which has been a source of inspiration to many subsequent scholars. Given that objectivity, like precision, speculation, and dogmatism, was a term widely used in nineteenth-century academia, though in a range of different ways, there is an evident need for studies that track the vicissitudes of such virtue and vice terms over time. Unfortunately, however, most of these studies (though not all of them) restrict themselves to tracing *meanings* of words, without devoting more than cursory attention to how virtue and vice terms were actually *used* in book reviews, letters of recommendation, or textbooks explaining to students what qualities of mind a career in academia required.

6 Christiaan Engberts, *Scholarly Virtues in Nineteenth-Century Sciences and Humanities: Loyalty and Independence Entangled* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022); Herman Paul, *Historians' Virtues: From Antiquity to the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 32–43.

7 Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998); Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Neil Kenny, *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Kathryn Murphy and Anita Traninger, eds., *The Emergence of Impartiality* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007); Markus Krajewski, Antonia von Schöning, and Mario Wimmer, eds., *Enzyklopädie der Genauigkeit* (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2021); Gayle Rogers, *Speculation: A Cultural History from Aristotle to AI* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021); Herman Paul and Alexander Stoeger, *Dogmatism: On the History of a Scholarly Vice* (London: Bloomsbury, 2024); Sorana Corneanu, "Notes towards a History of 'Prejudice,' Early to Late Modern," in *Vices of the Learned: Towards a Long-term History of Scholarly Vices*, ed. Sjang ten Hagen and Herman Paul (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

If we wonder why obituary writers so often turned diseased professors into models of virtue, why "vice-charging"[8] was an almost standard ingredient of academic polemics, or why methodology manuals like Ernst Bernheim's *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode* (1889) abounded with virtue talk,[9] conceptual-historical studies leave us largely empty-handed.

As far as the nineteenth-century *Geisteswissenschaften* are concerned—or the "humanities," as I will call them for convenience's sake[10]—this lack of interest in scholars' discourse of virtue and vice may have something to do with the research agendas that have dominated scholarship in the past half a century. German historiography in the era of Leopold von Ranke, for example, has often been studied *either* as the cradle of modern historiography, because of its codification of historical methods and innovative system of seminar teaching, *or* as a world mired in dangerous nationalism, with patriotic historical narratives legitimizing nondemocratic political regimes.[11] What mattered in these approaches were not virtues or vices but methods and political stances. Scholars' habitual use of virtue and vice terms comes into view as a topic worthy of historical study only when nineteenth-century scholarship is approached with a more open mind, by researchers committed to understanding rather than praising or criticizing the work of earlier generations. Only by giving up the idea that the nineteenth-century humanities should be studied through the prism of methods or politics, we create room for exploring why Theodor Mommsen deemed it necessary to declare that virtues could not be taught in class or why Jakob Minor, a Viennese Goethe expert, explained at length what he regarded as "the highest virtue of the philologist."[12]

The essays brought together in this volume address these questions in a variety of settings, thereby showing that virtues and vices were not

8 A term from Ian James Kidd, "Charging Others with Epistemic Vice," *The Monist* 99, no. 2 (2016): 181–97.

9 Herman Paul, "Distance and Self-Distanciation: Intellectual Virtue and Historical Method around 1900," *History and Theory* 50, no. 4 (2011): 104–16.

10 I will return to this translation issue near the end of this introduction.

11 See, e.g., Horst Walter Blanke, *Historiographiegeschichte als Historik* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1991); Friedrich Jaeger and Jörn Rüsen, *Geschichte des Historismus: Eine Einführung* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1992); Niklas Lenhard-Schramm, *Konstrukteure der Nation: Geschichtsprofessoren als politische Akteure in Vormärz und Revolution 1848/49* (Munster: Waxmann, 2014); Stefan Berger with Christoph Conrad, *The Past as History: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 140–225.

12 Theodor Mommsen, "Rede bei Antritt des Rektorates 15. Oktober 1874," in Mommsen, *Reden und Aufsätze* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1905), 3–16, at 11, 14; J. Minor, *Goethes Faust: Entstehungsgeschichte und Erklärung*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1901), vi.

a marginal topic but an idiom that nineteenth-century scholars used for addressing fundamental questions: What makes a good scholar? What does it take to become a conscientious, loyal, or imaginative researcher? Are women dispositionally suited for a career in academia? Does it matter whether students come from Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant families? Can virtue be taught in class? Is specialization a blessing or a curse? And to what extent must professors serve the national cause? At least within the humanities—the fields of physics and chemistry examined in chapter 2 show a slightly different pattern—virtues and vices mattered because they provided scholars with a vocabulary for talking about such major, discipline-transcending issues.

As the essays collected in this volume deal with scholars from various disciplines, in more than one country, while also documenting different stages in a research line developed over the course of one and a half decades, it may be helpful to pull some threads together in this introduction. Drawing on the example of Jakob Minor—a somewhat arbitrary but revealing case study—I will survey three ways in which historians of the humanities may study phrases like "the highest virtue of the philologist." First, they may treat them as evidence of scholars taking sides in controversies about the goals or methods appropriate to their field of study. This is an approach that fits the history of disciplines as it flourished in the 1980s and 1990s.[13] The second and third approach, by contrast, align themselves with trans-disciplinary modes of history writing such as practiced, as of recently, in the history of the humanities.[14] The second one follows Lorraine Daston in reading historians' reflections on virtues and vices as evidence of shared or contested scholarly standards. While different authors prefer different vocabularies—we hear about "moral economies" but also about "scholarly personae"[15]—the bottom line of this second approach is that it uses virtue

13 Illustrative examples are Jürgen Fohrmann and Wilhelm Voßkamp, eds., *Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Germanistik im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1994) and, at a smaller scale, Jürgen Fohrmann, *Das Projekt der deutschen Literaturgeschichte: Entstehung und Scheitern einer nationalen Poesiegeschichtsschreibung zwischen Humanismus und Kaiserreich* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1989). For a retrospective, see Suzanne Marchand, "Has the History of the Disciplines Had Its Day?" in *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, ed. Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moyn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 131–52.

14 On which see Rens Bod et al., "A New Field: History of Humanities," *History of Humanities* 1, no. 1 (2016): 1–8; Herman Paul, "Introduction: What Is the History of the Humanities?" in *Writing the History of the Humanities: Questions, Themes, and Approaches*, ed. Herman Paul (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 1–24.

15 Engberts, *Scholarly Virtues*, 175–206; Herman Paul, "Introduction: Scholarly Personae: What They Are and Why They Matter," in *How to Be a Historian: Scholarly Personae in Historical Studies,*

talk to write a history of what Daston calls "categories that structure our thought, pattern our arguments and proofs, and certify our standards for explanation."[16] While the third approach, finally, sympathizes with the second one, it distinguishes itself by taking, so to speak, a "rhetorical turn." It treats scholars' virtue talk not as a transparent window on underlying scholarly standards, but as a idiom that offered commentators inside and outside of the academic establishment a historically grown vocabulary for discussing personal qualities needed for research or teaching.

While all three approaches are legitimate and important—they cannot do without each other—I will argue that the third ("rhetorical") approach is the most innovative one. Also, it is the one best equipped to explain why "the highest virtue of ..." was a formula used not only by Minor but by a host of commentators inside and outside of the humanities. After discussing the three approaches in turn, I will explain how the chapters in this volume contribute to the third of these (as well as, occasionally, to the second one, while always drawing appreciatively on earlier work done under the rubric of the first approach).

First approach: The history of academic disciplines

Nomen est omen: Jakob Minor occupies only a small place in the historiography of German literary studies.[17] He is primarily known as a member of the "Scherer school" that dominated the largely overlapping fields of *Neugermanistik* and *Goethe-Philologie* near the end of the nineteenth century. When Wilhelm Scherer in an influential article of 1877 advocated the application of historical-critical methods as employed by classical and old Germanic philologists to modern authors like Goethe,[18] the then twenty-two-year-old Minor was still writing his doctoral dissertation at the University of Vienna. But as soon as the thesis was finished, Minor

1800–2000, ed. Herman Paul (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 1–14. Both draw on Daston's work, including esp. Lorraine Daston, "The Moral Economy of Science," *Osiris* 10 (1995): 2–24; Lorraine Daston and H. Otto Sibum, "Introduction: Scientific Personae and Their Histories," *Science in Context* 16, nos. 1–2 (2003): 1–8.

16 Lorraine Daston, "Historical Epistemology," in *Questions of Evidence: Proof, Practice, and Persuasion across the Disciplines*, ed. James Chandler, Arnold I. Davidson, and Harry Harootunian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 282–89, at 282.

17 Biographical details are taken from Sigfrid Faerber, *Ich bin ein Chinese: Der Wiener Literaturhistoriker Jakob Minor und seine Briefe an August Sauer* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004).

18 Wilhelm Scherer, "Goethe-Philologie," *Im neuen Reich* 7 (1877): 161–78, esp. 171.

traveled to Berlin, where together with his friend August Sauer he attended Scherer's seminar. Encouraged by their teacher, the two young Austrians coauthored a collection of *Studien zur Goethe-Philologie* (Studies in Goethe Philology, 1880), which faithfully followed in Scherer's footsteps insofar as they situated Goethe's work in its biographical context, traced its development (*Entwicklung*) over time, and compared manuscript variants, partly to map continuity and change in Goethe's thinking but also in the hope that Goethe's stylistic revisions would shed light on his aesthetic aspirations.[19] Methodologically, this book set the tone for much of Minor's later work. With book-length studies on Johann Georg Hamann (1882) and Friedrich Schiller (1890), not to mention dozens of articles, Minor developed a solid reputation as a conscientious philologist. Writing in 1900, an Austrian colleague judged that "Minor is one of the greatest masters" of meticulous, "microscopical" philology.[20] It is not surprising, therefore, that Minor, after succeeding Erich Schmidt as chair of literary history in Vienna, came to represent an Austrian branch of the Scherer school (together with Sauer and Bernhard Seuffert, among others).[21]

In light of this, Minor's commentary on Goethe's *Faust*, published in two volumes in 1901, came as a surprise to many.[22] Apart from that the book was dedicated "to the philologists of the twentieth century"—a phrase that caused readers to wonder why Minor put his faith in future generations—the opening volume contained a rather "sourish" preface (as one reviewer called it).[23] In these polemical pages, Minor expressed strong dissatisfaction with the specialization and increased attention to details that were characteristic not only of "Scherer and his epigones" but of nineteenth-century philology at large. Who still dared to interpret *Faust*, not at the word or sentence level, with the help of learned lexicons

19 J. Minor and A. Sauer, *Studien zur Goethe-Philologie* (Vienna: Carl Konegen, 1880).

20 O[tto] R[ommel], unpublished report on *Goethes Faust* (undated, [1900]), in Faerber, *Ich bin ein Chinese*, 227–28, at 228.

21 Herbert H. Egglmaier, "Entwicklungslinien der neueren deutschen Literaturwissenschaft in Österreich in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts und zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts: Institutionelles, Wissenschaftspolitisches, Bildungsgeschichtliches," in Fohrmann and Voßkamp, *Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Germanistik*, 204–35, at 232.

22 Roman Woerner, "Goethes Faust erklärt von J. Minor," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung* (9 April 1901): 3–7, at 3–4; Victor Michels, "Neue Faustschriften," *Euphorion* 8 (1901): 397–417, at 403–4; Franz Muncker, review of *Goethes Faust* by Jakob Minor, *Deutsche Litteraturzeitung* 24 (1903): 1774–76, at 1774–75; Franz Schultz, review of *Goethes Faust* by Jakob Minor, *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 58 (1904): 416–20, at 417.

23 Minor, *Goethes Faust*, vol. 1, iii*; Albert Köster, review of *Goethes Faust* by Jakob Minor, *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Litteratur* 28 (1902): 72–80, at 80.

and encyclopedias, but as a work of art, comprehensible only in an act of poetic imagination, by means of understanding (*verstehen*) rather than counting words or tracing allusions? In an age dominated by positivist ideals of methodological rigor, Minor sought to rehabilitate the imagination (*Phantasie*) as an indispensable resource for philological research. Hence his statement quoted above: "The gift of imaginatively putting oneself in the situation presented to us by the poet is, therefore, the highest virtue of the philologist."[24]

What made Minor so critical of the school to which he himself was perceived as belonging? Three explanations present themselves. First, from his student days onwards, Minor had hoped that philological inquiry would prepare the way for an aesthetic appreciation of Goethe's genius.[25] This was hardly an original thought: much of the prestige that philology enjoyed in nineteenth-century German-speaking Europe was based on the idea that it would provide a solid, "scientific" foundation for the aesthetic education of the youth.[26] By the late 1870s, it had seemed as if Scherer had been able to fulfill this hope. Sauer, for one, had been greatly impressed by Scherer's "sparking spirit."[27] Minor, however, had responded more reservedly. As early as 1878, he had confessed to Sauer that Scherer appeared to him as having "no personality, no character." Although Scherer brought the most diverse of sources to bear on one another, it was more a "combining" of insights than a "truly creative imagination [*eigentlich schaffende Phantasie*]," which Minor believed to be crucial for seeing the whole in the parts.[28] After Scherer's death, Minor had written more appreciatively about his teacher's ability to proceed from philological details to "the most inner secrets of Goethe's art." He had added, however, that even Scherer, a man more learned and less afraid of original hypotheses than any of his colleagues, had struggled all his life with a tension between information and insight, causing him at times to become a "victim" instead of a "high priest" of science.[29] This was a sobering thought. If even Scherer had not been able to live up to Minor's ideal, how much less could his students, living in an age of relentless specialization, be expected to do so?

24 Minor, *Goethes Faust*, vol. 1, vi.

25 Faerber, *Ich bin ein Chinese*, 8–10.

26 Hans-Martin Kruckis, *"Ein potenziertes Abbild der Menschheit": Biographischer Diskurs und Etablierung der Neugermanistik in der Goethe-Biographik bis Gundolf* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1995), 93–102.

27 August Sauer to Jakob Minor, 28 October 1877, in Faerber, *Ich bin ein Chinese*, 320–21, at 320.

28 Jakob Minor to August Sauer, 26 December 1878, ibid., 348–51, at 350.

29 Jakob Minor, "Wilhelm Scherer," *Deutsche Dichtung* 1 (1886): 123–24, at 123, 124.

Minor's worries seemed to be confirmed by a second factor: the transformation of the field of Goethe philology since Scherer's pioneering article of 1877. After the death of Goethe's last descendent in 1885, the writer's personal papers had become available for research. Within months, a Goethe Archive and a Goethe Society had been founded, the latter of which had begun work on a new, critical edition of the master's oeuvre, known as the Weimar edition (143 vols., 1887–1919).[30] These initiatives had profoundly changed the field, if only by creating job openings, many of which Scherer had managed to fill with his own former students.[31] More importantly, however, the sheer size of archival material made available to students of Goethe affected scholars' scope of research: it stimulated detailed investigations rather than overall assessments. Tellingly, when in 1887 Hermann Grimm issued a new edition of his then ten-year-old Goethe lecture, he saw no need to revise the book in the light of new findings, as he judged that Goethe philologists occupied themselves only with "trivia" (*Unbedeutendes*).[32] To what extent Minor shared this assessment is apparent from an 1894 article on the dangers of specialization, in which he argued that an overabundance of "dead and sterile material"—letters, diaries, and draft manuscripts of the sort kept in literary archives—stifles readers' interpretive powers. How can scholars hope to grasp the aesthetic unity of Goethe's work if they spend long years comparing variants and tracing allusions, resulting in *Habilitationsschriften* (second dissertations) devoted to only a handful of Goethe poems?[33] By the 1890s, the realization of Minor's ideal—an aesthetic appreciation of Goethe's art as a whole—seemed further away than ever.

If these two factors go a long way to explaining why Minor in 1901 found himself dissatisfied with the direction that his field had taken, one may add, in the third place, that Minor was not alone in rebelling against an overestimation of detailed philological work. Goethe philology as practiced by Scherer's pupils in the late 1880s and early 1890s prompted a whole chorus of anti-philological voices. The Tübingen *Gymnasium* professor Friedrich Braitmaier, for instance, wrote a widely read pamphlet against "the

30 Karl Robert Mandelkow, *Goethe in Deutschland: Rezeptionsgeschichte eines Klassikers*, vol. 1 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1980), 211–32; Paul Raabe, "Die Weimarer Goethe-Ausgabe nach hundert Jahre," in *Goethe-Philologie im Jubiläumsjahr: Bilanz und Perspektiven*, ed. Jochen Golz (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001), 3–19.

31 Kruckis, *Potenziertes Abbild*, 233.

32 Herman Grimm, *Goethe: Vorlesungen gehalten an der Kgl. Universität zu Berlin*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1887), xix.

33 Jakob Minor, "Centralanstalten für die literaturgeschichtlichen Hilfsarbeiten," *Euphorion* 1 (1894): 17–26, at 17, 24.

micrological spirit of current research" that he held responsible for the field of Goethe studies losing itself in pedantic "donkey work" (*Kärrnerarbeit*).[34] Although Richard Weltrich was less dismissive, he agreed with Braitmaier that Scherer's philological paradigm had become too powerful.[35] The future Leipzig professor Georg Witkowski, in his turn, historicized the "Schererian deluge" of philological studies as a typical product of the 1880s, prompted by the opening of the Goethe Archive. The challenge for the 1890s, Witkowski continued, is to reclaim "the aesthetic and philosophical method as it prevailed before Scherer's influence," albeit in a more critical, nonspeculative vein.[36] Even Erich Schmidt, Scherer's successor in Berlin, who as director of the Goethe Archive and editor of the Weimar edition bore no small amount of responsibility for the state of the field, agreed that the endless "quest for parallels" pursued by "tireless philological interpreters of details" (*Detailerklärer*) did not contribute much to a better understanding of Goethe.[37]

Against this background, Minor's musings on "the highest virtue of the philologist" may be interpreted as part of a broader debate about the benefits and limitations of philological inquiry in German literary studies. Without mentioning them by name, Minor agreed with Witkowski *et alia* that aesthetic appreciation suffered from the hegemony of philological research. Like Schmidt, he singled out philologists' obsession with parallel passages as an example of a practice gone astray.[38] Also, like Braitmaier, he believed that a remedy would require rehabilitation of the reader's imagination (*Phantasie*) and intuitive perception (*Anschauung*) in Goethe's sense of the word.[39] To some extent, Minor even joined the company of commentators calling for "aesthetic" or "philosophical" alternatives to the philological ethos that had dominated German literary studies in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Although Minor was too much of a philologist to give up on philology as such—his focus remained on the "virtues of the philologist"—he broadly shared these critics' dissatisfaction with an

34 [Friedrich] Braitmaier, *Göthekult und Göthephilologie: Eine Streitschrift* (Leipzig: Gustav Fock, 1892), 2, 68.

35 Richard Weltrich, "Goethekult und Goethephilologie [I]," *Beilage zur Allgemeine Zeitung* (27 December 1892): 1–4, at 1–2; "Goethekult und Goethephilologie [II]," *Beilage zur Allgemeine Zeitung* (28 December 1892): 1–6, at 6.

36 Georg Witkowski, "Neue Faustschriften," *Euphorion* 1 (1894): 625–47, at 626.

37 Erich Schmidt, "Aufgaben und Wege der Faustphilologie," in *Verhandlungen der einundvierzigsten Versammlung deutscher Philologen und Schulmänner in München von 20. bis 23. Mai 1891* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1892), 11–22, at 15, 11.

38 Minor, *Goethes Faust*, vol. 1, x.

39 Ibid., vi–ix; Braitmaier, *Göthekult und Göthephilologie*, 65.

overemphasis on carefulness, precision, and attention to detail. Minor's 1901 preface can therefore be situated in what historians of German literary studies have described as a revolt against the field's "philological ethos," which in turn paved the way for hermeneutical (*geistesgeschichtliche*) modes of literary studies.[40]

Second approach: The history of scholarly virtues and vices

One does not have to question the importance of the history of disciplines to recognize that the first perspective leaves a couple of things invisible. First of all, revolts against philology, or protests against the narrow-mindedness of an ethos built on carefulness, took place across the humanities. In the field of history, for instance, Johann Gustav Droysen famously railed against the barrenness of projects like Georg Heinrich Pertz's *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*: "We in Germany have, through the Rankean school and the Pertzians, got grumpily bogged down in so-called criticism, whose entire enterprise consists of deciding whether one poor devil of a chronicler has transcribed something from another."[41] Similarly, his lifelong indebtedness to classical philology notwithstanding, Friedrich Nietzsche struck a chord among academic and nonacademic readers alike when exposing the sterility of a field that had gotten used to treating philological techniques as ends in themselves.[42] (In 1912, the Swiss Germanist Jonas Fränkel even hinted at a parallel between Minor's and Nietzsche's criticisms of modern philology.)[43]

40 Wilfried Barner, "Zwischen Gravitation und Opposition: Philologie in der Epoche der Geistesgeschichte," in *Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte 1910 bis 1925*, ed. Christoph König and Eberhard Lämmert (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993), 201–31; Rainer Kolk, "Liebhaber, Gelehrte, Experten: Das Sozialsystem der Germanistik bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts," in Fohrmann and Voßkamp, *Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Germanistik*, 48–114, at 109–14. On the "philological ethos," see ibid., 74–79, and Chad Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment: Information Overload and the Invention of the Modern Research University* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 234–61 ("The Disciplinary Self and the Virtues of the Philologist").

41 Johann Gustav Droysen to Wilhelm Arendt, 20 March 1857, in Droysen, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Rudolf Hübner, vol. 2 (Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag, 1929), 441–43, at 442. The English translation is taken from Klaus Meister, "Thucydides in Nineteenth-Century Germany," in *A Handbook to the Reception of Thucydides*, ed. Christine Lee and Neville Morley (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 197–217, at 211.

42 On Nietzsche's complicated relationship with classical philology, see James I. Porter, *Nietzsche and the Philology of the Future* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), and Christian Benne, *Nietzsche und die historisch-kritische Philologie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005).

43 Jonas Fränkel, "Jakob Minor [II]," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (14 October 1912), 1*–2*, at 2*.

Moreover, the language of virtue on which Minor drew was spoken not only by German literary scholars. Throughout the humanities, virtue terms like loyalty, carefulness, impartiality, empathy, and objectivity served as a privileged idiom for discussing the scholar's vocation. In some cases, such virtue terms traveled from one field to another, thereby illustrating the phenomenon that Rens Bod and others call "the flow of cognitive goods."[44] More often, however, scholars' virtue talk was indebted to a discourse of virtue that was close to omnipresent in German middle-class society, permeating etiquette books, sermons, children's books, and educational manuals alike.[45] This is true for the category of "virtues" (*Tugenden*) as such, which in everyday language was often used loosely to denote personal "qualities" (*Eigenschaften*) that people needed to fulfill their social and professional duties. To some extent, however, it also applies to specific virtue terms like industriousness, loyalty, and impartiality. The firmer these virtues were embedded in the moral imagination of middle-class society, the more scholars seemed to agree on their importance in the academic realm, too.

Industriousness is a case in point. When Minor was posthumously praised for his "perhaps unprecedented amount of work"—"Work was his duty and pleasure"—this could refer to his remarkable productivity (of which Minor himself had kept track in an 883-item-long bibliography).[46] At the same time, readers of Minor's obituaries must have recognized that commitment to hard work was a *topos* attributed to almost every university professor. Scholars from all backgrounds were routinely depicted as men whose joy lay in their work ("labor ipse voluptas," as Leopold von Ranke liked to say).[47] This commonplace character testifies to the importance that European

44 Rens Bod et al., "The Flow of Cognitive Goods: A Historiographical Framework for the Study of Epistemic Transfer," *Isis* 110, no. 3 (2019): 483–96.

45 Manfred Hettling and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, eds., *Der bürgerliche Wertehimmel: Innenansichten des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); Michael Maurer, *Die Biographie des Bürgers: Lebensformen und Denkweisen in der formativen Phase des deutschen Bürgertums (1680–1815)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); Paul Münch, ed., *Ordnung, Fleiß und Sparsamkeit: Texte und Dokumente zur Entstehung der "bürgerlichen Tugenden"* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984).

46 Robert F. Arnold, "Jakob Minor," *Euphorion* 20 (1913): 789–801, at 794; Alexander v[on] Weilen, "Jakob Minor," *Jahrbuch der Grillparzer-Gesellschaft* 24 (1913): 164–87, at 164; [Jakob Minor], "Verzeichnis der Schriften Jakob Minors," *Almanach der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 63 (1913): 525–71.

47 Herman Paul, "Labor Ipse Voluptas: Virtues of Work in Nineteenth-Century Germany," in *Rethinking the Work Ethic in Premodern Europe*, ed. Gábor Almási and Giorgio Lizzul (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 311–30 [chapter 9 in this volume].

middle-class citizens, scholars included, attached to industriousness.[48] Similarly, loyalty was a virtue that nearly everyone recognized as important. Although *Treue* by the turn of the century had acquired a somewhat old-fashioned connotation, especially in comparison to the modern notion of *Vertrauen*,[49] loyalty remained a favorite virtue. Obituary writers in particular often hailed scholars' loyalty to science, the truth, the nation, or their professional duties (*Pflichttreue*).[50] In a similar vein, scholars were expected to be loyal to their former teachers and students. When Minor at one point broke off his correspondence with Scherer, his teacher experienced this as a painful breach of good manners.[51] When Minor reestablished contact two years later, Scherer urged him never again to cease writing about his joys and sorrows, private as well as professional, as befitting a mentoring relationship that was supposed to last until well after the student had become an established scholar.[52]

Arguably, industriousness and loyalty were uncontested virtues, not only because of their solid position in the middle-class moral universe, but also because they were compatible with different scholarly methods and habituses. This cannot be said, however, about "the gift of imaginatively putting oneself in the situation presented to us by the poet" that Minor regarded as "the highest virtue of the philologist." Early-nineteenth-century philologists like Friedrich Schleiermacher and August Boeckh had granted the imagination an important role in the interpretative process.[53] "Since poetry is created for the imagination," the latter had argued, "the interpreter must also be able to recreate it imaginatively."[54] Meanwhile, however, scholars like Richard

48 In book reviews, however, industriousness sometimes served as a dubious compliment, especially if the study under review did not exhibit other, more important virtues. See Martin Scheutz, "Turba ist ein ganz gemeiner Kerl! Rezensionen als Ehrdiskurs am Beispiel der MIÖG (1920–1939)," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 121 (2013): 63–86, at 67.

49 Ute Frevert, *Vertrauensfragen: Eine Obsession der Moderne* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2013), 124–25, 165–69.

50 E.g., Adalbert Horawitz, *Wilhelm Scherer: Ein Blatt der Erinnerung* (Vienna: s.n., 1886), 28. *Pflichttreue* also featured prominently in Minor's obituaries: Arnold, "Jakob Minor," 800; Stephan Hock, "Jakob Minor," *Neue Freie Presse* (13 October 1912): 31–33, at 33.

51 Wilhelm Scherer to Erich Schmidt, 2 March 1883, in Scherer and Schmidt, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Werner Richter and Eberhard Lämmert (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1963), 183.

52 Wilhelm Scherer to Jakob Minor, early 1884, as quoted in Faerber, *Ich bin ein Chinese*, 111; Manteufel, "Three-Story House."

53 Axel Horstmann, *Antike Theoria und moderne Wissenschaft: August Boeckhs Konzeption der Philologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992), 158–72.

54 August Boeckh, *Enzyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften*, ed. Ernst Bratuscheck (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1877), 144.

Heinzel, Minor's one-time teacher in Vienna, had begun to differentiate more strictly between *Wissenschaft* and the personal, relegating all empathy and imagination to the personal realm and advocating a positivist-inspired method of literary analysis that Minor called "sober and mechanical."[55] Similarly, in the field of history, scholars like Heinrich Ulmann rejected all romantic talk of imagination and inspiration as a relic of prescientific thought.[56] Even more nuanced authors like Ernst Bernheim agreed that the scholar's imagination is very different from the poet's in that it is "curbed" or "restrained" by the facts.[57] What these examples show is that imagination was a more contested "gift of nature" than industriousness or loyalty: both its nature and its importance for scholarly work in the humanities were subject to debate.

This is even more true for objectivity, one of the most modern and scientific of all scholarly virtues. As Lorraine Daston has argued, objectivity gained wide acceptance in the humanities insofar as it denoted an attitude of unbiased primary source reading that students encountered most directly in historical and philological exercises of the sort established at almost every nineteenth-century German-language university.[58] What should be added, however, is that this rise of objectivity prompted no less than three strands of debate: on the meaning of the term, on the desirability of what Julian Schmidt, speaking about Ranke-style objectivity, called a depoliticized and demoralized mode of history writing,[59] and on the relative importance of objective source criticism compared to political analysis, moral edification, aesthetic education, and other tasks traditionally associated with historical and philological study.[60] Droysen, whom Daston cites as one of her key witnesses, had nothing but contempt for what he dubbed "eunuch-like" objectivity, given its tendency to privilege source-critical questions over

55 Richard Heinzel, review of *Vorträge und Aufsätze zur Geschichte des geistigen Lebens in Deutschland und Österreich* by Wilhelm Scherer, *Deutsche Zeitung* (22 December 1874, evening edition), 4; Jakob Minor, "Richard Heinzel," *Almanach der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 55 (1905): 313–16, at 316.

56 Heinrich Ulmann, "Über wissenschaftliche Geschichtsdarstellung," *Historische Zeitschrift* 54 (1885): 42–54, at 47, 49.

57 Ernst Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode: Mit Nachweis der wichtigsten Quellen und Hülfsmittel zum Studium der Geschichte* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1889), 87–88, 429–31, 437–42.

58 Lorraine Daston, "Objectivity and Impartiality: Epistemic Virtues in the Humanities," in *The Making of the Humanities*, vol. 3, ed. Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 27–41, at 31–33.

59 Julian Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Nationalliteratur im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Friedrich Ludwig Herbig, 1853), 322–24.

60 Heinrich v[on] Sybel, "Georg Waitz," *Historische Zeitschrift* 56 (1886): 482–87, at 484.

everything else.[61] Similarly, Nietzschean charges against fetishized, "bloodless objectivity" were made throughout the *Geisteswissenschaften*, especially by scholars worried about the rise to dominance of a scholarly persona that seemed to sever its ties with a wider culture of *Bildung*.[62]

This explains why scholars' debates over the virtues conducive to their work focused less on individual virtues than on their relative importance. While the significance of carefulness *as such* was seldom called into question, an issue capable of dividing scholarly communities was just *how* important the virtue of carefulness was in relation to, say, creativity or intellectual courage. How acceptable was it to privilege one virtue at the cost of others? Were some virtues more negotiable than others? Were all scholars subject to the same standards of virtue or would the field benefit from some (senior) researchers taking greater liberties in launching new hypotheses than others? As Christiaan Engberts has argued, many nineteenth-century scholars were committed to an ideal of balance. Facing the potentially conflicting demands of loyalty and independence, many preferred not to choose but to aim for some kind of equilibrium, without necessarily agreeing on what this would entail.[63]

This commitment expressed itself in different ways. Implicitly, a notion of balance was invoked by book reviewers who accused authors of privileging breadth over depth, displaying a regrettable lack of thoroughness, being excessively skeptical ("hypercritical") in matters of source criticism, or exhibiting a patriotism that detracted from the scholarly merits of their work.[64] Minor did not escape such criticism either. The examiners of his doctoral dissertation found his work wanting in precision, whereas Scherer, in response to Minor's first book, urged his pupil to greater carefulness (*Sorgfalt*).[65] Minor often made similar judgments, thereby stylizing himself

61 Johann Gustav Droysen to Georg Beseler, 16 January 1853, in Droysen, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 2, 144–46, at 145.

62 E.g., Heinrich von Treitschke to Eduard Heinrich von Treitschke, 19 November 1864, in *Heinrich von Treitschkes Briefe*, ed. Max Cornicelius, vol. 2 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1913), 351–52, at 351. Similarly: Heinrich von Sybel, *Ueber den Stand der neueren deutschen Geschichtschreibung* (Marburg: Elwert, 1856), 7.

63 Engberts, *Scholarly Virtues*, esp. 197–98.

64 Ibid., 103–37; Herman Paul, "Hypercriticism: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Vice," *Modern Intellectual History* 21, no. 3 (2024): 585–609 [chapter 4 in this volume]; Sjang ten Hagen, "Evaluating Knowledge, Evaluating Character: Book Reviewing by American Historians and Physicists (1900–1940)," *History of Humanities* 7, no. 2 (2022): 251–77.

65 Karl Tomaschek and Richard Heinzel, undated *Gutachten* on "Schillers Theorie des Dramen" (1878), in Faerber, *Ich bin ein Chinese*, 36–37, at 36; Wilhelm Scherer to Jakob Minor, undated (early 1880), ibid., 44–45.

as a guardian of precisely those virtues that his early work had failed to honor sufficiently. Interestingly, he could also imagine colleagues perceiving his work as being too exact. In their *Studien zur Goethe-Philologie*, Minor and Sauer stated: "We do not expect or shy away from the charge of having gone too far in accuracy."[66] All these examples illustrate that virtues could be practiced both too much and too little.

If book reviewers seldom elaborated on what they saw as the right dose of accuracy, skepticism, or patriotism, Minor's obituary writers, notwithstanding the genre's reputation for "necrological sweet talk" (*Schönrednerei*), engaged more explicitly in a weighing of virtues and their importance.[67] Some spoke highly about Minor's "happy union of two qualities that are seldom found together in one human being [...]: imagination and common sense."[68] Others argued more critically that avoiding extremes was not a talent that Minor had possessed.[69] Also, while some former pupils emphasized that Minor's virtues had kept him free from various vices and temptations, others regarded his high degree of "determination" (*Entschiedenheit*) as a virtue turned into a vice.[70] No matter how different these assessments were, both praise and criticism testify to a moral economy in which virtues were supposed to complement and balance each other.

Interestingly, it was in reflections on the "first," "highest," or "cardinal virtue" of researchers that such implicit standards become most explicit. Premised on a notion of hierarchy rather than equilibrium, "the highest virtue" formula was usually invoked to articulate a scholarly ideal. While, for instance, the historian Wilhelm Maurenbrecher claimed that a "thorough practicing of historical criticism" was "the first commandment that science imposes" on students of the past, an Austrian colleague of his begged to differ: Ottokar Lorenz preferred to rank empathy as "the highest and most necessary quality of the historian."[71] In more polemical contexts, the formula could serve as a standard for measuring the accomplishments of colleagues

66 Minor and Sauer, *Studien zur Goethe-Philologie*, vi.

67 Arnold, "Jakob Minor," 794. On the peculiarities of the genre, see Anna Echterhölter, *Schattengefechte: Genealogische Praktiken in Nachrufen auf Naturwissenschaftler (1710–1860)* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 44–58.

68 Hock, "Jakob Minor," 31.

69 Weilen, "Jakob Minor," 168.

70 Hock, "Jakob Minor," 31, 32; August Sauer, "[Jakob Minor]," *Almanach der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 63 (1913): 467–76, at 475–76.

71 Wilhelm Maurenbrecher, *Ueber Methode und Aufgabe der historischen Forschung* (Bonn: Max Cohen & Sohn, 1868), 6; Ottokar Lorenz, "Friedrich Christoph Schlosser und über einige Aufgaben und Principien der Geschichtschreibung," *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philosophisch-historische Classe* 88 (1878): 131–219, at 189.

past or present. Heinrich von Treitschke illustrated this practice when he accused Friedrich Christoph Schlosser, a few years after his death, of lacking "one of the first virtues of the historian."[72] If this was a verdict about an individual author, "the highest virtue" also figured in assessments of entire fields. As a well-known German *Gymnasium* director wrote about the persona of the late-nineteenth-century classical philologist:

> Meticulousness [*Akribie*], the highest virtue of the philologist, becomes his curse; he no longer dares to err and therefore anxiously entrenches himself behind the fences of his subject. Where are the times when bold audacity [*kühner Wagemut*] tried to master larger scholarly areas, notwithstanding the certain danger of falling into error in individual points?[73]

Seen from this perspective, Minor's "highest virtue of the philologist" was not so much a sign of shifting paradigms in the field of German literary studies as a contribution to an ongoing discussion about what has been called "the scholarly self," or the qualities deemed necessary for scholars at a given time and place.[74] More specifically, it was an ode to a quality that had come under pressure due to the rise of scholarly personae that put a premium on the "mechanical" labor of finding parallels, tracing allusions, and identifying quotations.[75] Minor's panegyric on the imagination was, in other words, the manifesto of a scholar who worried that *Phantasie* was about to disappear from the catalog of philological virtues. It was a plea in favor of a persona that paired critical acumen to a lively imagination.

Third approach: The history of a vocabulary

As much as this second approach can be applauded—as I may be expected to say, given my attempts to advance it—it still resembles the first one in a

72 Heinrich von Treitschke, "F. C. Dahlmann," in Treitschke, *Historische und politische Aufsätze vornehmlich zur neuesten deutschen Geschichte*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1865), 359–445, at 411.

73 Friedrich Aly, "Universität und Gymnasium," *Zeitschrift für das Gymnasialwesen* 52 (1898): 65–71, at 69.

74 Herman Paul, "The Scholarly Self: Ideals of Intellectual Virtue in Nineteenth-Century Leiden," in *The Making of the Humanities*, vol. 2, ed. Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 397–411 [chapter 1 in this volume]; Léjon Saarloos, "The Scholarly Self under Threat: Language of Vice in British Scholarship (1870–1910)" (PhD thesis, Leiden University, 2021).

75 Minor, *Goethes Faust*, vol. 1, ix.

crucial respect: it treats scholars' virtue talk as a more or less transparent window on an underlying reality of ideals, aspirations, beliefs, and commitments. Instead of looking *at* the idiom of virtue, one might say, it tries to look *through* it.[76] This is, of course, common practice: historians read historical sources, not to contemplate their literary qualities, but to gain information.[77] This, however, comes at a price: the rhetorical features of a text like Minor's preface—the commonplaces it contains, the repertoires on which it draws, the appeals to authority that it makes—remain out of sight. This is regrettable, partly because virtue terms were often charged concepts, richly imbued with historically grown connotations, but also because virtues and vices were often invoked in the service of polemical agendas. In more technical language, one might say that the first and second approaches tend to focus almost exclusively on the *referential* aspects of scholars' virtue talk. Language is, however, not exhausted by its referential qualities: it also has *performative* dimensions insofar as speakers and writers "do things with words" (John Austin)—be it eulogizing a predecessor, criticizing a colleague, articulating an ideal of *Wissenschaft*, or keeping the doors of a profession closed to women.[78]

In addition to the two previous approaches, therefore, we need a third approach: one that is attentive to the idiom that scholars drew upon in articulating their views on the personal qualities needed for research or teaching. Such a rhetorical approach, as I will call it, asks: What were the historically grown connotations of terms like "imagination"? How did scholars like Minor draw on such inherited vocabularies? What rhetorical techniques did they use? And how did their readers respond? In more abstract terms, this amounts to saying that a rhetorical approach should attend to four features of scholars' virtue talk: (a) the *repertoires* on which it drew, or the cultural lexica that provided scholars with a vocabulary for discussing personal qualities required for research or teaching; (b) the *rhetorical techniques* that authors employed to lend force to their diagnoses of virtue and vice; (c) the *occasions* on which they did so; and (d) the *responses* that scholars' virtue and vice talk elicited.

The idea of a *repertoire* or cultural lexicon is fairly straightforward. In communicating with their peers, scholars tend not to invent their own

76 This phrasing is indebted to Frank Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth, and Reference in Historical Representation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 197.

77 Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 32, calls it a "documentary approach to the reading of texts."

78 J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

terminology but to draw on what Quentin Skinner calls "pre-existing language" or inherited vocabularies. Much of this language, however, is imbued with historically grown connotations, which especially in the case of highly charged concepts—think of virtues and vices—affect the range of uses available to authors as well as the terms' perceived meanings and emotional associations.[79] For instance, in nineteenth-century Europe, the word "dogmatism" not only recalled Immanuel Kant's charged distinction between critical and dogmatic thinking but also the cultural stereotype of dogmatic Catholicism. Scholars accused of dogmatism not seldom found themselves depicted as popelike figures clinging to infallible creeds (an image that became especially popular after the Vatican Council).[80] "Charlatanry," likewise, was not just a technical term for a cluster of scholarly wrongdoings but also a word evoking a centuries-long tradition of scholarly satire, not to mention the authority of Johann Burkhard Mencke, the Enlightenment historian whose treatise on the theme served as a *locus classicus* for all critics of charlatanry.[81] Also, despite the fact that objectivity was a semantically flexible term, German historians around 1900 could not mention it without evoking, intentionally or not, the image of Ranke, the "master of objectivity."[82]

Much the same is true for Minor's beloved notions of *Phantasie* and *Anschauung*. Concepts with ancient philosophical roots, imagination and intuitive perception had enjoyed high esteem in German Idealist philosophy, with Kant, among others, considering the two as constitutive elements of the *Einbildungskraft*. Expanding on Kant's aesthetics, Goethe had distinguished several forms of *Einbildungskraft*, granting especially the "synthesizing" or "encompassing" imagination a central place in his understanding of knowledge.[83] Even if much of this shining legacy had

79 Quentin Skinner, "The Idea of a Cultural Lexicon," in Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 158–74.

80 E.g., William Graham, *The Creed of Science: Religious, Moral, and Social* (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1881), 196, 237; Lewis Wright, "The New Dogmatism," *The Contemporary Review* 54 (1888): 192–213; T. H. Huxley, "Agnosticism and Christianity," *The Nineteenth Century* 25 (1889): 937–64, at 945. For context and discussion, see Paul and Stoeger, *Dogmatism*, 37–47.

81 Onur Bazarkaya, *Der gelehrte Scharlatan: Studien zur Poetik einer wissensgeschichtlichen Figur* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2019). Indicative of Mencke's authority is [Johann Gabriel Bernhard Büschel], *Ueber die Charlatanerie der Gelehrten seit Menken* (Leipzig: J. G. Büschels Witwe, 1791), 4: "What would good Menke say if he were currently alive?" (I owe these references to Marian Füssel.)

82 Theodor Lindner, "Die Weihe des Ranke-Museums in Wiehe," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung* (4 June 1907), 265–66, at 265.

83 Günter Abel, "Einbildungskraft," in *Goethe Handbuch*, ed. Bernd Witte et al., vol. 4/1 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2016), 239–42; F. Kaulbach, "Anschauung," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter, vol. 1 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), 340–47.

dimmed over the course of the nineteenth century, Wilhelm Dilthey (in whom Minor recognized a kindred spirit) had tried to recover the poetic imagination as both a subject and a method of literary research, firmly placing it in "the center of all literary history."[84] Consequently, when Minor sang the praises of the imagination, he was echoing a tradition familiar to all German literary historians at the time.

The expression "highest virtue of …" likewise, did not originate with Minor. In nineteenth-century Europe, academics and nonacademics alike used the formula to discuss the cardinal duties of citizens, soldiers, judges, or teachers. "What shall be the first virtue of the soldier?" asked an Austrian military textbook in 1855. "The first virtue of the soldier shall be love to God and his monarch. What shall be the second virtue of the soldier? The second virtue is a mannered way of life."[85] It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the catechism style highlighted the gravity of the topic under discussion: "The highest virtue" denoted a calling and lent that vocation an aura of solemnity. The flip side of this earnestness was, in Minor's case at least, an attitude of ridicule toward the *vitia sive errores eruditorum* ("vices and errors of the learned"). On one occasion, he mockingly remarked that "the modern philologist is $^{4}/_{8}$ industrialist, $^{3}/_{8}$ sportsman, and only $^{1}/_{8}$ scholar."[86] As original as this calculation might seem, it drew on existing models, too. The historian Heinrich von Sybel once described himself as "four-sevenths a professor and three-sevenths a politician," while seeing this ratio inverted in Johann Kaspar Bluntschli: "You are four-sevenths a politician and three-sevenths a professor."[87] In the background of this, moreover, was a centuries-long tradition of scholarly satire, in which academics were unmasked as pursuing other goals than pure learning.[88] Minor was of course aware of this tradition; he even presented the calculation just cited as one that was indebted to Johann Michael Moscherosch, a seventeenth-century master of the genre. Clearly, the shadow of the past loomed large over Minor's polemics.

84 Quoted in Volkhard Wels, "Zur Vorgeschichte des Begriffs der 'kreativen Phantasie,'" *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 50, no. 2 (2005): 199–226, at 199.

85 W. C. Wytlačil, *Lehr-Buch für Compagnie-Schulen der k. k. österr. Linien-Infanterie-Regimenter* (Brünn: Buschak und Irrgang, 1855), 47.

86 J. Minor, review of three editions of *Schillers Flucht von Stuttgart*, *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 26 (1905): 2787–88, at 2788.

87 Heinrich von Sybel to Johann Caspar Bluntschli, date unknown, as quoted in Conrad Varrentrapp, "Biographische Einleitung," in Heinrich von Sybel, *Vorträge und Abhandlungen*, ed. Conrad Varrentrapp (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1897), 1–156, at 128.

88 Alexander Košenina, *Der gelehrte Narr: Gelehrtensatire seit der Aufklärung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004). See also Sari Kivistö, *The Vices of Learning: Morality and Knowledge at Early Modern Universities* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

This brings us to a second line of analysis: the *rhetorical techniques* or means of persuasion that scholars used to lend weight to their discussions of virtue and vice. Take the *argumentum ab auctoritate*, or appeal to authority. Such appeals took place whenever Polybius was quoted on the importance of practical experience or Tacitus or the need to study *sine ira et studio* (a tag often used as a weapon of defense in scholarly controversies).[89] In Minor's generation, it had become just as common to cite modern authorities like Scherer on caution as "one of the most disgusting vices of scholars, closely related to cowardice," or Ranke on the "duties of the historian: criticism, precision, penetration."[90] Such appeals were especially helpful when scholars found themselves writing against the current. In a polemic against the "hypertrophic virtue" of objectivity, the literary historian Karl Hillebrand ridiculed the pedantry of Germany's youngest cohort of scholars by comparing them to Thucydides:

> If Thucydides appeared in public today, a *Privatdocent* from Leipzig or Göttingen would know well how to expose, in one or another literary periodical, the lack of method of the unfortunate historian who is not a product of Ranke's or Waitz's seminar.[91]

More subtly, scholars appealed to authority by using *bons mots*—a genre of which Minor was particularly fond. Although Goethe was, unsurprisingly, his greatest source of aphoristic wisdom ("to reverse a line from Faust, we might say …"),[92] other literary classics also provided Minor with quotable phrases: "What has been said of Lessing applies doubly and thrice to Goethe."[93] Or: "One might well raise again the question, with Lichtenberg, whether the writing of books is really the ultimate goal of study."[94] Time and again, Minor invoked the fourth of Karl Lehrs's "Ten Commandments for Classical

89 E.g., K. P. Schulze, "Berichtigung," *Berliner Philologische Wochenschrift* (17 January 1885): 2*.

90 Wilhelm Scherer, "Bemerkungen über Goethe's Stella," *Deutsche Rundschau* 2 (1876): 66–86, at 67; G. Waitz, *Die historischen Übungen zu Göttingen: Glückwunschschreiben an Leopold von Ranke zum Tage der Feier seines fünfzigjährigen Doctorjubiläums, 20. Februar 1867* (Göttingen: W. Fr. Kästner, 1867), 4.

91 Karl Hillebrand, "Ueber historisches Wissen und historischen Sinn" (1874), in Hillebrand, *Zeiten, Völker und Menschen*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Robert Oppenheim, 1875), 311–33, at 317–18.

92 J. Minor, "Festrede zur Goethefeier des Wiener Goethe-Vereins," *Chronik des Wiener Goethe-Vereins* 13 (1899): 54–56, at 55.

93 Ibid., 56.

94 Jakob Minor, "Die Aufgaben und Methoden der neueren Literaturgeschichte," *Neue Freie Presse* (20 November 1904): 35–39, at 37.

Philologists": "Thou shalt not take the name Method in vain."[95] On some occasions, he even quoted the Austrian emperor Franz Joseph I: "*Viribus unitis* [with united forces] is the motto of a philology-friendly monarch! It should also become ours."[96]

"Temporal othering" was another well-known rhetorical strategy. A famous example is Kant's diatribe against Christian Wolff's "worm-eaten" dogmatism, in which he depicted Wolffian philosophy as a relic from a precritical past, out of place in an "age of criticism."[97] Following in Kant's footsteps, many nineteenth-century philosophers and Biblical scholars (not to mention other *Geisteswissenschaftler*) similarly tried to relegate their opponents to an unenlightened past by imposing Whiggish storylines on the histories of their fields.[98] Given Minor's dissatisfaction with modern Goethe philology, such teleological storytelling was not an option available to him. Minor nonetheless also engaged in temporal othering, especially by placing his hope in "the philologists of the twentieth century." This made the present age appear as an era of vice rather than virtue—a time dominated by "pseudo philology," as Minor had put it on an earlier occasion, whose highest idol was an "artificially conserved mummy of Scherer."[99] Apparently, for the sake of polemics, virtues or vices could be indexed to particular periods of history.

A third and final rhetorical strategy that must be mentioned is ad hominem reasoning. As Lutz Danneberg has argued, in a culture where personal categories of virtue and vice were almost routinely invoked as evaluative categories, it could come as no surprise that scholarly controversies often deteriorated in ad hominem attacks, with both parties questioning each other's virtuousness.[100] In the 1890s, Minor took up such a line of attack against his younger colleague Max Herrmann, whom he accused of being dispositionally unfit for academic work.[101] Such arguments could also be

95 J. Minor, review of *Goethes Leipziger Liederbuch* by Adolf Strack, *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* (1894): 651–59, at 659; "Erwiderung des Verfassers," *Euphorion* 1 (1894): 489–90, at 490; "Aufgaben und Methoden," 36. On Lehrs's ten commandments, see William M. Calder III, "Karl Lehrs' Ten Commandments for Classical Philologists," *Classical World* 74, no. 4 (1980): 227–28.

96 Minor, "Centralanstalten," 26, quoted again in "Aufgaben und Methoden," 39.

97 Immanuel Kant, *Critik der reinen Vernunft* (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1781), x*, xi*.

98 Caroline Schep and Herman Paul, "Denial of Coevalness: Charges of Dogmatism in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities," *History of European Ideas* 48, no. 6 (2022): 778–94 [chapter 5 in this volume].

99 Jakob Minor to August Sauer, 16 January 1897, in Faerber, *Ich bin ein Chinese*, 439–41, at 440.

100 Danneberg, "Dissens."

101 Jakob Minor, "Stichreim und Dreireim bei Hans Sachs [I]," *Euphorion* 3 (1896): 692–705, at 703; J. Minor, "Unehrliche Fehde," *Deutsche Litteraturzeitung* 17 (1896): 799–800, at 800.

made collectively, against entire groups of people, such as women with academic aspirations. A recurring objection raised by critics of *Frauenstudium* was women's presumed lack of aptitude for certain male-gendered virtues: thoroughness, perseverance, balanced judgment, and the "gift of combination" (*Combinationsgabe*).[102] (Interestingly, when Minor sought to counter this argument, he did so with an appeal to the authority of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: if that great scholar "didn't think women's collaboration in the field of science was impossible in the seventeenth century, then we can hardly doubt it today.")[103] Similar ad hominem charges were leveled by Protestant scholars against Catholic colleagues—How could Catholics be objective if they were obliged to obey the pope?—or, some decades later, by European professors against students from Asian backgrounds.[104] Virtue talk, it seems, could easily be abused for ad hominem purposes.

Could this take place in every piece of writing, or in every academic genre? If we turn to the *occasions* on which scholars talked about virtues and vices, a somewhat ambiguous picture emerges. On the one hand, virtue terms can be found everywhere, in book reviews and controversies as well as in recommendation letters and obituaries. On the other hand, the personal qualities denoted by these terms mattered on some occasions more than on others. It has been noted, for example, that Minor's dissertation *Gutachten*, written in his Viennese years, included virtue terms only in exceptional cases, to convey high praise or serious criticism.[105] Similarly, in his book reviews, categories of vice feature most prominently in the harshest pieces, in which Minor found it necessary to spell out the dangers of virtues turned into vices.[106] This pattern can be seen in other book reviewers, too. The German classicist Benedikt Niese usually limited himself to assessing arguments and evidence but invoked authors' character traits as soon as he felt a need to explain either notable weaknesses or remarkable accomplishments (drawing on the ancient *oratio speculum mentis*, or the idea that texts are mirrors

102 Arthur Kirchhoff, ed., *Die akademische Frau: Gutachten hervorragender Universitätsprofessoren, Frauenlehrer und Schriftsteller über die Befähigung der Frau zum wissenschaftlichen Studium und Berufe* (Berlin: Hugo Steinitz, 1897), 117, 126, 166, 197, 299.

103 Jakob Minor, "Historisches zur Frage des Frauenstudiums," *Die Zeit* 5 (1895): 87–88, at 88.

104 Paul, *Historians' Virtues*, 32–43.

105 Elisabeth Grabenweger, "Die Selbstverständlichkeit der großen Zahl: Die ersten Promovendinnen der Wiener Germanistik (1903–1938)," *Jahrbuch für Universitätsgeschichte* 20 (2017): 97–118, at 112, 114.

106 E.g., Jakob Minor, "Stichreim und Dreireim bei Hans Sachs [II]," *Euphorion* 4 (1897): 210–51; Minor, review (1894).

of the mind, reflecting their author's characters).[107] Does this suggest that virtues and vices were invoked with particular force when, in the eyes of those involved, something important was at stake? Although the current state of research does not allow for anything close to a definitive answer, it is worth noting that book reviewers used the formulaic expression "the highest virtue" also only on rare occasions, to justify either lavish praise or strong criticism.[108] It seems as if the phrase was imbued with the weight of a gold standard. This in turn would imply that Minor's words must have carried a certain gravitas. "The highest virtue of ..." was not a phrase used lightly.

Finally, a rhetorical analysis of virtue talk must attend to *audiences* and their responses to attributions of virtue or vice. In a culture where honor was as important a moral category as virtue,[109] it comes as no surprise that charges of vice often met with cries of indignation from the accused, who felt that their sense of honor had been violated.[110] While this explains the large number of rebuttals and rejoinders submitted to review journals like the *Literarisches Centralblatt*, it also suggests that Minor's criticism of Herrmann's lack of virtuousness cannot be understood without taking Herrmann's responses into consideration. Only when read in tandem with the latter, it becomes apparent that Minor was not simply assessing the scholarly merits of the latter's monograph on Hans Sachs but fighting a personal feud in which the most terrible reproaches went back and forth.[111] Similarly, to appreciate the rhetorical strength of Minor's appeal to "the philologists of the twentieth century," the surprised responses that this dedication provoked are a factor to take into account. Commenting on Minor's apparent frustration with the current state of scholarship, one

107 B. Niese, review of *Die Staatshaushaltung der Athener*, 3rd ed., by August Boeckh, *Deutsche Litteraturzeitung* 8 (1887): 17; review of *Abhandlungen aus der griechischen Geschichte* by Max Duncker, *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen* (1889), 36–39, at 39; review of *Die Kenntnis Germaniens im Altertum bis zum 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* by Ludwig Hoff, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum und deutsche Literatur* 35 (1891): 254–55, at 255; review of *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, 3 vols., by Karl Müllenhoff, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum und deutsche Literatur* 37 (1893): 266–68, at 267.

108 N. N., review of *Neue Propheten* by Karl Hase, *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* (1862): 82–88, at 82; H. Ziemer, review of *Die Sprache als Kunst* by Gustav Gerber, *Wochenschrift für klassische Philologie* 3 (1886): 483–92, at 485.

109 Ann Goldberg, *Honor, Politics, and the Law in Imperial Germany, 1871–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

110 E.g., Max Lehmann, *Stein, Scharnhorst und Schön: Eine Schutzschrift* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1877), 37; Gustav Schmoller, "Zum Andenken an Albert Naudé," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preußischen Geschichte* 9, no. 2 (1897): v–xviii, at xiii.

111 See esp. J. Minor, "Unehrliche Fehde," *Deutsche Litteraturzeitung* 17 (1896): 799–800, and Max Herrmann, "Unehrliche Fehde," ibid., 1593–96.

reviewer wondered aloud: "Is it justified?"[112] The Leipzig Goethe scholar Albert Köster believed it was not. Drawing on the Biblical story of the flood, he argued that Minor made a fool of himself:

> In M[inor]'s terrible verdict, the whole sinful philology of the 19th c[entury] is wiped out; for the earth was full of violence [Genesis 6:11]. Only one must have found grace in this deluge, another Noah: the author himself. All coming generations of philologists will take their beginning out of him.[113]

Judging by these reserved responses, Minor's appeal to the future was perhaps not very successful.[114]

How, then, does a rhetorical analysis enrich our understanding of "the highest virtue" invoked in Minor's preface? What the third approach adds to the two previous ones is an appreciation not of *what* Minor said but *how* he said it: in a time-honored idiom of virtue, charged with emotional meaning; drawing on formulaic expressions, some of which could be used only on the most solemn occasions; anchoring his critique of mind-numbing counting and checking in a tradition of scholarly aphorisms and *bons mots*; appealing to the authority of classical authors; and invoking a grand narrative in which the present age appeared as an era of vice rather than virtue—all for the purpose of settling scores with colleagues whose work he disliked.[115] Like the second approach, the third one is committed to a transdisciplinary history of the humanities. The difference, however, is that it treats scholars' talk of virtue and vice not as a window on underlying beliefs but as a reality in its own right—as an idiom that offered scholars across disciplines a vocabulary for discussing personal qualities needed for research and teaching.

Final remarks

Each in their own way, the chapters collected in this volume contribute to this rhetorical approach. It is fair to add that this has not been my aim from the beginning. Chapters 1 and 6 (the two oldest texts in this collection) align

112 Michels, "Neue Faustschriften," 403–4.

113 Köster, "Goethes Faust," 80.

114 See also, more ironically, J. Collin, review of *Goethes Faust* by Jakob Minor, *Literaturblatt für germanische und romanische Philologie* 25 (1904): 353–60, at 360: "I dedicate this review to the philologists of the twentieth century."

115 On the rhetorical technique of "anchoring," see Ineke Sluiter, "Anchoring Innovation: A Classical Research Agenda," *European Review* 25, no. 1 (2017): 20–38.

more closely with what I now call the second approach. If I had ordered the chapters chronologically, the volume would have opened with chapters 1 and 6, followed by the chapters 2 and 7, in which the need to reflect on issues of genre conventions and rhetorical commonplaces gradually becomes manifest. Only after the groundwork done in these four pieces, it was possible to write the chapters 3, 4, 5, 8, and 9, which (together with this introduction) most explicitly show the potential of a rhetorical approach to scholars' virtue talk. For the reader's convenience, however, I have adopted a more systematic order, resulting in the threefold structure of this book.

Part I: Across Disciplines comprises three chapters that examine the spread of virtue language from local perspectives, with case studies from Leiden, Göttingen, and Strasbourg, respectively. Read in this order, these chapters offer a progressively more complex analysis of what virtues and vices meant to nineteenth-century scholars. Whereas chapter 1 limits itself to ideals of virtue cultivated by a handful of men employed in faculties of letters and theology, chapter 2 broadens the scope by comparing historians to physicists and chemists. The differences that come into view prompt the issue of what I have elsewhere called the "affordances" of virtue language—that is, in simple terms, what the discourse could and could not do.[116] Chapter 3 answer this question by arguing that virtues were not the only idiom available nor, judging by the case of Strasbourg, a sufficient one for articulating all of the expectations that late-nineteenth-century German scholars had to meet. All three chapters, nonetheless, make clear that virtue talk is a promising topic for transdisciplinary history writing, given that the idiom was used by scholars in a wide range of disciplinary settings.

This prepares the reader for Part II: Rhetorical Uses, which takes up John Austin's invitation to examine "things" that people did with words. Chapters 4 and 5 study how scholars in two humanities disciplines used a particular vice term—hypercriticism and dogmatism, respectively—to criticize flawed scholarship or, more generally, register dissent with prevailing research trends. Unsurprisingly, such critical diagnoses were shot through with religious and political motives, especially when research touched on canonical texts like Homer and the Bible. Both chapters also illustrate the potential for vice terms to be used, or abused, for what Quassim Cassam calls "vicious vice-charging" (people charging others with vices in

116 Herman Paul, "A Virtue Ethics for Historians: Prospects and Limitations," *History and Theory* 63, no. 4 (2024), 3–22.

a nonvirtuous way).[117] This, in turn, shows that the idiom of virtue and vice did much more than mirroring scholarly standards: it was an arsenal of rhetorical weapons that authors could use for different purposes. Chapter 6, on yet another religiously charged controversy, adds to this by showing how nineteenth-century supporters of Reinhart Dozy, a Leiden professor of Arabic, creatively twisted the discourse of virtue to defend a book that evidently sinned against established philological standards.

If Part II focuses on rhetorical uses, Part III: Cultural Repertoires attends to Skinner's "pre-existing language," or the cultural lexicon that offered scholars a vocabulary for discussing personal qualities. Chapter 7 introduces this category by arguing that exchanges across disciplinary boundaries do not sufficiently explain the popularity of "German thoroughness" among late-nineteenth-century faculty members at Johns Hopkins University. Instead, these professors drew on a commonplace that was readily available at the time. Similarly, chapter 8 shows how historians' and physicists' views of philosophers' vices (speculation, system-building) drew on clichéd images more than on close encounters with living philosophers. Although cultural stereotypes are not a high-ranking topic in the history of science,[118] chapter 9 argues that they deserve serious attention, if only because nineteenth-century professors were, with only few exceptions, middle-class men, subject to the expectations of middle-class society, as much as they were experts in a particular area of study. As illustrated by a rich array of anecdotes about industrious (or excessively industrious) men of learning, scholars resembled doctors, pastors, and lawyers in drawing on a broadly similar repertoire of virtues and models.

A single glance on the table of contents will suffice to note that most of the case studies are situated in the nineteenth-century German *Geisteswissenschaften*—even though chapters 1 and 6 present Dutch case studies, chapter 2 discusses physicists and chemists, and chapter 7 shifts the geographical focus to the United States (while also featuring mathematicians, chemists, and medical doctors). This concentration on the nineteenth-century *Geisteswissenschaften* may raise three questions, which I will answer by way of final remarks: What makes the nineteenth century so important? Can *Geisteswissenschaften* be translated with "humanities" (as this introduction

117 Quassim Cassam, "Misunderstanding Vaccine Hesitancy: A Case Study in Epistemic Injustice," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 55, no. 3 (2023): 315–29.

118 See, however, Steven Shapin, "Proverbial Economies: How an Understanding of Some Linguistic and Social Features of Common Sense Can Throw Light on More Prestigious Bodies of Knowledge, Science for Example," *Social Studies of Science* 31, no. 5 (2001): 731–69.

has already tacitly done)? And how does the volume define or delineate these nineteenth-century humanities, also in light of the fact that Biblical scholars and church historians, who are not always considered as belonging to the humanities, feature rather prominently in chapters 1, 4, 5, and 6?

The historicizing gaze adopted in this volume leaves little space for traditional views of the nineteenth-century *Geisteswissenschaften* as a "cradle" of the modern humanities or as a "burden" from which the humanities need to be liberated.[119] Neither do I subscribe to the romantic idea that the nineteenth century was, in terms of status or support, a "golden age" for the humanities. My focus on the period stretching, roughly, from Barthold Georg Niebuhr and August Boeckh to Jakob Minor and Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve is prompted rather by the cultural prominence of virtue language in this era. It is true, of course, that many of the virtues that nineteenth-century scholars cared about had centuries-long histories. One of the tasks of the rhetorical approach is to trace such debts to the past. Also, it has been shown that virtue talk persisted in academic texts until long after World War II, especially in book reviews and student manuals.[120] Nonetheless, within this *longue durée* trajectory, the nineteenth century stands out as a period in which categories of virtue and vice enjoyed special prominence, not just among scholars, but in middle-class society at large. As said, the nineteenth century was a time when "virtue" was a leading pedagogical category, with school curricula and children's books recommending virtuous behavior as explicitly as sermons and moral advice literature. Precisely, then, because the word "virtue" was on everyone's lips, the nineteenth century lends itself well for an exploration of how scholars used this vocabulary in discussing the goals and standards of their fields. Accordingly, the time span indicated in the volume's title ("nineteenth-century humanities") should not be understood in a limiting sense, as if the discourse of virtue and vice did not exist before Niebuhr and disappeared after Gildersleeve: it should be understood simply as indicating the period covered in this study. *Geisteswissenschaften* is a difficult word to translate, not only because the two most obvious English candidates, "humanities" and "human sciences," are laden with twentieth-century connotations that were foreign to the

119 The persistence of the latter view is illustrated by Siraj Ahmed, *Archaeology of Babel: The Colonial Foundations of the Humanities* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018).
120 Kim M. Hajek, Herman Paul, and Sjang ten Hagen, "Objectivity, Honesty, and Integrity: How American Scientists Talked about Their Virtues, 1945–2000," *History of Science* 62, no. 3 (2024): 442–69. See also Alexej Lochmatow, *Public Knowledge in Cold War Poland: Scholarly Battles and the Clash of Virtues, 1945–1956* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2024).

nineteenth-century *Geisteswissenschaften*,[121] but also, more fundamentally, because *Geisteswissenschaften* was a contested term from the beginning. Although it clearly denoted a cluster of fields outside of the *Naturwissenschaften*—fields like history and classical philology, but philosophy and psychology no less—definitions and classifications varied from author to author. As a result, historians of the humanities are nowadays more inclined to historicize the term—to examine how it was used, for purposes of boundary work or otherwise—than to turn it into an analytical category.[122] Insofar as they, nonetheless, call themselves historians of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, thereby implying that some positive, first-order usage of the term is possible in spite of all historicizing, such usage must necessarily be indicative, provisional, and open-ended. Arguably, such caveats are even more necessary when, in an age of global English, *Geisteswissenschaften* is rendered as "humanities."[123] In the absence of plausible alternatives, this volume follows common usage, but not without repeating, with a nod to Donna Haraway, that "humanities," applied to scholarship in nineteenth-century Europe, is a way of staying with the trouble more than solving it.

Finally, for the purposes of this volume, it makes no difference whether or not church historians and Biblical scholars are classified as *Geisteswissenschaftler*. From an institutional point of view, such a classification would probably stretch categories too much. In German-speaking Europe, after all, Biblical scholarship and church history were practiced in faculties of theology rather than in faculties of philosophy—the institutional home base of the *Geisteswissenschaften*.[124] Nonetheless, the relative prominence of Biblical scholars and church historians in the pages in this volume testifies to their importance, at least in controversies about scholarly virtues and vices. As Catherine Conybeare and Simon Goldhill have argued in a recent

121 Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *The Humanities and the Dream of America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 145–90; Roger Smith, "What Is the History of the Human Sciences?" in *The Palgrave Handbook of the History of Human Sciences*, ed. David McCallum (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 3–28.

122 Fabian Kraemer, "What Are the Humanities? A Short History of Concepts and Classifications," in Paul, *Writing the History of the Humanities*, 27–46; Julian Hamann, "Boundary Work between Two Cultures: Demarcating the Modern *Geisteswissenschaften*," *History of Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2018): 27–38.

123 As done not only in survey texts like Rens Bod, *A New History of the Humanities: The Search for Principles and Patterns from Antiquity to the Present*, trans. Lynn Richards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), but also in more specialized volumes like Efraim Podoksik, ed., *Doing Humanities in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

124 Thomas Albert Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

volume, practitioners of these two disciplines displayed a more than average interest in historical and philological methods. Precisely because there was so much at stake for them—God's revelation in the Bible, his providence in the history of the church, the miracles and relics of the saints—Biblical scholars and church historians engaged at least as intensely (often even more vigorously) with issues of historical method and philological criticism than, say, classical philologists at work on the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*.[125] For much the same reason, I would add, they contributed disproportionally to debates over scholarly vices like dogmatism and hypercriticism, both of which could be seen as threatening the integrity of religious texts or traditions.[126] Jakob Minor would have agreed: virtues and vices served as a vocabulary, not only for assessing individual scholars, but also, sometimes even primarily, for discussing how scholars' interpretive habits conflicted with deeply felt commitments, be it to Goethe or the Bible.

With these introductory remarks, the ground has been cleared: readers are now well prepared for the chapters that follow. My hope is that these essays convey something of the importance of virtues and vices, the promise of the approach adopted, and the excitement of looking afresh at classic nineteenth-century sources. Also, I hope they will stimulate others to continue where I leave off, deepening this research line and expanding it in new directions.

125 Catherine Conybeare and Simon Goldhill, eds., *Classical Philology and Theology: Entanglement, Disavowal, and the Godlike Scholar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021). See also Thomas Albert Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W. M. L. de Wette, Jacob Burckhardt, and the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historical Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
126 See chapters 4 and 5 in particular.

Part I

Across Disciplines

1. The Scholarly Self: Ideals of Intellectual Virtue in Nineteenth-Century Leiden

Abstract: Chapter 1 sets the tone for the volume by comparing what ideals of virtue were propagated by historians, church historians, Arabic philologists, and Biblical scholars in late-nineteenth-century Leiden. The group includes both famous names (Abraham Kuenen, C. P. Tiele) and half-forgotten figures (Reinhart Dozy, J. G. R. Acquoy). What the comparison reveals is that a "philological ethos" characterized by virtues like carefulness, accuracy, patience, and perseverance was valued by all of them, though not to the same degree. This yields a first insight: ideals of scholarly virtue were recognized across the humanities and traveled across disciplinary borders (with Acquoy, the church historian, modeling himself explicitly after Robert Fruin, the historian).

Keywords: epistemic virtues, scholarly virtues, philological ethos, historical criticism, Leiden University, history of humanities

Introduction

Throughout the 1880s and early 1890s, Johannes Gerhardus Rijk Acquoy, professor of church history at Leiden University, used to invite his most talented students to a weekly *privatissimum*. In a room belonging to the university library, as close as possible to the books and manuscripts he needed, Acquoy taught his students the first principles of source criticism. More importantly, however, he also tried to mold their habits, characters, and working manners to transform them into real, "scientific" church historians. He told them that scholarship worthy of its name depended on such character traits as truthfulness, circumspection, precision, and "complete objectivity

Paul, Herman. *Virtues and Vices in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities: Explorations of a Discourse*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025.
DOI 10.5117/9789048562985_CH01

and impartiality."[1] In particular, Acquoy emphasized that church historians must be "critical," that is, in the possession of an inquiring mind, not easily satisfied, and unfailingly dedicated to the principle of asserting nothing that is not justified with primary source material. Church history had to be critical if it amounted to the status of *Wissenschaft*.[2]

In the historiography of the humanities, seminars such as Acquoy's *privatissimum* have often been seen as markers of professionalization and discipline formation. In the history of historical writing, for example, the Ranke-inspired *historisches Seminar* is frequently treated, not merely as a breeding ground for modern, source-based historical studies, but also as the institutional arrangement through which "professionals" distinguished themselves from "amateurs" and thereby helped create a distinct professional identity.[3] Arguably, the creation of such disciplinary identities was a major concern throughout the nineteenth century, not only for historians, but for scholars across the humanities.[4] However, Acquoy's weekly gatherings in the university library do not only inform us about processes of discipline formation; they are also evidence of a widespread commitment to "critical" history, "critical" source evaluation, and "critical" scholarship.

Whereas, by and large, the history of the humanities is often still written along disciplinary lines,[5] I would like to propose a different, discipline-transcending perspective. I am interested, not in how figures such as

1 J. G. R. Acquoy, *Handleiding tot de kerkgeschiedvorsching en kerkgeschiedschrijving* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1894), 119.

2 Ibid., 72. For a firsthand impression of Acquoy's teaching at Leiden, see Paul Fredericq, *L'enseignement supérieur de l'histoire et de la géographie en Hollande* (Ghent: Eug. Vanderhaeghen, 1889), 16.

3 E.g., Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 103–29; Pavel Kolář, "Nährboden fachlicher Innovation? Verfassungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte im Seminarunterricht an der Berliner, Wiener und Prager Deutschen Universität im Zeitalter des universitären Großbetriebs (1900–1930)," in *Vorlesung, Seminar, Repetitorium: Universitäre geschichtswissenschaftliche Lehre im internationalen Vergleich*, ed. Gabriele Lingelbach (Munich: Martin Meidenbauer, 2006), 89–128.

4 See, e.g., Konrad H. Jarausch, "Graduation and Careers," in *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. 3, ed. Walter Rüegg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 363–89; Reba N. Soffer, "The Development of Disciplines in the Modern English University," *The History Journal* 31, no. 4 (1988): 933–46; and Björn Wittrock's review essay, "The Transformation of European Universities: Disciplines and Professions in England, Germany and Prussia since 1870," *Central European History* 13, no. 1 (2004): 101–16.

5 See Volker Peckhaus and Christian Thiel, eds., *Disziplinen im Kontext: Perspektiven der Disziplingeschichtsschreibung* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1999). An inspiring exception is Rens Bod, *De vergeten wetenschappen: Een geschiedenis van de humaniora* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2010).

Acquoy helped create a discipline, but in how they conceived of the *persona* of the historian.[6] What sort of intellectual virtues did they attribute to him (never a her)? Whom did they identify as personifications of this ideal, and hence as model scholars? In what sort of practices did they hope to craft such "scholarly selves"?[7] And to what extent did they themselves, in the eyes of colleagues or students, live up to their ideals? Not unlike Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, whose work traces the historical trajectories of such virtues as truth, objectivity, precision, and replicability,[8] I am interested in the epistemic virtues that scholars considered essential to academic performance. What sort of *wissenschaftliche Persönlichkeit*, or scholarly self, did scholars have to acquire in order to classify as good academics?

Focusing, in this chapter, on the virtues implied in the ideal of a "critical" historian, I choose Acquoy and his colleagues at Leiden as my case study. This is, obviously, not because scholars at Leiden exercised a monopoly on so-called critical history, but because their university had an established reputation for such criticism—especially for "historical criticism" in Biblical scholarship.[9] I will briefly compare Acquoy's views in these matters to those of Abraham Kuenen, the Old Testament scholar, Reinhart Dozy, the Arabist, and Robert Fruin, the historian known as the "father of modern Dutch historiography."[10] For reasons of space, I will focus exclusively on their *ideals* of academic selfhood, that is, on the epistemic virtues they advocated in their teaching and writing, thereby leaving the question what sort of virtues and vices they *actually* exercised to a future occasion.[11]

6 I am indebted to a series of excellent studies on the personae of early modern philosophers, collected in Conal Condren, Stephen Gaukroger, and Ian Hunter, eds., *The Philosopher in Early Modern Europe: The Nature of a Contested Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), and a subsequent theme issue of *Intellectual History Review* 18, no. 3 (2008), edited by Conal Condren, Stephen Gaukroger, and Ian Hunter.

7 Lorraine Daston, "Die wissenschaftliche Persona: Arbeit und Berufung," in *Zwischen Vorderbühne und Hinterbühne: Beiträge zum Wandel der Geschlechterbeziehungen in der Wissenschaft vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Theresa Wobbe (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2003), 110–36.

8 Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

9 E.g., Is. da Costa, *Wat er door de Theologische Faculteit te Leyden al zoo geleerd en geleverd wordt: Eene stem der smart en des beklags* (Amsterdam: H. de Hoogh, 1857); N. N., "Leydsche beginselen," *De Tijdspiegel* (1862): II, 393–408.

10 For the common context of these four professors, see W. Otterspeer, *De wiekslag van hun geest: De Leidse universiteit in de negentiende eeuw* (The Hague: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1992), 203–19.

11 For this distinction, see Herman Paul, "Performing History: How Historical Scholarship is Shaped by Epistemic Virtues," *History and Theory* 50, no. 1 (2011): 1–19, at 7.

The critical historian

First, then, what sort of critical virtues did Acquoy, Kuenen, Dozy, and Fruin attribute to their model historians? Although, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the word "critical" was on many lips, this adjective could acquire a variety of meanings. What is needed, therefore, is a discourse analysis of the semantic field in which this word was employed. To what sort of performances did the predicates "critical," "uncritical," and "hypercritical" refer?[12] How was the ideal of "critical" history translated into character traits, virtues, habits, dos and don'ts?

Based on their teaching notes and on such programmatic pieces as their inaugural addresses, one can observe, first of all, that the four Leiden professors more or less agreed on the epistemic virtues that a "critical" historian had to embody. Requiring historians to base themselves, as much as possible, on primary source material, they all attributed great importance to virtues of the sort entailed in source criticism, that is, in detailed examination of such issues as the authorship, date, purpose, and reliability of ancient documents. Source criticism was careful, patient work and, accordingly, required "tough perseverance and inexhaustible patience" besides "fair judgment and a large amount of acuteness," as Acquoy told his students.[13] Fruin agreed that source criticism was a matter of "incredible exertion and shrewdness," requiring on the part of its practitioners "a craving for accuracy, also in little things" and an "unconditional love and reverence for the truth."[14] Dozy, too, urged his students that truth could only be reached through "accurate use of sources" and considered "great attentiveness and acuteness" indispensable for critical research.[15] "[M]any texts are still awaiting critical treatment, many errors still have to be put out of the way, many issues demand more accurate consideration than they have received so far."[16] Unsurprisingly, accuracy

12 On the excesses of hypercriticism, see Herman Paul, "Hypercriticism: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Vice," *Modern Intellectual History* 21, no. 3 (2024): 585–609 [chapter 4 in this volume].

13 Acquoy, *Handleiding*, 119.

14 Robert Fruin, "Over de plaats, die de geschiedenis in den kring der wetenschappen inneemt" (1878), in *Robert Fruin's verspreide geschriften*, ed. P. J. Blok, P. L. Muller, and S. Muller Fz., vol. 9 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1904), 349–75, at 368, 367, 373.

15 R. P. A. Dozy, *Over den gunstigen invloed, dien de omwentelingen in Frankrijk, sedert 1789, hebben uitgeoefend op de studie der middeleeuwsche geschiedenis* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1850), 30; R. Dozy, *De Israëlieten te Mekka van Davids tijd tot in de vijfde eeuw onzer tijdrekening* (Haarlem: A. C. Kruseman, 1864), 2.

16 Dozy, *Israëlieten te Mekka*, 12–13. On the significance that Dozy attached to accurate source criticism, see also A. J. Geurts, "Onderwijs in de geschiedenis der Middeleeuwen aan de Leidse

was also a key virtue for Kuenen, who recommended "utmost care" in matters of source criticism. Arguing that sources "must not be blindly accepted and followed, but must be carefully weighed and estimated,"[17] Kuenen almost equated progress in matters of source evaluation with an increase in scholarly cautiousness.[18]

Carefulness, accuracy, patience, and perseverance: these are intellectual virtues that Franz Schultz describes as "the heritage of a centuries-old philological mentality."[19] Rainer Kolk sees them as part and parcel of a "philological ethos" that prevailed throughout much of the nineteenth-century humanities.[20] Nonetheless, the Leiden faculty held somewhat divergent views on how significant the philological dimension of their research was. Consequently, despite their shared ideas about the diligence and devotion needed for source criticism, they did not entirely agree over whether historians must possess additional virtues or character traits and, in case of a positive answer, which virtues counted as most desirable.

Dozy, for example, never considered himself superior to humble source criticism, but felt irresistibly attracted to great epic narratives of the sort written in France by, for example, François Guizot and Augustin Thierry. "Compare a French historian to a German one," he said in 1850. "Why does the latter usually stand below the former, even if both have worked with equal industry? One answers: because the Germans often lack judgment and taste."[21] They overburden their studies with excessive footnotes, drown themselves in technical details, and tend to forget that history is more than the sum of its auxiliary sciences. So, what Dozy wanted historians to have, in addition to carefulness and perceptivity in matters of source evaluation, was imagination, literary taste, as well as a healthy amount of patriotism. For a compelling history of the sort that Dozy had in mind not merely showed what had happened in the

universiteit rond het midden van de negentiende eeuw," in *Mayolica: Mediëvistische opstellen aangeboden aan dr. Mayke de Jong bij haar afscheid van de Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen* (Nijmegen: Vakgroep Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis, 1987), 159–66, at 164.

17 A. Kuenen, "Critical Method—I," *The Modern Review* 1 (1880): 461–88, at 474.

18 A. Kuenen, *De godsdienst van Israël tot den ondergang van den Joodschen staat*, vol. 1 (Haarlem: A. C. Kruseman, 1869), 16.

19 Franz Schultz, "Die Entwicklung der Literaturwissenschaft von Herder bis Wilhelm Scherer," in *Philosophie der Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Emil Ermatinger (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1930), 1–42, at 37.

20 Rainer Kolk, "Wahrheit, Methode, Charakter: Zur wissenschaftlichen Ethik der Germanistik im 19. Jahrhundert," *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 14, no. 1 (1989): 50–73.

21 Dozy, *Over den gunstigen invloed*, 23.

past, but also instructed its readers and inculcated them with love for their country and its past.[22]

Kuenen, too, required additional virtues and cherished an ideal of narrative history. "Generally the critic and the historian are combined in the same individual, but for all that the former is the servant of the latter," he explained in 1880.[23]

> History that deserves the name is always "history of civilisation," whatever it may call itself, and of "civilisation," moreover, in that deeper sense which excludes any merely external conception and concentrates our attention upon the rise and growth of ideas, their propagation in society, and the power they exercise on life.[24]

At the same time, Kuenen was too much committed to meticulous criticism to ever allow any overhasty generalization about the development of ideas in society. When he praised his colleague, Henricus Oort, for his imaginative powers, he did not refrain from mentioning that Oort's historical narratives sometimes lacked a proper critical basis.[25]

For Kuenen, then, historians, on the one hand, need more than diligence and discernment. Empathy, imaginative power, intuition, and "congeniality of spirit" are indispensable for understanding ideas and their development over time.[26] On the other hand, Kuenen argued that these additional virtues must always be restrained by the asceticism of a truly critical mind: "Let the imagination spread its wings, but—only begin to fly when tranquil and patient research must declare to have reached the end of their possibilities."[27] Finally, it should not go unnoticed that Kuenen attached great weight to the

22 Ibid., 23, 8.

23 Kuenen, "Critical Method," 465.

24 Ibid., 466.

25 A. Kuenen, "De geschiedenis der priesters van Jahwe en de ouderdom der priesterlijke wet," *Theologisch Tijdschrift* 42 (1890): 1–42, at 33.

26 Kuenen, "Critical Method," 469.

27 Cited in J. C. Matthes, "Kuenen als criticus," *De Gids* (1894): 494–517, at 506. Kuenen's major books—*Historisch-kritisch onderzoek naar het ontstaan en de verzameling van de boeken des Ouden Verbonds* (1861–65) and *De godsdienst van Israël tot den ondergang van den Joodschen staat* (1869–70)—nicely illustrate this twofold attitude. Whereas *Historisch-kritisch onderzoek* was a meticulously detailed specimen of criticism, *De godsdienst van Israël* presented itself as "a concatenated narrative of Israel's fortunes" (vol. 1, 17). In comparison to the former, the latter book also tried less hard to hide the author's personal tastes and preferences. See A. van der Kooij, "The 'Critical Method' of Abraham Kuenen and the Methods of Old Testament Research since 1891 up to 1991: Some Considerations," in *Abraham Kuenen (1828–1891): His Major Contributions to the Study of the Old Testament*, ed. P. B. Dirksen and A. van der Kooij (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 49–64, at 50–51.

courage not to shrink away from unconventional or theologically unorthodox conclusions. Intellectual honesty sometimes requires the courage to "choose a new site for our edifice," even if that would not remain unchallenged in such a minefield as the discipline of Biblical scholarship.[28] The courage to embrace one's own conclusions, said Kuenen, is a moral demand for any scholar in pursuit of truth.[29]

Although Fruin and Acquoy agreed with much of this, they did not share Dozy's and Kuenen's ideals of narrative history. As long as "critical" historical studies had not grown beyond their embryonic state, any synthesis of scholarly findings was premature. Accordingly, for Fruin and Acquoy, the difference between history and criticism was relatively small. They wanted all of the historian's work to be guided by ascetic virtues of the sort that Dozy and Kuenen reserved to the stage of source evaluation. As Fruin unequivocally put it in an 1865 article:

> Before many a detail is put in better light, there can be no thought of a thoroughly satisfying survey of the entire course of history. It is therefore better to spend our energies in clarifying details than to waste them in delivering grand insights that are only partly correct. We are not to begin with the building before we have gathered and prepared the building material.[30]

Accordingly, Fruin's model historian had a great eye for detail and exhibited such virtues as precision and attentiveness, not only in an archives reading room, but also behind his writing desk. He would not dare to write what Kuenen called an "organic" history of how a people developed in the course of centuries.[31]

Likewise, Acquoy taught his students to avoid everything that bordered on such vices as carelessness, inaccuracy, and overhasty generalization.

> The less experienced an historian is, the more he shall give himself to startling conjunctions and daring hypotheses. But the more experience

28 A. Kuenen, *An Historico-Critical Inquiry into the Origin and Composition of the Hexateuch* (*Pentatech and Book of Joshua*), trans. Philip H. Wicksteed (London: Macmillan & Co., 1886), xiv.
29 A. Kuenen, *John William Colenso* (Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink, 1884), 11–12.
30 Robert Fruin, "De drie tijdvakken der Nederlandsche geschiedenis" (1865), in *Robert Fruin's verspreide geschriften*, ed. P. J. Blok, P. L. Muller, and S. Muller Fz., vol. 1 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1900), 22–48, at 22.
31 A. Kuenen, "Voorrede," in [Th.] Eisenlohr, *Het Israëlietische volk onder de regering der koningen: eene beschrijving van Israëls ontwikkeling volgens de beginselen der nieuwere methode*, trans. H. A. C. Denier van der Gon, vol. 1 (Leiden: P. Engels, 1861), i*–iv*.

> he has gained, the more truth-loving he has become; the more he has learned to belie his nature, to solicit the approval of posterity instead of the acclaim of his contemporaries; the more he will be tempted to confess his ignorance and not to act as if he knew everything and was able to explain it all.[32]

On Acquoy's view, even the texture of the historian's prose—serene and tranquil, plain and without any finery—and the typographical appearance of his work had to conform to ascetic virtues.[33]

In sum, all four professors agreed that history must be critical in the sense of being based on primary sources that had to be interpreted as meticulously, carefully, and accurately as possible. No significant differences existed between the virtues the four associated with the adjective "critical." However, if "critical" served as a minimum requirement for historical studies, the foursome did not fully agree on which additional character traits their model historians had to display. Despite a shared commitment to what Kolk calls a "philological ethos," their ideals of academic selfhood reflected different moral and aesthetic commitments.

Exemplary figures

My second question is how such ideals of academic selfhood were embodied by exemplary figures and illustrated by positive or negative examples. If Charles Paul and Jochen Zwick, among others, are right in treating academic memory cultures as realms in which scholarly ideals were expressed, discussed, and negotiated,[34] we may expect to encounter such idealized examples of scholarly selves, together with warnings against scholarly sins and vices, in genres like the obituary, the memoir, and the *laudatio*.[35] Indeed, in the immediate context of Leiden University, obituaries presented to the Society for Dutch Literature (Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde) provide vivid examples of how members of that society—these included Dozy, Kuenen, Fruin, and Acquoy—conceived of academic

32 Acquoy, *Handleiding*, 89.

33 Ibid., 107–13, 153–59.

34 Charles B. Paul, *Science and Immortality: The Éloges of the Paris Academy of Sciences (1699–1791)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Jochen Zwick, "Akademische Erinnerungskultur, Wissenschaftsgeschichte und Rhetorik im 19. Jahrhundert: Über Emil du Bois-Reymond als Festredner," *Scientia Poetica* 1 (1997): 120–39.

35 Bridgit Fowler, *The Obituary as Collective Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

selfhood, achievement, prestige, and career. Acquoy, for example, presented his deceased colleague Karel Wybrands as an exemplary model of a learned, dedicated, impartial, and sharp-witted church historian.[36] By contrast, his obituary for Hendrik Jan Spijker, which lamented the waste of talent caused by Spijker's far too many interests, or lack of proper focus, presented a negative model, or an example not to be imitated by students aspiring to academic excellence.[37] Likewise, Fruin's obituary for his friend Laurens Ph. C. van den Bergh did not conceal that this historian had lacked the precious gift of "solid criticism," which had often caused him to be "carried away" by his imagination.[38] Kuenen neither suppressed the fact that his colleague Lodewijk W. E. Rauwenhoff had never felt attracted to subtle "examination of details." He spoke highly, however, of another colleague, Theodoor W. J. Juynboll, whom Kuenen considered a specimen of meticulousness and diligence.[39]

Rites of passage were not the only occasions on which examples of virtue and vice were publicly presented. Whenever the four professors reflected on what made a good historian, they referred to concrete examples. For instance, after a lengthy elaboration on the virtue of impartiality, in his 1860 inaugural address, Fruin rhetorically asked: "But why should I speak any longer in the abstract? I would like to mention the historian in whom I find and admire the impartiality I have advocated in a larger degree than in anyone else: Leopold Ranke."[40] On other occasions, too, Fruin presented Ranke as epitomizing the epistemic virtues associated with critical history.[41] Kuenen, in turn, greatly admired the Tübingen theologian Ferdinand Christian Baur, whom

36 J. G. R. Acquoy, "Levensbericht van Aemilius Willem Wybrands," in *Handelingen en mededeelingen van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde te Leiden over het jaar 1887* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1887), 319–53, at 319.

37 J. G. R. Acquoy, "Levensbericht van Dr. Hendrik Jan Spijker," in *Handelingen en mededeelingen van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde te Leiden over het jaar 1871* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1871), 301–35, at 309–11.

38 Robert Fruin, "[Levensbericht van] L. Ph. C. van den Bergh" (1888), in *Robert Fruin's verspreide geschriften*, vol. 9, 465–96, at 477.

39 A. Kuenen, "Levensbericht van Lodewijk Willem Ernst Rauwenhoff," *Handelingen en mededeelingen van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde te Leiden over het jaar 1888–1889* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1889), 103–35, at 118–19; A. Kuenen, "Nekrologie," *Algemeene Konst- en Letterbode* 73, no. 41 (1861): 321–23, at 323.

40 Robert Fruin, "De onpartijdigheid van den geschiedschrijver" (1860), in *Robert Fruin's verspreide geschriften*, vol. 9, 274–99, at 293.

41 E.g., Robert Fruin, "Leopold von Ranke op zijn negentigsten verjaardag" (1886), in *Robert Fruin's verspreide geschriften*, vol. 9, 419–37. Along the same lines: B. ter Haar Bzn., "Leopold von Ranke," in *Mannen van beteekenis in onze dagen*, vol. 9 (Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink, 1878), 349–86, at 360, 363, 365.

he honored as a "great master" in the craft of New Testament criticism.[42] As for the courage to break new ground—the virtue that Kuenen considered of particular significance in the field of Old Testament scholarship—he enthusiastically referred to Dozy's controversial book, *De Israëlieten te Mekka* (1864), with its dazzling hypothesis that the Kaaba in Mecca had been founded by the Israelite tribe of Simon. Without taking sides in the scholarly debate that this thesis had evoked, Kuenen repeatedly ensured his readers what a "liberating effect" Dozy's "rare originality and freedom from traditional restraint" had had upon himself.[43] Meanwhile, Dozy himself preferred such French historians as the aforementioned Guizot and Thierry, arguing that they were critical scholars, but also great storytellers.[44] His *Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne* (1861) was an explicit attempt to imitate what he described as "the picturesque or descriptive school" in French historiography.[45]

One may wonder, of course, whether these model historians were selected because they embodied an ideal of scholarly selfhood or whether the chain of causation rather ran the other way, in the sense that the virtues and vices Fruin and his colleagues spoke about were abstractions or inferences from what they admired in Ranke and others. Perhaps it is more appropriate to say that Fruin wanted to be a Rankean type of historian, or that Dozy cherished the hope to achieve in Leiden what Guizot did in Paris, than to assume that their abstract ideals of academic selfhood preceded their choices of exemplary figures.

In any case, once such figures as Ranke were heralded as models to follow, they also, almost naturally, came to serve as father figures in what one might call professional genealogies or disciplinary histories. Following Stefan Collini, I understand a disciplinary history to be a teleological "account of the alleged historical development of an enterprise the identity of which is defined by the concerns of the current practitioners of a particular scientific field."[46] Fruin created such a disciplinary history when he presented Ranke as the father of modern historiography. Likewise, on a smaller geographical scale,

42 Kuenen, "Critical Method," 467.

43 Kuenen, *Historico-Critical Inquiry*, xviii; A. Kuenen, "Critische bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van den Israëlietischen godsdienst," *Theologisch Tijdschrift* 4 (1870): 391–426, at 404–6.

44 Catrien G. Santing, "De middeleeuwen met een phrygische muts: De geschiedvisie van Reinart [sic] Dozy en Willem Jonckbloet," *Theoretische Geschiedenis* 26 (1999): 220–37.

45 J. Brugman, "Dozy, a Scholarly Life According to Plan," in *Leiden Oriental Connections, 1850–1940*, ed. Willem Otterspeer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 62–81, at 70–71.

46 Stefan Collini, "'Discipline History' and 'Intellectual History': Reflections on the Historiography of the Social Sciences in Britain and France," *Revue de Synthèse* 109 (1988): 387–99, at 388.

Acquoy invented a disciplinary tradition when he claimed that, in the 1810s and 1820s, the Dutch theologians Annaeus Ypey and Isaäc Johannes Dermout had made "a first attempt" to practice church history in a critical manner.[47] Also, referring to Nicolaas Christiaan Kist, who had taught church history at Leiden between 1823 and 1859, and Kist's student Willem Moll, who had been Acquoy's teacher in Amsterdam, Acquoy declared to be pleased with the thought of occupying "the old chair of Kist," "that man of unremitting industry, thorough study of sources, and exemplary precision." "To imitate him in this respect, and also, in doing so, to prove myself a student of his student, Willem Moll, that is my wish."[48] Interestingly, this professional genealogy did not include Acquoy's immediate predecessor (and Kist's successor) at Leiden's church history chair, Lodewijk W. E. Rauwenhoff. Unmistakably, it was Rauwenhoff's "Hegelian" method,[49] or lack of proper critical virtues, that caused him to fall prey to such a removal from the discipline's genealogy.

Such patricides or father murders were not uncommon. Speaking on the virtue of impartiality, Fruin responded with sharp criticism to perhaps the best-known Dutch historian of the early nineteenth century, Willem Bilderdijk. Despite his diligence and commitment, Bilderdijk had been too biased politically to approach Fruin's ideal of an objective scholarly self. For Fruin, then, historical scholarship required "a completely different talent than the one we admire in Bilderdijk."[50] With even more contempt, Kuenen complained about "apologists" in Biblical scholarship, whose method, Kuenen asserted, "claims to be critical, but which, as a matter of fact, is the direct negation of criticism," because it treats the Bible with "implicit reverence and blind assent."[51] Engaged in lively and sometimes heated discussions with these apologists or traditionalists, Kuenen so much emphasized the need to break the "power of tradition" that Biblical scholarship prior to the nineteenth century was effectively relegated to the prehistory of the discipline.[52]

47 J. G. R. Acquoy, *Het nut der beoefening van de geschiedenis der Hervormde Kerk in Nederland* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1878), 11.

48 J. G. R. Acquoy, *Kerkgeschiedenis en geschiedenis van het Christendom* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1882), 7, 27.

49 F. Pijper, "Kist, Moll en Acquoy, de grondvesters der Nederlandsche historische school," *Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 4, no. 3 (1907): 237–52, at 247.

50 Fruin, "Onpartijdigheid," 287. Equally critical of Bilderdijk was M. de Vries, *De Nederlandsche taalkunde, beschouwd in hare vroegere geschiedenis, tegenwoordigen toestand en eischen voor de toekomst: Eene voorlezing* (Haarlem: A. C. Kruseman, 1849), 27–28.

51 Kuenen, "Critical Method," 686, 706.

52 Ibid., 697. See, however, A. Kuenen, "Hugo de Groot als uitlegger van het Oude Verbond," *Verslagen en Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeeling Letterkunde*, 2nd series, 12 (1883): 301–32.

Academic socialization

If exemplary figures and disciplinary histories reflect how Kuenen and his colleagues conceived of the historian's *persona*, or what they believed to constitute a scholarly self, one may wonder how such notions of academic selfhood were sustained in scholarly practices, and whether or how, in turn, such practices were institutionally embedded. All four scholars were convinced that intellectual virtue and scholarly character could only be acquired through "sustained and methodical exercise."[53] In his biography of John William Colenso, the autodidact Old Testament scholar, Kuenen did not hesitate to postulate a causal relationship between the vices that characterized Colenso's earliest writings—vices of imbalance and injudiciousness in particular—and the author's lack of a solid, academic training. "Colenso had educated himself and, consequently, was exposed to errors that in a good school he would have learned to avoid."[54] But what sort of educational practices were seen as constituting such a good school? When Dozy, in his inaugural address, invited his students to a seminar aimed "to revive your love for history, [and] to sharpen your historical tact,"[55] did he believe such a seminar to serve as the most appropriate place for students to acquire critical skills and develop their scholarly selves?

This question cannot easily be answered, given that I have been dealing so far with ideals of academic selfhood as expressed in the (often occasional) rhetoric of Dozy and his colleagues. Such ideals of intellectual virtue must not be confused with the scholarly ethos in which students at Leiden were actually socialized, or the virtues that were practiced in the books and articles the four professors wrote. As Irmline Veit-Brause reminds us, in an interesting case study of self-stylization in nineteenth-century academic discourse, significant discrepancies could exist between the rhetoric of *wissenschaftliche Persönlichkeiten* and the qualities actually needed in archival or laboratory work. Obituaries commemorating the merits of the dead could express ideals of intellectual virtue that were nostalgically anachronistic or simply unrealistic.[56]

Assuming, however, that Kuenen's and Fruin's admirers were not entirely wrong in remembering these Leiden professors as epitomizing the scholarly

53 Fruin, "Over de plaats," 372.

54 Kuenen, *John William Colenso*, 10.

55 Dozy, *Over den gunstigen invloed*, 31.

56 Irmline Veit-Brause, "The Making of Modern Scientific Personae: The Scientist as a Moral Person? Emil du Bois-Reymond and His Friends," *History of the Human Sciences* 15, no. 4 (2002): 19–49, at 31.

selves they themselves had advocated,[57] we can observe that the practices in which these scholars taught such virtues as precision, accuracy, and impartiality were only partly embedded in academic institutions. Although Dozy proposed to convene a seminar and Acquoy conducted a *privatissimum* in the library, perhaps the greatest part of scholarly character formation took place in personal contact between students and professors. As Jo Tollebeek has shown, for Fruin's generation, historical scholarship was largely still a domestic affair.[58] Although Fruin himself was slightly old-fashioned, by the standards of his time, in preferring teaching at home over lecturing in the Academy Building, student supervision and examination almost invariably took place in the professor's private study rather than in seminar rooms or lecture halls. Moreover, in good nineteenth-century fashion, Fruin and others used to invite their more talented students to their homes for tea.[59] Former students who acknowledged in writing the influence they had received from Fruin or Acquoy mostly refer to such informal meetings, in which the master most effectively prepared his pupil for the craft of solid scholarship.[60] Unsurprisingly, then, in many commemorative texts, the professor's study was bestowed an almost sacred aura.[61]

This may be one reason among others why at least three of the four Leiden professors—Fruin, Acquoy, Kuenen—were elevated to exemplary status shortly after or even before their death. When Fruin was proclaimed "the father of modern Dutch historiography" on the occasion of his retirement in 1894,[62] this honorary title was conferred to him by students who conceived

57 E.g., C. P. Tiele, "Abraham Kuenen: In memoriam," *De Gids* (1892): 191–96, at 193; K. Budde, "Vorwort," in Abraham Kuenen, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur biblischen Wissenschaft*, trans. K. Budde (Freiburg; Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1894), iii–xii, at v; Matthes, "Kuenen als criticus," 496.
58 Jo Tollebeek, "Een wetenschap van kleine gebaren: Historiografische praktijken in de late negentiende eeuw," in *Het vaderlandse verleden: Robert Fruin en de Nederlandse geschiedenis*, ed. Herman Paul and Henk te Velde (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2010), 17–37, at 18–22.
59 P. J. M. Aalberse, diary entries of 17 and 20 November 1893, http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/Aalberse/Dagboeken/Dagboek/Aalberse02%201892-1893.
60 E.g., I. M. J. Hoog, *De martelaren der Hervorming in Nederland tot 1566* (Schiedam: H. A. M. Roelants, 1885), ix*–x*; Michael Schoengen to Jan Kalf, 18 January 1906, as quoted in Gerda C. Huisman, "'Het is hier geen École des Chartes': Michael Schoengen, privaatdocent in diplomatiek, paleografie en verdere hulpwetenschappen van de geschiedenis, 1904–1931," in *De geschiedenis van de middeleeuwen aan de Groningse universiteit, 1614–1939*, ed. Catrien Santing (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997), 85–96, at 93; P. J. Blok, "Levensbericht van James de Fremery," in *Handelingen en mededeelingen van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde te Leiden over het jaar 1901* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1901), 106–23, at 115.
61 Jo Tollebeek, *Fredericq & Zonen: Een antropologie van de moderne geschiedwetenschap* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008), 86–92.
62 S. Muller Fz., "Robert Fruin," *De Gids* (1894): II, 353–62, at 359.

of themselves as sons keen to imitate their father.[63] Likewise, when Frederik Pijper depicted Acquoy as a "symbol" of "solid source study, impartial love of truth," and "accuracy in detail,"[64] this judgment reflected a genuine desire to follow in the footsteps of his admired teacher (of whom he kept a sizeable portrait in his study).[65] Such almost personal identifications with a *Doktorvater* usually emerged from more than mere class attendance. Although there are examples of students at Leiden who conceived a genuine love for their teacher based on his classes alone,[66] epistemic virtues of the sort that Fruin and Acquoy advocated were sustained first and foremost in private encounters, in practices of personal supervision and coaching.

Conclusion

As brief as this analysis has been, I hope it illustrates how promising an interdisciplinary history of the humanities fractured through the prism of academic selfhood can be. What the foregoing shows is that Kuenen, Dozy, Fruin, and Acquoy, despite their divergent disciplinary perspectives, shared an ethos of critical historical research, characterized by such intellectual virtues as carefulness, precision, and accuracy. Although the four professors held somewhat different ideas about the desirability for historians to possess additional virtues, such as stylistic virtuosity or patriotic devotion, they turned out to share what I called a philological ethos. This, then, is the first advantage of interdisciplinary histories conceived along the lines sketched in this chapter: they may reveal scholarly habitudes, shared across disciplinary boundaries, that have long been obscured by discipline-oriented historiography.[67] More precisely, such histories may reveal how an ideal like "historical criticism" was discussed, negotiated, and implemented in an intellectual realm that overlapped, but did not coincide with, any of the academic disciplines that the nineteenth century saw emerge.

63 Herman Paul, "'De Hollandsche meester der streng-analytischen methode': Robert Fruin als vader van de Nederlandse geschiedwetenschap," in Paul and Te Velde, *Vaderlandse verleden*, 221–48, at 223–25.

64 Pijper, "Kist, Moll en Acquoy," 252.

65 A. Eekhof, "Levensbericht van Fredrik Pijper," in *Handelingen van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde te Leiden 1926* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1926), 123–42, at 124.

66 H. Y. Groenewegen, *Het onderwijs in de zedekunde van prof. Abraham Kuenen* (Amsterdam: Y. Rogge, [1893]).

67 On the concept of scholarly habitus, see Remi Lenoir, "Scientific Habitus: Pierre Bourdieu and the Collective Individual," *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 6 (2006): 25–43.

Secondly, as repeatedly noted above, the demand for "criticism" was more than an intellectual requirement. Although the adjective "critical" referred to such intellectual virtues as acuteness and meticulousness, it had aesthetic overtones, for example, when Acquoy argued that intellectual asceticism corresponded to soberness in typographical matters. More importantly, criticism was considered a moral duty, most explicitly so by Kuenen, who regarded Colenso's intellectual courage as "noble" from "*an ethical point of view*."[68] In fact, one might argue, as Fruin did in 1860, that intellectual and moral virtues can never be separated.[69] This, then, raises the question to what extent demands for criticism in historical scholarship were motivated by moral concerns, or what mutual influences we can discern between the historian's professional ethos and upper-middle-class codes of morality. How was intellectual virtue related to civic virtue, and how were notions of scholarly selfhood linked to ideals of bourgeois citizenship?[70] Or how to explain the suggestive similarities between the intellectual asceticism permeating Acquoy's *Handleiding tot de kerkgeschiedvorsching en kerkgeschiedschrijving* (Manual for the study and writing of church history, 1894) and the moral self-restraint preached in so-called adolescent advice literature?[71] These questions should be addressed in follow-up research.

Finally, it goes without saying that a full analysis of the critical ethos shared by the four Leiden professors figuring in this chapter has to contain not only synchronic, but also diachronic axes. What constituted a *wissenschaftliche Persönlichkeit* was not etched in stone; such ideals changed over time. The example we encountered in the preceding pages was Acquoy's inaugural address of 1881, in which the newly appointed church historian presented a disciplinary genealogy that excluded his immediate predecessor, Rauwenhoff. This reveals not only how little Acquoy's catalog of intellectual virtues corresponded to Rauwenhoff's, but also how greatly the church

68 Kuenen, *John William Colenso*, 11. See also Cornelis Houtman, "Colenso as Seen by Kuenen, and as Known from Colenso's Letters to Kuenen," in *The Eye of the Storm: Bishop John William Colenso and the Crisis of Biblical Inspiration*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 76–103.

69 Fruin, "Onpartijdigheid," 290. A modern, neo-Aristotelian view of intellectual virtue as inextricably linked with moral qualities is presented in Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

70 In his *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), Stefan Collini offers some fascinating explorations of this question.

71 For moral advice literature in the nineteenth-century Netherlands, see Marja van Tilburg, *Hoe hoorde het? Seksualiteit en partnerkeuze in de Nederlandse adviesliteratuur, 1780–1890* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1998).

history taught in Acquoy's *privatissimum* differed from Rauwenhoff's classes, prior to 1881. A full history of historical scholarship at Leiden would treat Rauwenhoff, together with Johannes Henricus Scholten and others, as representing a Hegelian-inspired view of history that became increasingly under threat from the sort of critical scholarship that came into vogue in the 1860s. Likewise, it would examine how, by the turn of the century, the critical ethos advocated by Dozy, Fruin, Kuenen, and Acquoy increasingly met with disapproval, even in what Fruin's most loyal pupil, Petrus Johannes Blok, proudly called "the Leiden school of history."[72] Among other things, such transformations in what counted as intellectual virtue or academic selfhood make the *persona* of the scholar a fascinating subject for interdisciplinary histories of the humanities.

72 P. J. Blok, "De historische school," in A. R. Zimmerman et al., *Pallas Leidensis MCMXXV* (Leiden: S. C. van Doesburgh, 1925), 105–18.

2. Weber, Wöhler, and Waitz: Virtue Language in Late-Nineteenth-Century Physics, Chemistry, and History

Abstract: Chapter 2 continues where chapter 1 left off, with the question of whether the discourse of virtue was also used outside of the humanities, in the natural sciences. Focusing on three University of Göttingen professors and their posthumous reputations, the chapter shows that virtue talk was more dominant in history than in chemistry and physics. Nonetheless, scholars in all three fields invoked notions of virtue at moments when the defining features of their scholarly personae were perceived as being under pressure. This shows that the discourse of virtue could serve as a means for taking sides in debates about such fundamental issues as the proper relation between academy and industry or the relative importance of source criticism in relation to writing (*Darstellung*).

Keywords: epistemic virtues, scholarly virtues, University of Göttingen, history of humanities, history of physics, history of chemistry

Introduction

If the Göttingen professors Friedrich Wöhler, Wilhelm Weber, and Georg Waitz had one thing in common, it was that they were immortalized in stone by the Berlin sculptor Ferdinand Hartzer. In the years between 1887 and 1899, Hartzer created a bust of Waitz, the historian, a statue of Wöhler, the chemist, and a *Doppelstandbild* depicting Weber, the physicist, together with Carl Friedrich Gauß.[1] A standard feature of the festive culture of Wil-

1 Monika Arndt and Karl Arndt, *Der Bildhauer Ferdinand Hartzer 1838–1906* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1986), 158–60, 164–66, 188–94. Hartzer's correspondence regarding the Waitz bust can be found in the Göttingen State and University Library, inv. no. 2 Cod. Ms. Philos. 182 F. Hartzer: Briefe.

Paul, Herman. *Virtues and Vices in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities: Explorations of a Discourse*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025.
DOI 10.5117/9789048562985_CH02

helmine Germany was that the unveiling of such sculptures was not only accompanied by draperies of flags, festive cantatas, and lavish dinners for invited guests, but also by speeches that described in superlative terms the accomplishments of the men depicted in stone.[2] In Weber's case, for instance, Waldemar Voigt delivered a glowing "consecration speech," as exultant as the marching music played before and afterwards, in which the Göttingen physics professor depicted Gauß and Weber in military language as "heroes of the spirit [...] who have fought for our fatherland to become a superpower in the empire of science."[3] Waitz's death in 1886 prevented the unveiling of his bust to become such a festive ceremony. The lack of an unveiling speech, however, was richly compensated by almost thirty obituaries produced by former colleagues and students.[4]

What do such commemorative sources—unveiling speeches and obituaries—reveal about epistemic virtues in late-nineteenth-century scholarship?[5] A quick glance at the panegyrics on Wöhler, Weber, and Waitz suffices to observe that quite a few speakers and authors employed virtue language in highlighting the achievements of the deceased. At the unveiling of Wöhler's statue, for example, August Wilhelm von Hofmann praised Wöhler's "diligence," "steadfast will power," "unimpeachable honesty," and "loyalty to the truth" (*Wahrheitstreue*).[6] Likewise, Waitz's students and sympathizers echoed each other in emphasizing his "enormous diligence," "relentless thoroughness," and "penetrating criticism."[7]

2 Karl Arndt, "Denkmäler in Göttingen: Dichter und Gelehrte," in *Göttinger Jahrbuch 1975* (Göttingen: Heinz Reise, 1975), 107–43.

3 N. N., "Carl Friedrich Gauss und Wilhelm Weber," *Zeitschrift des Vereins Deutscher Ingenieure* 43 (1899): 824–25, at 825; Horst Michling, "Vom Gauß-Weber-Denkmal und seiner Einweihung," *Mitteilungen der Gauss-Gesellschaft* 6 (1969): 16–21. (Axel Wittmann, secretary of the Gauss-Gesellschaft in Göttingen, kindly provided me with a copy of the Michling article.)

4 Herman Paul, "The Virtues of a Good Historian in Early Imperial Germany: Georg Waitz's Contested Example," *Modern Intellectual History* 15, no. 3 (2018): 681–709.

5 On necrological genres in nineteenth-century Germany, see Ralf Georg Bogner, *Der Autor im Nachruf: Formen und Funktionen der literarischen Memorialkultur von der Reformation bis zum Vormärz* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2006), 361–77.

6 N. N., "Das Wöhler-Denkmal in Göttingen," *Berichte der Deutschen Chemischen Gesellschaft* 23 (1890): 829–51, at 836, 845. Hofmann's speech was also published in Aug. Wilh. von Hofmann, *Justus von Liebig, Friedrich Wöhler: Zwei Gedächtnissreden* (Leipzig: Veit & Comp., 1891), 39–63.

7 C. Er. Carstens, "Geheimrath Professor Dr. G. Waitz," *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Schleswig-Holstein-Lauenburgische Geschichte* 17 (1887): 366–74, at 372; Juan Fastenrath, "Los historiadores alemanes Leopoldo de Ranke y Jorge Waitz," *Revista de ciencias históricas* 5 (1887): 16–21, at 21; A. Hagedorn, "Zum Andenken an Georg Waitz," *Mittheilungen des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Alterthumskunde* 2 (1886): 146–49, at 147.

What to make of such praise of the dead? As Anna Echterhölter and others have argued, scholarly obituaries constitute a peculiar kind of source material. They should neither be taken at face value, as faithful descriptions of an individual's life, nor rejected out of hand as untrustworthy ("de mortuis nil nisi bonum"). Necrologies are useful sources rather to the extent that they reflect culturally sanctioned standards for praise and blame, thereby articulating socially shared expectations, implicit or explicit codes of conduct, and biographical templates for scholars to conform to. Necrologies, in other words, reveal what scholars are expected to do and, more importantly, how they are expected to live.[8] Accordingly, the question is not whether Wöhler, Weber, and Waitz were as "accurate," "loyal," or "industrious" as the necrologies portray them, but what the virtues ascribed to them reveal about the normative standards of late-nineteenth-century German chemists, physicists, and historians. What sort of virtue catalogs did they invoke? An why and under what circumstances did they speak in terms of virtue about their predecessors?

Given that these questions are only beginning to receive attention from historians—following a longer-standing interest of philosophers of science in epistemic virtues, or virtues considered as conducive to the acquisition of knowledge and other epistemic goods—there is not much literature on which to rely.[9] In particular, few attempts have been made so far to explain the functions of virtue language in nineteenth-century scholarly discourse. The only explanation that has been put forward so far comes from Jo Tollebeek, who argues that virtue language in the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*) around 1900 served the goal of strengthening bonds of unity in emerging scholarly disciplines. In this reading, virtues were markers of shared commitments to shared goals or methods, which in turn contributed to a shared

8 Anna Echterhölter, *Schattengefechte: Genealogische Praktiken in Nachrufen auf Naturwissenschaftler (1710–1860)* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 35; Charles B. Paul, *Science and Immortality: The Éloges of the Paris Academy of Sciences (1699–1791)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); George Weisz, "The Self-Made Mandarin: The *Éloges* of the French Academy of Medicine, 1824–47," *History of Science* 26, no. 1 (1988): 13–40, at 14–15.

9 Jason Baehr, *The Inquiring Mind: On Intellectual Virtues and Virtue Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), provides a good overview. See, however, Jo Tollebeek, *Men of Character: The Emergence of the Modern Humanities* (Wassenaar: Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2011); Falko Schnicke, *Die männliche Disziplin: Zur Vergeschlechtlichung der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft 1780–1900* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015); Herman Paul, "Virtue Language in Nineteenth-Century Orientalism: A Case Study in Historical Epistemology," *Modern Intellectual History* 14, no. 3 (2017): 689–715 [chapter 6 in this volume]; Herman Paul, "The Virtues and Vices of Albert Naudé: Toward a History of Scholarly Personae," *History of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2016): 327–38.

sense of belonging. Virtues, in other words, were shorthand descriptions of an ethos or habitus that scholars had to appropriate in order to be included in scholarly communities committed to "modern," "scientific" research.[10]

In order to test this hypothesis, I will compare the occurrence and functions of virtue language in three scholarly disciplines: physics, chemistry, and history. Although it is not yet common for historians of the sciences and the humanities to engage in such comparisons across the classic divide between *Geistes-* and *Naturwissenschaften*, I think this is a much-needed step toward an integrated history of the sciences and the humanities such as advocated by Rens Bod (2015) and Lorraine Daston and Glenn W. Most (2015).[11] More in particular, such a cross-disciplinary comparison may help prevent premature extrapolation of discipline- or even time- and place-specific findings to other fields of inquiry. Concretely, I will therefore examine the occurrence and functions of virtue language in obituaries written for the three men mentioned above: Friedrich Wöhler, Wilhelm Weber, and Georg Waitz. I will base my analysis on what is probably not a complete set of necrologies, but a corpus of source texts that includes as many late-nineteenth-century obituaries of the three Göttingen professors as I have been able to find. Although the overwhelming majority of these texts is written by German academics, Waitz and especially Wöhler and Weber were also commemorated in French, Spanish, Italian, British, and American journals. For all these obituaries, I identify their authors and examine the purposes these authors had in honoring the dead as well as the meanings they associated with concepts of virtue and vice.

What emerges is an interpretation that differs from Tollebeek's in so far as it focuses not on unity but on difference. My thesis is that epistemic virtues such as "accuracy" and "steadfastness" were primarily invoked in situations of disagreement over scholarly personae, that is, over models of what it takes to be a scholar in terms of attitudes or dispositions.[12] Virtues were no peace flags, but declarations of war or, less metaphorically, shorthand

10 Jo Tollebeek, "Commemorative Practices in the Humanities around 1900," *Advances in Historical Studies* 4, no. 3 (2015): 216–31.

11 Rens Bod, "A Comparative Framework for Studying the Histories of the Humanities and Science," *Isis* 106, no. 2 (2015): 367–77; Lorraine Daston and Glenn W. Most, "History of Science and History of Philologies," *Isis* 106, no. 2 (2015): 378–90.

12 Lorraine Daston and H. Otto Sibum, "Introduction: Scientific Personae and Their Histories," *Science in Context* 16, nos. 1–2 (2003): 1–8; Herman Paul, "What Is a Scholarly Persona? Ten Theses on Virtues, Skills, and Desires," *History and Theory* 53, no. 3 (2014): 348–71; Paul, "Virtues and Vices of Albert Naudé"; Gadi Algazi, "Exemplum and Wundertier: Three Concepts of the Scholarly Persona," *Low Countries Historical Review* 131, no. 4 (2016): 8–32.

for commitments to scholarly aims that were controversial enough to need defense. Whether and why such defenses were needed, differed from context to context, depending on variables far more specific than scholarly disciplines. In Göttingen, the man with the smallest statue turned out to cause the greatest amount of disagreement.

Georg Waitz

While Georg Waitz's bust was only seventy-six centimeters high, his fame had been great enough to attract students from all over Europe to his *historische Übungen* (a kind of informal research seminar).[13] By the late 1880s, these former students had become a rather diverse lot, in terms of age, nationality, employment, political leaning, and religious affiliation.[14] This diversity is reflected in obituaries that appeared from Riga to Madrid, in different languages, from Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish authors alike. To be sure, all necrologies agreed that Waitz had excelled in such virtues as "meticulousness," "carefulness," "precision," and "love of truth."[15] These were virtues characteristic of a philological ethos: a way of doing history that resembled classical philology as practiced by Barthold Georg Niebuhr and his pupils.[16] It preferred factual accuracy over hypothetical inference and avoided claiming anything about the past that could not be substantiated

13 Ulrich Muhlack, "Die Stellung von Georg Waitz in der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Jaroslav Goll a jeho žáci*, ed. Bohumil Jiroušek, Josef Blüml, and Dagmar Blümlová (České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita, 2005), 165–81. On the informal character of Waitz's teaching, see Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, "Private Übungen und verkörpertes Wissen: Zur Unterrichtspraxis der Geschichtswissenschaft im neunzehnten Jahrhundert," in *Akademische Wissenskulturen: Praktiken des Lehrens und Forschens vom Mittelalter bis zur Moderne*, ed. Martin Kintzinger and Sita Steckel (Basel: Schwabe, 2015), 143–61. This section draws and expands on Paul, "Virtues of a Good Historian."

14 A list of former students can be found in Eberhard Waitz, *Georg Waitz: Ein Lebens- und Charakterbild zu seinem hundertjährigen Geburtstag 9. Oktober 1913* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1913), 92–100.

15 These were virtues that Waitz himself had ascribed to his teacher Leopold von Ranke: G. Waitz, *Die historischen Übungen zu Göttingen: Glückwunschschreiben an Leopold von Ranke zum Tage der Feier seines fünfzigjährigen Doctorjubiläums, 20. Februar 1867* (Göttingen: W. Fr. Kästner, 1867), 4.

16 Rainer Kolk, "Wahrheit, Methode, Charakter: Zur wissenschaftlichen Ethik der Germanistik im 19. Jahrhundert," *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 14, no. 1 (1989): 50–73, under reference to Franz Schultz, "Die Entwicklung der Literaturwissenschaft von Herder bis Wilhelm Scherer," in *Philosophie der Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Emil Ermatinger (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1930), 1–42, at 37.

with published or unpublished source material. But while all necrologies treated Waitz as a key example of this philological ethos, they disagreed on how praiseworthy this was. Let me offer two examples.

One necrology was written by Heinrich von Sybel, who like Waitz had studied with Leopold von Ranke, the alleged father of modern German historiography, but who had developed himself in such a way as to become almost an antitype of the philological ethos embodied by Waitz.[17] Indeed, his description of himself as "four-sevenths a professor and three-sevenths a politician" had sufficed for Waitz's students to conceive of Sybel as almost a mirror-image of their own teacher, who had increasingly preferred sharp boundaries between history and politics.[18] Sybel, then, used his obituary of Waitz to argue that the historian has three tasks—research, interpretation, and writing—each of which requires particular skills and virtues. As politely as possible, Sybel continued that Waitz, like all great men, had had a single *forte*, and that his philological virtues clearly illustrated that this *forte* had been research rather than interpretation or writing.[19] Judging by Sybel's own standards, this implied that Waitz had been one-sided—a judgment that was issued more explicitly and less politely in private correspondence, not only by Sybel, but also by Johann Gustav Droysen, Jacob Burckhardt, and Ernst Bernheim, to mention but a few famous names.[20]

Some of Waitz's most loyal pupils, such as August Kluckhohn, rushed to his defense and used their obituaries to acquit Waitz from the charge that his philological ethos had caused him to lose himself in details.[21] Taken at face value, these necrologies seem to indulge in self-gratulation by emphasizing the privilege of having sat at Waitz's feet.[22] One could almost

17 Volker Dotterweich, *Heinrich von Sybel: Geschichtswissenschaft in politischer Absicht* (*1817–1861*) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978).

18 Heinrich von Sybel to Johann Caspar Bluntschli, date unknown, as quoted in Conrad Varrentrapp, "Biographische Einleitung," in Heinrich von Sybel, *Vorträge und Abhandlungen*, ed. Conrad Varrentrapp (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1897), 1–156, at 128; Friedrich von Bezold, "Lebenserinnerungen" (undated), 47, Bonn University Archive, inv. no. Bh Bez.

19 Heinrich v[on] Sybel, "Georg Waitz," *Historische Zeitschrift* 56 (1886): 482–87, at 484, 485. Similarly: N. N., "Leopold v. Ranke und Georg Waitz †," *Zeitung für das höhere Unterrichtswesen Deutschlands* 15 (1886): 179–80, at 180.

20 See, e.g., Ernst Bernheim to Karl Lamprecht, 2 January 1885, Bonn University and State Library, inv. no. S 2713, Korr. 9.

21 A[ugust] K[luckhohn], "Georg Waitz," *Allgemeine Zeitung* (1886): 4017–18, 4041–42, 4313–14, 4385–86, at 4042, 4314.

22 Ibid., 4042, 4385; [Hubert Ermisch], "Georg Waitz † 24. Mai 1886," *Wissenschaftliche Beilage der Leipziger Zeitung* (1886): 265–69, at 267; Ferdinand Frensdorff, "Zur Erinnerung an Georg Waitz: Vortrag auf der Versammlung des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins zu Quedlinburg am 15. Juni 1886 gehalten," *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 14 (1885): 1–10, at 9.

gain the impression that these former students were celebrating a shared disciplinary "we." However, if we read their pieces against the background of Sybel's necrology and other critical assessments of Waitz's merits, their veiled references to the "derogatory manner" in which Waitz's achievements had been evaluated become a key to understanding what their more important purpose was.[23] The primary concern of Waitz's students was to rescue the honor of their former teacher as well as to legitimize their own way of doing history by defending the scholarly persona that Waitz had embodied against its rivals.[24] Concretely: they clung to virtues of accuracy, precision, and shrewdness in order to dissociate themselves from more politicized and/or aesthetically oriented personae of the sort cherished by Sybel, Droysen, and Burckhardt.[25]

Something similar applies to Hermann Grauert's more than fifty-page necrology, which presented Waitz as a role model for "exact critical historical research."[26] Unremarkable as this may sound for a former student of Waitz, it is noteworthy that Grauert issued this praise in the journal of the Görres Society—an association of Catholic historians more familiar with the persona of the apologetic Catholic writer such as embodied by Johannes Janssen, the polemical defender of Catholic truth, than with the "impartiality" of a "scientific" historian.[27] Grauert's praise is all the more remarkable because Waitz had had a rather bad name among Catholic historians due to of some notoriously condescending remarks he had made about the "ultramontane" inclinations of southern German historiography.[28] Several Catholic colleagues had returned the compliment and accused Waitz of Protestant bias and ignorance about Catholic history writing.[29] So, in this context, praise for Waitz's "rare talent" amounted to dissociation

23 [Ermisch], "Georg Waitz," 268.

24 Particularly defensive are Alfred Stern, "Georg Waitz," *Die Nation* 3 (1886): 538–40, at 538, 540, and Ludwig Weiland, *Georg Waitz* (*geb. 9. October 1813, gest. 24. Mai 1886*)*: Rede gehalten in der öffentlichen Sitzung der K. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften am 4. Dezember 1886* (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Verlags-Buchhandlung, 1886), 7–8, 11. See also [Wilhelm] Wattenbach, "Gedächtnisrede auf Georg Waitz," in *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin aus dem Jahre 1886* (Berlin: Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1887), 1–12, at 9.

25 Herman Paul, "The Heroic Study of Records: The Contested Persona of the Archival Historian," *History of the Human Sciences* 26, no. 4 (2013): 67–83.

26 Herm[ann von] Grauert, "Georg Waitz," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 8 (1887): 48–100, at 99.

27 Walter Troxler, *Ein Aussenseiter der Geschichtsschreibung: Johannes Janssen 1829–1891: Studien zu Leben und Werk eines katholischen Historikers* (Berlin: Pro Business, 2007).

28 G. Waitz, "Deutsche Historiker der Gegenwart: Briefe an den Herausgeber," *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 5 (1846): 520–35, at 533–34.

29 Johann Friedrich Böhmer to Joseph Eutych Kopp, 6 September 1846, in *Joh. Friedrich Böhmer's Briefe*, ed. Johannes Janssen, vol. 1 (Freiburg: Herder'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1863), 451. See

from prevalent Catholic models, or, more precisely, to a difficult attempt at reconciling epistemic virtues of the kind embodied by Waitz with religious virtues associated with Janssen. Unsurprisingly, Grauert's unorthodox attempt at reconciling Protestant criticism with Catholic faith caused not a little nervousness within the Görres Society and something close to a crisis at the association's 1887 annual meeting.[30]

Waitz's necrologies, in short, show that epistemic virtues referred to commitments shared at a much smaller scale than the entire historical discipline. They were invoked, not to unite historians of various stripes, but to defend a scholarly persona or *Gelehrtentypus* in the context of a politically and religiously divided discipline.[31] Can the same be said about physics and chemistry in late-nineteenth-century Germany?

Scientific discoveries

The obituaries for Weber and Wöhler as well as the speeches delivered by the unveiling of their statues in Göttingen show a rather different picture. The point is not that virtue language was lacking. To the contrary, Weber was frequently praised for his kindness and sobriety, as well as for his civil courage in joining "the Göttingen Seven" in challenging King Ernst Augustus's unlawful alteration of the Hanoverian constitution in 1837—an act of civil disobedience that had temporarily cost him his chair in Göttingen.[32] These were moral and civic virtues, however, without epistemic implications, as illustrated by the fact that they were only invoked in short, personal reminiscences near the end of the obituaries, after far more lengthy discussions of Weber's scholarly merits, in which virtue language was strikingly absent.

Indeed, the main difference between Waitz's necrologies and those of Weber and Wöhler is that the latter focus almost exclusively on scientific results,

also [Ludwig] P[astor], "Georg Waitz als preußischer Geschichtsmonopolist," *Der Katholik* 55 (1875): 435–45.

30 Gregor Klapczynski, *Katholischer Historismus? Zum historischen Denken in der deutschsprachigen Kirchengeschichte um 1900: Heinrich Schrörs, Albert Ehrhard, Joseph Schnitzer* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2013), 22–23 n. 58.

31 I borrow the term *Gelehrtentypus* from Michael Maurer, "Christian Thomasius oder: vom Wandel des Gelehrtentypus im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Christian Thomasius (1655–1728): Neue Forschungen im Kontext der Frühaufklärung*, ed. Friedrich Vollhardt (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997), 429–44.

32 How the Göttingen Seven were remembered and appropriated across the German political spectrum is the subject of Miriam Saage-Maaß, *Die Göttinger Sieben: Demokratische Vorkämpfer oder nationale Helden? Zum Verhältnis von Geschichtsschreibung und Erinnerungskultur in der Rezeption des Hannoverschen Verfassungskonfliktes* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2007), 47–84.

or on what the Göttingen chemist Hans Hübner, writing about Wöhler, called his *wissenschaftlichen Grossthaten*.[33] In loving detail, they dwelled on his "interesting discoveries" and "monumental research accomplishments."[34] By doing so, they paid far more attention to the outcomes of Wöhler's experiments—to his artificial formation of urea, in particular—than to the manner in which "the dean of German chemists" had conducted his research.[35] Wöhler "executed," "isolated," "improved," "showed," "discovered," and "proved," to quote a few telling verbs from a single paragraph in *The American Journal of Pharmacy*.[36] Despite some occasional remarks on "a mind fertile in methods, and a judgment seldom at fault," the focus was on "the fruits of well-directed intellectual labor."[37] Weber, likewise, was primarily remembered for his "chief contributions to science, those for which he is now best known, and will long continue to be known."[38] What mattered to his necrologists were his "immortal achievements," which had provided a "foundation on which all later researchers" could build.[39]

This focus on discoveries allowed for a historicization, or emphasis on distance in time, for which Waitz's students were hardly prepared. Weber, for instance, was described as "the last representative of that generation of men of science that cast so much luster on the first half of this century," or even as a man "who had long been walking among us as a monument of beautiful days past."[40] As *The Popular Science Monthly* put it:

33 H. Hübner, "Friedrich Wöhler † (geb. den 31. Juli 1800, gest. den 23. September 1882): Rede gehalten in der öffentlichen Sitzung der K. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften am 9. December 1882," *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* 29 (1882): 1–11, at 1, 9.

34 E.g., N. N., "Wöhler-Denkmal," 839; A. W. H[ofmann], "Zur Erinnerung an Friedrich Wöhler," *Berichte der Deutschen Chemischen Gesellschaft* 15 (1882): 3127–290, at 3220; M. F., untitled necrology, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London* 35 (1883): xii–xx, at xviii. I owe the latter reference to Léjon Saarloos.

35 Untitled death announcement, *Journal für praktische Chemie* 26 (1882): 256.

36 N. N., "Obituary," *The American Journal of Pharmacy* 54 (1882): 591–92, at 592.

37 "Friedrich Wöhler," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 18 (1882–83): 463–65, at 464, 463.

38 [Amos E. Dolbear], "Wilhelm Eduard Weber," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 27 (1891–92): 449–50, at 450.

39 Giuseppe Basso, "In commemorazione di Guglielmo Weber," *Atti della R. Accademia delle scienze di Torino: Classe di scienze fisiche, matematiche e naturali* 27 (1891–92): 4–13, at 7; A. Momber, "Zur Erinnerung an Wilhelm Weber: Vortrag in der Sitzung vom 14. Oktober 1891 gehalten," *Schriften der Naturforschenden Gesellschaft in Danzig* 8 (1892): 146–54, at 146–47.

40 [Éleuthère Élie Nicolas] Mascart, "Notice sur Wilhelm Weber," *Comptes rendus hebdomadaires des séances de l'Académie des Sciences* 113 (1891): 105–9, at 109; approvingly quoted in N. N., "Sketch of William Edward Weber," *The Popular Science Monthly* 40 (1892): 548–53, at 548; H. Schultz, *Rede am Sarge Wilhelm Webers gehalten am 10. Juli 1891* (Göttingen: Dieterichschen Univ.-Buchdruckerei, [1891]), 3.

> So retired was Weber's life in his later days that, though his fame had not diminished, the world had almost forgotten that he was still in it; and it is said that when, at the meeting of the German naturalists in Berlin a few years ago, the name of Weber was read in the list of those who had taken part in the first meeting held there in 1828, surprise was expressed at recognizing in their octogenarian friend one who had sat there with Berzelius and Ohm and Heim.[41]

Similarly, Hübner stated that much of Wöhler's work already belonged to "the history book of chemistry."[42] He meant this quite literally, in the sense that chemistry textbooks treated 1828 as the birth year of synthetic urea.[43] This was more than fifty years earlier, so that even Wöhler himself was reported to have joked that he belonged to the past.[44] Given this historicization, some hermeneutical talent was needed for assessing Wöhler's achievements. In Hofmann's language, one had "to put oneself back [*zurückversetzen*] into that period" and to "immerse [*versenken*] oneself in the history of chemistry."[45]

All this, then, was written from the subject position of a successor rather than that of a pupil. Wöhler's and Weber's necrologists did not look up at their masters, but backward to the origins of their research paradigms. Weber and Wöhler were not portrayed as men whose epistemic virtues had to be imitated, as in Waitz's case, but as scholars who had "enriched science with many important facts, many of which have come to serve as points of departure for new, fruitful views."[46] What posterity owed to them was therefore not a scholarly persona, but a series of discoveries.

"Pure" and "applied"

Nonetheless, physics and chemistry around 1890 were as internally divided as the historical discipline, if not in terms of politics and religion, then at

41 "William Edward Weber," *The Popular Science Monthly*, 553.

42 Hübner, "Friedrich Wöhler," 3.

43 Critical assessments of this discovery tale are offered by Douglas McKie, "Wöhler's 'Synthetic' Urea and the Rejection of Vitalism," *Nature* 153 (1944): 608–10, and John Hedley Brooke, "Organic Synthesis and the Unification of Chemistry: A Reappraisal," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 5 (1971): 363–92.

44 Hübner, "Friedrich Wöhler," 3.

45 "Wöhler-Denkmal," 837; Hofmann, "Zur Erinnerung," 3126.

46 [Carl] v[on] Voit, "Friedrich Wöhler," *Sitzungsberichte der mathematisch-physikalischen Classe der k. b. Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Munich: F. Straub, 1884), 231–42, at 231.

least over issues of "pure" and "applied" science.[47] In late-nineteenth-century Germany, these contested terms were typically invoked in debates over the merits of academic education in comparison to instruction at technical colleges. They also referred to different conceptions of the relation between research and industry and corresponded to different self-images of the scientist.[48] Doesn't that imply that scholarly personae in physics and chemistry were as contested as they were among historians? And doesn't that suggest that Wöhler's and Weber's students were as likely as Waitz's to invoke categories of virtue and vice in defense of their preferred models of being a scholar?

In Weber's case, indeed, various authors tried to claim the deceased as a forerunner of their own "pure" or "applied" approach to science. While some biographers invoked Weber's "absent-mindedness" to emphasize his lack of interest in "practical applications," others presented Weber as model of a physicist pursuing laboratory research for, ultimately, the benefit of the public.[49] Central to this discussion was Gauß's and Weber's telegraph of 1833. How "practical" had Weber's intentions been in connecting his laboratory to Gauß's observatory with a three-kilometer-long wire passing over the tower of St. John's Church? Writing in *Nature*, the mathematician Carl Runge bluntly declared that "the enormous practical consequences of telegraphy have nothing to do with the scientific merit of the invention." Consequently, he considered Weber's "purely scientific work" as "more glorious" than the telegraph.[50] The Strasbourg physicist Friedrich Kohlrausch even went so far as to argue that Gauß and Weber, despite the marble plaque in Göttingen ("first telegraph—1833—Gauss and Wehler"), could hardly be considered the

47 For the nineteenth-century connotations of this contested distinction, see Paul Lucier, "The Origins of Pure and Applied Science in Gilded Age America," *Isis* 103, no. 2 (2012): 527–36, and Graeme Gooday, "'Vague and Artificial': The Historically Elusive Distinction between Pure and Applied Science," *Isis* 103, no. 2 (2012): 546–54.

48 Jonathan Harwood, "Das Selbstverständnis des Naturwissenschaftlers im Wandel: Die Lage innerhalb und außerhalb der Akademie zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Die Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 1919–1945*, ed. Wolfram Fischer (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), 143–68.

49 On Weber's presumed absent-mindedness: W. Kohlrausch, "Gedächtnissrede für Wilhelm Weber," in *Jahresbericht des Physikalischen Vereins zu Frankfurt am Main für das Rechnungsjahr 1890–1891* (Frankfurt am Main: C. Naumann, 1892), 43–55, at 55; and Momber, "Zur Erinnerung," 148. The historical roots of this *topos* are explored in Gadi Algazi, "Geistesabwesenheit: Gelehrte zu Hause um 1500," *Historische Anthropologie* 13, no. 3 (2005): 325–42, and "Gelehrte Zerstreutheit und gelernte Vergesslichkeit: Bemerkungen zu ihrer Rolle in der Herausbildung des Gelehrtenhabitus," in *Der Fehltritt: Vergehen und Versehen in der Vormoderne*, ed. Peter von Moos (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001), 235–50.

50 C. Runge, "W. E. Weber," *Nature* 44 (1891): 272.

inventors of the telegraph, because the men could not even have imagined the practical implications of their finding.[51] Felix Koerber, by contrast, emphasized the "truly practical use" of the telegraph—although it could send no more than six words per minute—and, consequently, Weber's significance "for the development of electrical telegraphy."[52] Albert Momber also challenged Runge's interpretation by recalling that Weber had tried to persuade the directorate of the Leipzig–Dresden Railway Company to install a telegraph along their railway—a plan that had eventually been abandoned, but clearly demonstrated Weber's interest in technical applications.[53]

It was in this context of controversy that Weber's epistemic virtues became an argument, especially for scholars committed to "pure" research. For as John Tyndall, the Irish physicist, had argued under reference to Weber: "the discoverer and applier of natural truth" require different sets of epistemic virtues, or "[d]ifferent qualities of mind and different habits of thought."[54] The most explicit reference to such qualities of mind can be found in a necrology by August Voller, a man who, curiously enough, has become best known for the fingers of his right hand. (An X-ray photograph of this hand was included in a widely read report on Wilhelm Röntgen's discovery of X-rays and has been reproduced countless times since then.)[55] Voller was director of the Physical State Laboratory in Hamburg, where Röntgen conducted his experiments, and a former student of Weber. Like Waitz's pupils, he elaborated at length on his teacher's *wissenschaftlichen Sinn*, "shrewdness," "indefatigability," and "versatility of mind."[56] Why did Voller emphasize those epistemic virtues?[57]

Arguably, Voller found himself torn between, on the one hand, his scientific ambitions and, on the other, the expectations of city magistrates

51 W. Kohlrausch, "Gedächtnissrede," 54.

52 F. Kbr. [= Felix Koerber], "Wilhelm Weber †," *Himmel und Erde* 3 (1891): 528–31, at 529.

53 Momber, "Zur Erinnerung," 151. Cf. *Die Leipzig-Dresdner Eisenbahn in den ersten fünfundzwanzig Jahren ihres Bestehens: Denkschrift zur Feier des 7. April 1864* (Leipzig: Giesecke & Devrient, 1864), 45.

54 John Tyndall, *Six Lectures on Light: Delivered in America in 1872–1873* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1873), 220.

55 Otto Glasser, *Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen und die Geschichte der Röntgenstrahlen*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Springer, 1959), 26–27.

56 A. Voller, "Zur Erinnerung an Wilhelm Weber," *Zeitschrift für den Physikalischen und Chemischen Unterricht* 5 (1891): 29–30, at 29.

57 A more extensive analysis of the Voller case is provided in Herman Paul, "What Is the Good of Government Interference in Science? A Question from Late-Nineteenth-Century Germany," in *The Dutch National Research Agenda in Perspective: A Reflection on Research and Science Policy in Practice*, ed. Beatrice de Graaf and Alexander Rinnooy Kan (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 167–80.

that regarded Voller's state laboratory as a physical consultancy agency. It was part of the director's job, for example, to hold daily office hours for everyone seeking advice in physical matters.[58] In this awkward situation, Voller emphasized again and again that nothing was more important for his lab than to engage in "serious scholarly work."[59] Voller found himself, in other words, in an area of tension between "pure" and "applied" science, in which he tried to serve the advance of "pure" science as well as circumstances allowed. Arguably, this was the reason why Voller described Weber's epistemic virtues in glowing terms and why he contrasted his teacher's "purely scientific goals" with "the unrest and loud noise" of the "market of contemporary life."[60]

In this case, then, epistemic virtues once again appear in a context of disagreement about the aims of science, or about the priorities that should be guiding scholarly research. Epistemic virtues were not invoked to confirm shared identities, but to articulate a vision of the "scientific self" over against alternative views of the scholar's true vocation. This happened, moreover, in the contexts of contemporary debates, such as over the relation between "pure" and "applied" science. I should like to emphasize this, because later generations, looking back on Weber and his contemporaries, might well be inclined to analyze, for instance, the striking differences between Weber's and Carl Neumann's research styles in terms of different catalogs of epistemic virtues.[61] This, however, was not a central concern to German physicists in the early 1890s. What they perceived as their main challenge was the relation between "pure" and "applied" science. Accordingly, it was in this context that they invoked ideals of epistemic virtuousness.

Friedrich Wöhler

If physicists could quarrel over "pure" versus "applied" research, so could chemists in late-nineteenth-century Germany. As early as the 1840s, Justus von Liebig in Giessen had been criticized in moral terms for exploring the

58 A. Voller, "Physikalisches Staats-Laboratorium," *Jahrbuch der Hamburgischen wissenschaftlichen Anstalten* 3 (1886): lxiii–lxv, at lxiv.

59 [A.] Voller, "Das Physikalische Staats-Laboratorium," in *Hamburg in naturwissenschaftlicher und medizinischer Beziehung: Den Teilnehmern der 73. Versammlung deutscher Naturforscher und Ärzte als Festgabe gewidmet*, ed. [J.] Classen and [Th.] Deneke (Hamburg: Leopold Voss, 1901), 205–12, at 210–11, 208.

60 Voller, "Zur Erinnerung," 30.

61 Olivier Darrigol, *Electrodynamics from Ampère to Einstein* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 42–76.

commercial potential of nitrogen-based fertilizer (a true sign of "greed" and "vanity," in the eyes of critics more devoted to "pure" science).[62] This tension was reflected, moreover, in institutional arrangements. In the days of Wöhler's appointment in Göttingen, the chemistry professor had had to inspect all pharmacies in the Kingdom of Hanover on an annual basis—a requirement clearly reflecting the practical expectations held of the field.[63] Although chemistry in the third quarter of the century had been successful in acquiring more autonomy, the 1870s had witnessed the emergence of new institutional conflicts, primarily between traditional universities devoted to "pure" research and new, technical colleges founded as training centers for engineers. Surprisingly, however, none of these factions—"scientists" versus "industrialists" and "factualists" versus "theoreticians"—tried to appropriate Wöhler as an embodiment of their preferred persona. Why not?

Presumably, the answer is that no one cultivated Wöhler's reputation as a father figure as strongly as August Wilhelm von Hofmann, one of the leading German chemists of his day. As a Berlin professor with close ties to the chemical industry, Hofmann saw it as his task to prevent growing tensions between "science" and "industry" to deteriorate into conflict.[64] His institutional means to that end was the German Chemical Society, which he had cofounded in 1867 "to provide an opportunity for mutual exchange of ideas between the representatives of speculative and applied chemistry in order to seal anew the alliance between science [*Wissenschaft*] and industry."[65] Under Hofmann's leadership, this society acquired a reputation for its celebratory style: it let no opportunity pass to celebrate a jubilee or to invite its members to large-scale drinking parties and multicourse

62 G. J. Mulder, "Liebig's kunstmest" (1845–47), in Mulder, *Scheikundige onderzoekingen, gedaan in het laboratorium der Utrechtsche hoogeschool*, vol. 4 (Rotterdam: H. A. Kramers, 1848), 531–34, at 533–34; Mulder, "Over ossengal" (1848), in Mulder, *Scheikundige onderzoekingen, gedaan in het laboratorium der Utrechtsche hoogeschool*, vol. 5/6 (Rotterdam: H. A. Kramers, 1851), 1–104, at 99.

63 Christoph Meinel, "Friedrich Wöhler und die Chemie in Göttingen," in *Die Wissenschaften in der Akademie: Vorträge beim Jubiläumskolloquium der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen im Juni 2000*, ed. Rudolf Smend and Hans-Heinrich Voigt (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 93–109, at 100–101, 106–7.

64 Christoph Meinel, "August Wilhelm Hofmann: 'Reigning Chemist-in-Chief,'" *Angewandte Chemie: International Edition in English* 31 (1992): 1265–1398, at 1274.

65 "Constituirende Versammlung vom 11. November 1867," *Berichte der Deutschen Chemischen Gesellschaft* 1 (1868): 1–4, at 3. On the German Chemical Society, see also Jeffrey Allan Johnson, "Germany: Discipline, Industry, Profession: German Chemical Organizations, 1867–1914," in *Creating Networks in Chemistry: The Founding and Early History of Chemical Societies in Europe*, ed. Anita Kildebæk and Soňa Štrbáňová (Cambridge: Royal Society of Chemistry, 2008), 113–38, at 114–23.

dinners.[66] At most of these events, Hofmann delivered festive speeches, in what Friedrich Nietzsche would have called a "monumental" key, aimed at glorifying the greatness of the scientific ancestors.[67] This construction of a shared past was Hofmann's means for furthering unity among academic and industrial chemists in Germany. If the German Chemical Society at times resembled a Society for Chemical Feasts—the year 1890 even witnessed a *Benzolfest* and an *Anilinfest*—this was because history was to provide chemists of different stripes and colors with a shared background.[68] As Christoph Meinel puts it:

> [T]he more differentiated and dissonant [...] Wilhelmian Germany became, the more brilliant and jubilant were the festivities of the German Chemical Society: expressions of a deep desire to rise above the conflicts of the day, to compensate for dissonance in society with the harmony of a community.[69]

It is in this context that Hofmann's necrology of Wöhler and his unveiling speech in Göttingen must be read. Both followed well-established patterns, given that the Chemical Society between 1867 and 1918 sponsored no less than twenty-one statues of German chemists, while Hofmann wrote more than fifty lengthy obituaries for the society's journal.[70] If Hofmann, some nice words on Wöhler's "lovely character" notwithstanding, portrayed the Göttingen chemist as a pioneer to whose discoveries both academic and industrial chemists were indebted, this closely resembled his praise for Liebig, back in the 1870s, to whom he claimed the field was indebted for having "marked out in theory the way of chemical research and discovery for centuries yet to come."[71] Likewise, it resembled his obituary of Gustav

66 Meinel, "August Wilhelm Hofmann," 1276–78.

67 Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Utility and Liability of History for Life," in Nietzsche, *Unfashionable Observations*, trans. Richard T. Gray (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 83–168.

68 B. Lepsius, *Festschrift zur Feier des 50jährigen Bestehens der Deutschen Chemischen Gesellschaft und des 100. Geburtstages ihres Begründers August Wilhelm von Hofmann* (Berlin: R. Friedländer & Sohn, 1918), 41–47.

69 Meinel, "August Wilhelm Hofmann," 1276.

70 Ibid., 1278. Many of these obituaries were subsequently collected in Aug. Wilh. von Hofmann, *Zur Erinnerung an vorangegangene Freunde: gesammelte Gedächtnissreden*, 3 vols. (Braunschweig: Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn, 1888).

71 N. N., "Wöhler-Denkmal," 846, 837–38; A. W. Hofmann, "The Life-Work of Liebig in Experimental and Philosophic Chemistry; with Allusions to His Influence on the Development of the Collateral Sciences, and of the Useful Arts," *Journal of the Chemical Society* 28 (1875): 1065–1140, at 1069.

Magnus, in which Hofmann had highly praised the "virtues of the *man*," but had strictly separated those from what had taken up the greater part of his necrology: the "great successes crowning the *scholar's* labors."[72] This focus on Wöhler's historical contribution to the rise of modern chemistry, finally, could become a dominant one, in Germany and abroad, because Hofmann's richly documented piece, complete with long quotations from Wöhler's correspondence, served as a main source for various other necrologies.[73] While the *Journal of the Chemical Society* simply summarized Hofmann's article, other publications paraphrased it with or without proper source acknowledgment.[74] Therefore, if Hofmann has been described as "reigning chemist-in-chief," this also applies to his role in managing Wöhler's memory. It was his example that encouraged chemists in the 1880s to treat Wöhler as an "origin" rather than as a "model."[75]

Yet even here, there were two exceptions proving the rule. In the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, Carl von Voit, a former student of Wöhler, emphasized his teacher's "modesty" and "simplicity" in order to challenge some prevailing tendencies in his own time: "Wöhler still was a pure scholar, who valued scholarship above everything." In apparent contrast to the average chemist in Wilhelmine Germany, Wöhler, said Voit, didn't try to make himself a

72 Aug. Wilh. Hofmann, "Zur Erinnerung an Gustav Magnus," *Berichte der Deutschen Chemischen Gesellschaft* 3 (1870): 993–1098, at 1098, 1097.

73 A few years earlier, Hofmann had edited Wöhler's correspondence with Liebig: *Aus Justus Liebig's und Friedrich Wöhler's Briefwechsel in den Jahren 1829–1873*, ed. A. W. Hofmann, 2 vols. (Braunschweig: Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn, 1888).

74 N. N., "Friedrich Wöhler," *Journal of the Chemical Society* 43 (1883): 258–63, at 258; M. F., untitled necrology. Later pieces such as T. E. Thorpe, "Friedrich Wöhler" (1884), in Thorpe, *Essays in Historical Chemistry* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1894), 236–57, and N. N., "Friedrich Woehler," *The Pharmaceutical Era* 10 (1893): 100–101, heavily relied on Hofmann, too.

75 Wilhelm Ostwald, *Lebenslinien: eine Selbstbiographie*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Klasing & Co., 1926), 185. Hofmann nonetheless allowed himself to describe a difference in working manners between Liebig and Wöhler. Liebig was "fiery and impetuous, seizing a new thought with enthusiasm, and giving to it the reins of his fancy, tenacious of his convictions, but open to the recognition of error." In Hofmann's memory, he had been "irritable and quick to take offence, hot-tempered, hardly master of his emotions." Wöhler, by contrast, an "impassioned" man, full of "equanimity" and "sobriety," was "calm and deliberate, entering upon a fresh problem after full reflection, guarding himself against each rash conclusion, and only after the most rigorous testing, by which every chance of error seemed to be excluded, giving expression to his opinion." This does not imply, though, that Hofmann preferred Wöhler over Liebig. True to his program, Hofmann hastened to declare that both chemists were "animated by the same intense love of truth," and that their working manners were "complementary" rather than mutually exclusive. Hofmann, "Zur Erinnerung," 3239. I use the translation provided in Thorpe, "Friedrich Wöhler," 255–56. Hübner made a similar comparison between Liebig and Wöhler in "Friedrich Wöhler," 10.

name with "fleeting hypotheses."[76] This was an appeal to epistemic virtue in the broadest possible sense: a commitment to goods "internal" to science combined with an ascetic indifference toward such "external" goods as money and fame (two important *topoi* in nineteenth-century catalogs of vices).[77] Unsurprisingly, this was advocated by a man known as "a German of the old school," who enjoyed a reputation for his empiricist attitudes and commitment to *Genauigkeit* (precision).[78] Voit, then, emphasized Wöhler's epistemic virtuousness in order to defend a scholarly persona, just as *The Chemical News* did when it argued, after an enumeration of Wöhler's "patience," "exactitude," "sobriety of judgment," and "uprightness": "Those who maintain that a life devoted to science renders a man harsh, proud, and selfish, will find in the person of Friedrich Wœhler a brilliant refutation of their doctrine."[79] Again, epistemic virtues served as markers of commitments that needed to be defended.

Conclusion

The memory cultures surrounding the three men depicted in stone by Ferdinand Hartzer allow for two conclusions regarding epistemic virtues in late-nineteenth-century Germany. First of all, I have shown that virtue language was far more prevalent in Waitz's necrologies than in those commemorating Wöhler and Weber. While historians almost without exception commented in detail on Waitz's epistemic virtues—that is, on dispositions conducive to such epistemic aims as knowledge and understanding of reality—physicists and chemists reflected on such epistemic virtues only in rare cases. In part, this may be explained by the fact that Weber's and Wöhler's scientific discoveries were a more natural subject for panegyric than Waitz's results: the history of medieval law was a less sensational and less influential field of inquiry than electromagnetism or organic

76 Voit, "Friedrich Wöhler," 241.

77 Lejón Saarloos, "Virtue and Vice in Academic Memory: Lord Acton and Charles Oman," *History of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2016): 339–54.

78 Reportedly, Voit had such a dislike of modern academic manners that he could not even bring himself to attending scientific conferences—the gatherings of one local society excepted, because these were social rather than scientific in nature: Otto Frank, "Nachruf Carl Voit gewidmet," *Zeitschrift für Biologie* 51 (1908): i–xxiv, at xvi, xviii; Graham Lusk, "Carl von Voit, Master and Friend," *Annals of Medical History* 3 (1931): 583–94, at 590; H. H. Mitchell, "Carl von Voit," *The Journal of Nutrition* 13 (1937): 1–13, at 4, 5.

79 N. N., "The Late Professor Wœhler," *The Chemical News* 46 (1882): 183.

chemistry. Partly, also, the different amounts of emphasis that epistemic virtues received in the academic memory cultures around Wöhler, Weber, and Waitz is explained by different styles of commemoration. As I have argued for the case of Wöhler, it was Hofmann's explicit purpose to create a disciplinary past with which both academic and industrial chemists in Imperial Germany could identify. Historians, by contrast, used the occasion of Waitz's death to engage in lively debate over his merits as a role model for younger generations. This might imply that the occurrence of epistemic virtues in scholarly necrologies was at least in part determined by the conventions of academic commemoration in the three respective disciplines. It is well possible indeed that other types of source material—scholarly correspondence, book reviews, or conference reports—will show a greater concern about epistemic virtues among physicists and chemists than is apparent from the necrologies they wrote.

More important, however, for the purpose of this chapter is a second conclusion: historians, chemists, and physicists in Imperial Germany resembled each other in that they invoked epistemic virtues if and only if they felt that defining features of what it took to be a scholar were at stake. For all of them, epistemic virtues were shorthand of scholarly personae that they invoked at moments when they perceived those personae as being under pressure. Thus, Waitz's students felt a need to defend their teacher's meticulous source criticism when critics stressed the importance of "talent for conjecture" and "literary skill," both of which played only a marginal role in the persona embodied by Waitz. Likewise, Voller emphasized Weber's "purely scientific goals" over against "the unrest and loud noise" that he experienced in his own, practically oriented *Staatslabor*, just as Voit idealized Wöhler's devotion to the cause of science in order to justify his criticism of what he perceived as a widespread forsaking of the scholar's true vocation. Epistemic virtues, in short, were invoked in contexts of critical reflection on prevailing scholarly personae.

This implies that Tollebeek's interpretation of virtues as markers of disciplinary identity is not so much wrong as too general to account for fundamental disagreements that existed within disciplines about the defining features of being a scholar. It neglects the fact that scholars—in our case, especially the historians—did not only identify with their field as a whole, but also, more importantly perhaps, with subgroups within their field formed around a shared ideal of what it took to be a scholar. What the polemical function of virtue language in the necrologies for Weber, Wöhler, and Waitz reveals is that disciplines were not monolithic communities, but fields divided over fundamental issues such as the relative importance of source criticism in relation to *Darstellung*, in the case of history, and the proper relation between academy and industry, in the case of physics and chemistry. Given that such disagreements corresponded to different expectations of the scholar, each with their own specific catalogs of virtue and vice, it not surprising to find scholars quarreling over scholarly personae and identifying with scholars seen as embodying such personae in exemplary fashion. Therefore, if this chapter has shown anything, it is that whenever the men honored with statues on the streets of Göttingen were hailed for epistemic virtuousness, this happened in defense of particular modes of being a scholar. In nineteenth-century Germany, epistemic virtues served as markers of epistemic commitments and thereby as shorthand for scholarly personae.

3. An Ethos of Criticism: Virtues and Vices in Nineteenth-Century Strasbourg

Abstract: If chapter 2 broadened the disciplinary perspective by comparing humanities scholars to natural scientists, chapter 3 highlights two other ways in which the analysis offered in chapter 1 can be expanded. First, instead of limiting itself to ideals of virtue, the chapter inquires how virtues actually mattered in the research and teaching practices of humanities scholars (including ancient philologists, linguists, Egyptologists, and musicologists) at the Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität in Strasbourg. How did high-minded ideals of virtue relate to the mundane work of deciphering manuscripts or teaching classes? Second, while the chapter offers plenty of evidence for the importance of virtue and vice as privileged categories for discussing scholarly duties or responsibilities, it also points to the limitations of this discourse: not everything that mattered could be expressed in terms of virtues and vices.

Keywords: epistemic virtues, scholarly virtues, historical criticism, Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität, Strasbourg, history of humanities

Introduction

One of the prisms through which historians have come to study scholars' activities in centuries past is that of virtues and vices: character traits that were perceived as beneficial and detrimental, respectively, to the pursuit of scholarly work. Historians study these virtues and vices partly because it

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allows them to add historical depth and nuance to contemporary academic performance criteria. While we think we know what "objectivity" entails, historical research forces us to rethink what we mean by the term, given that objectivity, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, has taken on a range of forms, each with its own demands on scholars' intellectual habits. In their history of objectivity, historians Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison therefore present historical contextualization as a much-needed remedy against ahistorical thinking about scholarly norms and values: "It is not always the same kind of ethos, or the same kind of self, that is involved: both have histories."[1]

If historicizing contemporary virtues is one impetus behind the recent surge of interest in scholarly virtues and vices, a second one is that virtues and vices lend themselves well to transdisciplinary comparisons of the kind that especially historians of the humanities like to make.[2] No single field of study had a monopoly on objectivity, impartiality, or accuracy: both these virtues and their negative counterparts, the vices, traveled across disciplinary divides, either because scholars appropriated them from neighboring fields or because people drew on shared moral repertoires to which categories of virtue were central.[3] So by tracing how, for instance, "thoroughness" appealed to philologists, historians, chemists, and medical scholars alike, we can identify parallels and sometimes even transfers between fields of research that are conventionally studied in isolation from each other.[4]

Both of the approaches just mentioned, however, have the disadvantage of isolating single virtues or vices from broader clusters of qualities that scholars regarded as needed for research or teaching. A study that zooms in too closely on thoroughness, for instance, runs the risk of ignoring that the meanings and connotations of this virtue depended on other, contrastive, complementary, or overlapping virtues. Likewise, a study of objectivity may easily forget that the relative weight attached to this virtue can only be assessed by examining what I have elsewhere called the "constellations of virtues" to which scholars were committed.[5] Scholars never put all their

1 Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 40.

2 Rens Bod et al., "A New Field: History of Humanities," *History of Humanities* 1, no. 1 (2016): 1–8.

3 Rens Bod et al., "The Flow of Cognitive Goods: A Historiographical Framework for the Study of Epistemic Transfer," *Isis* 110, no. 3 (2019): 483–96; Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul, eds., *Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities* (Cham: Springer, 2017).

4 Herman Paul, "German Thoroughness in Baltimore: Epistemic Virtues and National Stereotypes," *History of Humanities* 3, no. 2 (2018): 327–50 [chapter 7 in this volume].

5 Herman Paul, "Virtue Language in Nineteenth-Century Orientalism: A Case Study in Historical Epistemology," *Modern Intellectual History* 14, no. 3 (2017): 689–715 [chapter 6 in this volume].

money on a single virtue: they cared about objectivity and patriotism alike or valued intellectual courage only as long as it was restrained by accuracy and love of truth. So, despite the rich layers of meaning that studies of individual virtues and vices may unearth, the challenge for historians of the humanities is not to lose sight of the fact that scholarly virtues always existed in the plural.

How can this be done? Analyzing evaluative genres, such as book reviews, is one possible way of foregrounding interaction between scholarly virtues, given that reviewers until well into the twentieth century often judged scholarly publications on the virtues or vices that they displayed.[6] Along these lines, studies of book reviews and scholarly controversies have argued that a "balancing" of virtues was central to the moral economies of German and British scholars in the nineteenth century.[7] The relative importance assigned to different virtues can, however, also be examined in other ways. This chapter will do so by analyzing the ethos of a particular community of humanities scholars, at the Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität in Strasbourg. What were the constellations of virtues cherished by these late-nineteenth-century German academics? What catalogs of virtues did they instill in their students and display in their research or writing?

By selecting the Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität as its case study, this chapter discusses an example from the heyday of the German *Geisteswissenschaften* as well as from the height of nineteenth-century nationalism. That is to say, in the first place, that this chapter deals with a university that proudly presented itself as a stronghold of what the philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey called the "human sciences": fields of inquiry that tried to grasp human culture in all its complexity, not merely by explaining regularities in the human experience, as natural scientists allegedly did, but by "understanding" (*verstehen*) products of the human mind both in their historical settings and in their normative appeal to present-day audiences.[8] When asked for advice by Strasbourg university authorities, just a year before the German

6 See, e.g., Aleksei Pleshkov and Jan Surman, "Book Reviews in the History of Knowledge," *Studia Historiae Scientiarum* 20 (2021): 629–50; Christiaan Engberts, "Scholarship, Community Formation and Book Reviews: The *Literarisches Centralblatt* as Arena and Meeting Place," ibid., 651–79; Richard L. Kremer and Ad Maas, "A Tale of Reviews in Two History of Science Journals," ibid., 755–85.

7 Christiaan Engberts, *Scholarly Virtues in Nineteenth-Century Sciences and Humanities: Loyalty and Independence Entangled* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022); Léjon Saarloos, "The Scholarly Self under Threat: Language of Vice in British Scholarship (1870–1910)" (PhD thesis, Leiden University, 2021).

8 Rudolf Makkreel, *Dilthey: Philosopher of the Human Studies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 35–44.

university in the newly conquered province of Alsace officially opened its doors (1872), Dilthey grasped the opportunity to recommend no less than eighteen chairs in the human sciences.[9] Although this plan turned out a little too ambitious, the importance that Germany's youngest university attached to the human sciences is apparent from the resources it invested in them. Not only could the Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität boast to be the first continental university with a chair in English,[10] it also managed to attract both staff and students by offering modern seminar teaching in nearly all fields of study.[11]

These investments were made possible, financially and otherwise, by a wave of nationalist enthusiasm over the German occupation of the Alsace. Almost immediately after the region had been ceded to Germany, the idea of establishing a university in the Alsatian capital captured the imagination of German scholars and politicians alike. They believed that such an institution would be able, not only to showcase the supremacy of German *Wissenschaft*, but also to contribute to a "Germanification" of Alsace's French-speaking population.[12] This vision helps explain why the human sciences were granted such a privileged status. In Dilthey's words: "In the historical-philosophical sciences lies the power to stimulate national feeling and moral severity."[13] Importantly, this did not imply that Strasbourg faculty members eagerly posed as "political professors" or used the lectern as their pulpit.[14] On the contrary, especially in politically sensitive fields like history, university administrators carefully avoided appointing candidates known for patriotic styles of teaching.[15] Instead of loudly preaching love of country, Strasbourg professors were expected to teach by example, showing the superiority of German culture by demonstrating excellence

9 Wilhelm Dilthey, "Entwurf zu einem Gutachten über die Gründung der Universität Straßburg" (1871), *Die Erziehung* 16 (1941): 81–85.

10 Renate Haas and Albert Hamm, *The University of Strasbourg and the Foundation of Continental English Studies: A Contribution to a European History of English Studies* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009).

11 Stephan Roscher, *Die Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität Straßburg 1872–1902* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006), 147–48.

12 John E. Craig, *Scholarship and Nation Building: The Universities of Strasbourg and Alsatian Society, 1870–1939* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

13 Dilthey, "Entwurf," 82.

14 On the "political professor," see Ulrich Muhlack, "Der 'politische Professor' im Deutschland des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Materialität des Geistes: Zur Sache Kultur: Im Diskurs mit Ulrich Oevermann*, ed. Ronald Burkholz, Christel Gärtner, and Ferdinand Zehentreiter (Weilerswist: Velbrück, 2001), 185–204.

15 Craig, *Scholarship and Nation Building*, 57.

in research and teaching alike.[16] Otto von Bismarck's suggestion to change the university motto *Litteris et patriae* into *Patriae et litteris* was therefore rejected: faculty believed they served their country best by strengthening Germany's reputation as a stronghold of *Wissenschaft*.[17]

What did this imply for the virtues in which Strasbourg students were being socialized? Focusing on the humanities—fields like philology, Biblical scholarship, history, philosophy, art history, and musicology—I will give an answer in two parts. In the first half of the chapter, I will argue that the dominance of philological and historical critique was such that virtues of criticism (accuracy, precision, attention to detail) were central to Strasbourg's academic ethos in the period under discussion, from 1872 to the turn of the century. In this context, I take the term "ethos" to refer to habits, expectations, norms, and values that scholars at the time believed to define good scholarship.[18] Yet while virtues of criticism were held in high regard, to the point of being seen as indispensable for each and every serious attempt at scholarly inquiry, the ethos at Strasbourg allowed for more than philological precision or historical accuracy. In writing books for general readers, for instance, humanities scholars also engaged in activities that required other qualities than carefulness and sharp-mindedness. So, in the second half of the chapter, I will offer three qualifications to the importance of virtues of criticism: (1) not all genres to which Strasbourg scholars contributed made an equally strong demand on virtues of criticism; (2) these virtues of criticism were compatible with different scholarly personae, or models of being of scholar; and (3) more often than not, they were colored by evaluative stances vis-à-vis the German past, the Christian tradition, or the non-European "other."

Scholarly self-images

Friedrich Max Müller's inaugural address, *Über die Resultate der Sprachwissenschaft* (On the results of the science of language, 1872), is a good place to

16 As the youngest daughter of economics professor Georg Friedrich Knapp recalled in her memoirs: "We almost never used the word 'Germanifying.' My father [...] did not talk about Germanness, but lived it." Elly Heuß-Knapp, *Ausblick vom Münsterturm: Erlebtes aus dem Elzaß und dem Reich* (Berlin: Hans Bott, 1934), 16.

17 Craig, *Scholarship and Nation Building*, 84–85.

18 This draws on Robert K. Merton's classic definition in "Science and the Social Order," *Philosophy of Science* 5 (1938): 321–37, at 326 n. 16, and "A Note on Science and Democracy," *Journal of Legal and Political Sociology* 1 (1942): 115–26, at 116.

start. What makes this text stand out is that it abounds with language of virtue and vice. For instance, in explaining why the study of Indo-European languages was rapidly advancing, Müller pointed to the "unflagging industry," "mathematical exactness," "conscientiousness," and "great cautiousness" exercised by recent generations of linguistics. To some extent, these virtues had helped the field get rid of "prejudice," "speculations," and deference to authority.[19] To remedy some still prevalent vices, such as the arrogant thought of knowing better than others and the sloppy practice of quoting things at second hand, Müller went on recommending *Gewissenhaftigkeit* and *Bescheidenheit*: "Whoever devotes himself to the study of so comprehensive a science must try never to lose sight of two virtues: conscientiousness and modesty." To emphasize the critical importance of these character traits, Müller let his lecture culminate in a long quotation from Barthold Georg Niebuhr:

> Above all things, we must in all scientific pursuits preserve our truthfulness [*Wahrhaftigkeit*] so pure that we thoroughly eschew every false appearance; that we represent not even the smallest thing as certain of which we are not completely convinced; that if we have to propose a conjecture, we spare no effort in representing the exact degree of its probability. If we do not ourselves, when it is possible, indicate our errors, even such as no one else is likely to discover; if, in laying down our pen, we cannot say in the sight of God, "Upon strict examination, I have knowingly written nothing that is not true"; and if, without deceiving either ourselves or others, we have not presented even our most odious opponents in such a light only that we could justify it upon our deathbeds—if we cannot do this, study and literature serve only to make us unrighteous and sinful.[20]

One may wonder what to make of this exalted prose. What, if anything, does it reveal about the virtues in which Müller and his colleagues tried

19 F. Max Müller, *Über die Resultate der Sprachwissenschaft: Vorlesung gehalten in der Kaiserlichen Universitæt zu Strassburg am XXIII. Mai MDCCCLXXII* (Strasbourg: Karl J. Trübner, 1872), 9, 10, 15, 17, 12, 13, 14, here cited in the English translation (modified in one case) published as "On the Results of the Science of Language: Inaugural Lecture, Delivered in the Imperial University of Strassburg, May 23, 1872," in F. Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 4 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), 199–26, at 205, 209, 211, 207, 208, 209.

20 Müller, *Über die Resultate*, 29, 32; "On the Results," 223, 225–26. The Niebuhr quote was taken from [Dora Hensler, ed.], *Lebensnachrichten über Barthold Georg Niebuhr aus Briefen desselben und aus Erinnerungen einiger seiner nächsten Freunde*, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Friedrich Perthes, 1838), 208.

to socialize their students? Precisely to the extent that the passage depicts scholars at their Sunday best, as aspiring to what Daston and Galison call "the self-discipline of saints," it does not tell us much about everyday teaching or research habits.[21] This is partly because high-minded words about the scholar's vocation belonged to the standard features of the genre.[22] Also, because an *Antrittsvorlesung* offered professors a chance to stylize themselves as virtuous scholars, their appeal to modesty and conscientiousness is likely to tell us more about virtues that they *preferred* to have than about dispositions that they *actually* possessed. At least in Müller's case, the virtues hailed in his inaugural overlapped only partly with qualities that colleagues ascribed to him.[23] (Just months after the occasion, the secretary of the London Philological Society described the Strasbourg professor as a scientific lightweight, "not much thought of" by serious students of language.)[24]

Nonetheless, virtues of the kind emphasized in Müller's addresses were invoked by, or attributed to, many a Strasbourg professor. Obituary writers were especially eager to stress conscientiousness and carefulness as characteristic qualities of deceased Strasbourg scholars. Whereas the historian Julius Weizsäcker was remembered for his "most painful exactitude," "sharp-minded criticism," and "conscientious work," the classical philologist Wilhelm Studemund was praised for his "erudition" and "scrupulous accuracy."[25] Yet another classical scholar, Rudolf Schöll, was hailed as a "sharp-minded researcher," who "in exemplary fashion [had] combined meticulousness with sharpness of judgment."[26] Just how persistent this discourse of precision, carefulness, and conscientiousness was, is apparent from the case of Theodor Nöldeke, the Strasbourg Orientalist who as late as the early 1930s was held up as a model of "conscientious research,"

21 Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, "The Image of Objectivity," *Representations* 40 (1992): 81–128, at 83.

22 Mark-Georg Dehrmann, "Prüfung, Forschung, Gruß: Antrittsprogramme und Antrittsvorlesungen als akademische Praktiken im 19. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für Germanistik* 23, no. 2 (2013): 226–41.

23 Arie L. Molendijk, "Multiple Personae: Friedrich Max Müller and the Persona of the Oriental Scholar," in *Scholarly Personae in the History of Orientalism, 1870–1930*, ed. Christiaan Engberts and Herman Paul (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 45–63, esp. 48–51.

24 Frederick J. Furnivall to William Dwight Whitney, 27 December 1872, as quoted in Stephen G. Alter, *William Dwight Whitney and the Science of Language* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 177.

25 [Ludwig Quidde], "Julius Weizsäcker †," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 2 (1889): 327–40, at 328, 329, 330; P. Thomas, "Nécrologie," *Revue d'instruction publique en Belgique* 32 (1889): 362–64, at 362.

26 [Wilhelm von Christ], "Rudolf Schöll," *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philologischen und historischen Classe der k. b. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München* (1894): 149–52, at 150–51.

"considerate judgment," "stringent matter-of-factness," and "exactitude in the smallest things."[27]

Obviously, such words of praise should not be taken at face value. Like inaugural addresses, obituaries tended to distribute light and shadow in such a way as to make scholars appear at their best.[28] Yet what matters for our purposes is not the degree of stylizing in a genre known for saying nothing but good of the dead (*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*). More relevant is that obituary writers, like Müller in his inaugural, chose to emphasize virtues like carefulness, accuracy, and conscientiousness. In their preferred mode of self-fashioning, at least, Strasbourg humanities scholars put a premium on what I will call "virtues of criticism": qualities like precision, exactitude, cautiousness, and sharp-mindedness that were seen as indispensable for philological and historical *Kritik*. Strasbourg professors, in other words, liked to see themselves, not as great orators or as influential teachers, but as dedicated researchers who privileged thoroughness and precision over bold hypotheses or grand visions.

Seminar teaching

If virtues of criticism played a major role in the *discursive legitimation* of scholarship, then to what extent did these virtues also capture how Strasbourg scholars *actually* did their work as teachers and researchers? How important were virtues of criticism, not on Sunday, but on Monday, when scholars found themselves sitting at a desk cluttered with notes or in front of a student audience? One "weekday" practice that has recently been studied in some detail is the seminar: a small-scale teaching format that, unlike the traditional *Vorlesung*, allowed for group discussions and student presentations. Developed by classical philologists in the late eighteenth century, seminars or "exercises" found their way throughout the humanities, mainly because professors embraced them as means for socializing future colleagues into field-specific research habits. Seminar teaching therefore quickly acquired an aura of *Wissenschaftlichkeit*, which helps explain why the

27 Enno Littmann, "Theodor Nöldeke: Gedächtnisrede gehalten am 9. Mai 1931," in *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen: Geschäftliche Mitteilungen aus dem Berichtsjahr 1930/31* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1931), 48–57, at 50; C. H. Becker, "Theodor Nöldeke," *Der Islam* 20 (1932): 43–48, at 43, 45.

28 Anna Echterhölter, *Schattengefechte: Genealogische Praktiken in Nachrufen auf Naturwissenschaftler (1710–1860)* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012).

Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität saw it as a matter of prestige to offer seminars in nearly all fields of study.[29]

Among the sources informing us about virtues and skills cherished in such seminars are eyewitness accounts such as penned by François Collard, a classical philologist from Louvain who visited Wilhelm Studemund's Greek philology seminar in 1878.[30] What struck him most was the professor's habit of inviting seminar participants over for dinner. Like the many hours that Studemund spent daily on student supervision, these *soupers philologiques* appeared to him as evidence of great devotion to the students.[31] As soon as Greek texts appeared on the table, however, Studemund also turned out to be demanding. Collard observed that the philologist "attached great importance to dates," while pressing his students to resolve issues of authorship and authenticity to the best of their abilities:

> Woe to the student who erred in haste or hesitated in a moment of doubt: a disquieting glance, an ironic smile, a nervous gesture, or a somewhat brusque remark made him feel that he would have done better to remain carefully silent.[32]

If this depicts Studemund as a man with little tolerance for mistakes, Collard went on to emphasize that "rigorous method" in source critical matters was what the professor wanted his students to develop. Accordingly, the virtues highlighted in his report resemble those of Müller: accuracy, precision, and "extreme carefulness."[33]

Clearly, this account was written for a purpose: propagating a German teaching model at Belgian universities. This explain why Collard's text,

29 Carlos Spoerhase, "Seminar Libraries as Laboratories of Philology: The Modern Seminar Model in Nineteenth-Century German Philology," *History of Humanities* 4, no. 1 (2019): 103–23; Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, "Virtues of History: Exercises, Seminars, and the Emergence of the German Historical Discipline, 1830–1900," *History of Universities* 34, no. 1 (2021): 27–40.

30 Other relevant sources include annual seminar reports, such as those written by Wilhelm Scherer: "Bericht des Prof. W. Scherer über das Seminar für deutsche Philologie während der drei ersten Semester seines Bestehens (Winter 1872/3–Winter 1873/4)," 25 May 1874, in Scherer, *Briefe und Dokumente aus den Jahren 1853 bis 1886*, ed. Mirko Nottscheid and Hans-Harald Müller (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005), 377–81, and Scherer, "Seminarbericht 1874/75," 4 June 1875, in Scherer and Elias von Steinmeyer, *Briefwechsel 1872–1886*, ed. Horst Brunner and Joachim Helbig (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1982), 320–21. See also, more generally, Uwe Meves, "Die Jahresberichte der Seminardirektoren als Quellen für die Seminarpraxis," *Zeitschrift für Germanistik* 23, no. 2 (2013): 242–58.

31 F. Collard, *Trois universités allemandes considérées au point de vue de l'enseignement de la philologie classique* (*Strasbourg, Bonn et Leipzig*) (Louvain: Ch. Peeters, 1879–82), 54–55.

32 Ibid., 36.

33 Ibid., 37, 39, 45.

like Müller's inaugural, is not free from idealizing tendencies. It is worth noting, therefore, that virtues of accuracy, exactitude, and carefulness were also emphasized in sources that were not intend on telling success stories. A memoir of Hermann Baumgarten, for instance, emphasized that the Strasbourg historian had felt reserved about *historische Übungen*. Instead of familiarizing his students with the dos and don'ts of source criticism, he wanted to teach them the importance of imagination, vision, and a good style of writing. Baumgarten realized, however, that these were things that could hardly be taught, while his students expected him to offer "critical" exercises. So he did what he could, drawing on his own philological training, but with less than convincing results: "The energetic life of a real seminar meeting was mostly absent with him."[34] If this indirectly confirms Collard's point of seminars focusing on philological training, so do the grievances of more outspoken critics like Alfred Dove, who abhorred "the narrowly philological school" of historical exercises.[35] Friends and foes, in other words, agreed that seminar teaching placed a premium on virtues of criticism.

Source editions

Virtues of accuracy, precision, and patience were indispensable, too, in the realm of research, especially in a type of analysis known as *Kritik*. Echoing Immanuel Kant, who had proclaimed the eighteenth century "the real age of critique," Gustav Gröber, the Romanist philologist, and Georg Dehio, the art historian, proudly referred to "our century of critique" or "the century […] that chose critique as its guide."[36] These were not empty phrases: many humanities scholars, in Strasbourg and elsewhere, saw *Kritik* as a defining mark of *Wissenschaftlichkeit*. Arguably, critique could achieve this prominence thanks to a semantic flexibility that allowed both neo-Kantian philosophers and classical philologists to present themselves

34 Erich Marcks, "Hermann Baumgarten (III)," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung* (4 October 1893): 2–5, at 3.

35 Alfred Dove to Heinrich von Treitschke, 13 May 1873, in Dove, *Ausgewählte Briefe*, ed. Oswald Dammann (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1925), 32–35, at 34. I discuss some other disapproving responses in Herman Paul, "The Heroic Study of Records: The Contested Persona of the Archival Historian," *History of the Human Sciences* 26, no. 4 (2013): 67–83.

36 Immanuel Kant, *Critik der reinen Vernunft* (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1781), xi*; Gustav Gröber, "Geschichte der romanischen Philologie," in *Grundriss der romanischen Philologie*, ed. Gustav Gröber, vol. 1 (Strasbourg: Karl J. Trübner, 1888), 3–139, at 34; Georg Dehio, *Geschichte des Erzbistums Hamburg-Bremen bis zum Ausgang der Mission*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1877), 43.

as critical.[37] Clearly, though, for Gröber, Dehio, and their colleagues in Strasbourg, philological connotations of the term outweighed philosophical ones. When they engaged in “criticism of the Old Testament,” subjected the Pastoral epistles to “critical treatment,” or offered “contributions to a critique of German and Italian source texts,” they were critical in the sense of not accepting at face value the authorship, the dating, or the message of a text.[38]

How much such “critical” research depended on the same sort of virtues that we encountered in the seminar is apparent from source editions, a genre to which many Strasburg scholars contributed at some point in their careers. Classical philologists led the way, with Rudolf Schöll editing Asconius Pedianus, Proclus, and Justinian, while Georg Kaibel published editions of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Galen, Longinus, and Aristotle.[39] Chair holders in nonclassical languages followed suit with editions of Geoffrey Chaucer and Francesco Petrarch, among others.[40] Medieval historians launched projects like the *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Straßburg* (Book of records of the city of Strasbourg, 7 vols., 1879–1900), while the Sanskrit scholar Siegfried Goldschmidt made the ancient Indian *Rāmāyaṇa* epic available to modern readers.[41] Even the musicologist Gustav Jacobsthal contributed his share with a diplomatic edition of a thirteenth-century collection of medieval polyphonic music.[42]

37 See Benedetto Bravo, “*Critice* in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and the Rise of the Notion of Historical Criticism,” in *History of Scholarship: A Selection of Papers from the Seminar on the History of Scholarship Held Annually at the Warburg Institute*, ed. Christopher Ligota and Jean-Louis Quantin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 135–95; Claus von Bormon, Helmut Holzhey, and Giorgio Tonelli, “Kritik,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 4, ed. Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, and Gottfried Gabriel (Basel: Schwabe & Co., 1976), 1250–82; Giorgio Tonelli, “‘Critique’ and Related Terms prior to Kant: A Historical Survey,” *Kant-Studien* 69 (1978): 119–48; J. Colin McQuillan, *Immanuel Kant: The Very Idea of a Critique of Pure Reason* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2016), 3–20.

38 Theodor Nöldeke, *Untersuchungen zur Kritik des Alten Testaments* (Kiel: Schwers, 1869); Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, *Die Pastoralbriefe, kritisch und exegetisch behandelt* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1880); P. Scheffer-Boichorst, “Beiträge zur Kritik deutscher und italienischer Quellenschriften,” *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte* 11 (1871): 483–527.

39 See the titles listed in Fr. Schöll, “Rudolf Schöll, geb. 1. Sept. 1844, gest. 10. Juni 1893,” *Biographisches Jahrbuch für Altertumskunde* 20 (1897): 9–40, and W. Radtke, “Georg Kaibel, geb. 30. Oktober 1849, gest. 12. Oktober 1901,” *Biographisches Jahrbuch für Altertumskunde* 27 (1904): 15–71, at 66–71.

40 *Der Prolog zu den Canterbury Tales: Versuch einer kritischen Ausgabe*, ed. Bernhard ten Brink (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1871); Francesco Petrarca, *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, ed. [Gustav Gröber] (Strasbourg: J. H. Ed. Heitz, [1906]).

41 *Râvaṇavaha oder Setubandha*, ed. Siegfried Goldschmidt (Strasbourg: Karl J. Trübner, 1880).

42 Gustav Jacobsthal, “Die Texte der Liederhandschrift von Montpellier H. 196: Diplomatischer Abdruck,” *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 3 (1879): 526–56, and 4 (1880): 35–64, 278–317.

What kind of virtues such editorial work required, can be seen, first of all, from the pile of correspondence that Julius Weizsäcker and his assistants generated in the process of editing the German Reichstag records. While some of these letters and postcards address travel plans or reimbursement of expenses, the lengthiest ones are almost invariably devoted to minutiae of spelling and punctuation. Should one read *expectat* or *expectatur*, *Galis* or *Gallis*, *volebat* or *volebant*, *quo* or *quod*?[43] Getting these details straight was not beyond the call of duty. Book reviewers wondering how *pendre* could have possibly be transcribed as *prendre* showed that they, too, valued textual accuracy over anything else.[44] Even more instructive is the example of Studemund preparing a Plautus edition based on a palimpsest in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan. The ancient script concealed beneath an early medieval manuscript was notoriously hard to decipher. Despite Studemund making unscrupulous use of chemical reagents to make the text more legible,[45] his notes are peppered with phrases like "difficult to read" and "it may be that someone who obtains permission to use new chemicals will be able to read a bit more."[46] Although a provisional edition of the text was finished within a couple of years, Studemund kept returning to Milan for further inspections of the manuscript, especially after two colleagues had proposed readings that differed from his.[47] Oskar Seyffert, who eventually helped Studemund finish his *opus magnum*, was not alone in expressing astonishment at the degree of "conscientiousness" that went into the project.[48] Colleagues near and far agreed that Studemund's work was characterized by "most conscientious care" and "truly admirable persistence, cautiousness, and discernment."[49]

43 Julius Weizsäcker to Ernst Bernheim, 1 May 1884, Greifswald University Library, Ms 1588.

44 H. Ulmann, review of *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, vol. 1, *Deutsche Litteraturzeitung* 15 (1894): 495–98, at 498.

45 Mario Varvaro, "Wilhelm Studemund e il 'martire illustre della paleografia,'" *Seminarios Complutenses de Derecho Romano* 25 (2012): 281–318.

46 *T. Macci Plauti fabularum reliquiae Ambrosianae Codicis rescripti Ambrosiani Apographum*, ed. Guilelmus Studemund (Berlin: Weidmann, 1889), fol. 235r, 235v. The English translations are taken from Walter Stockert, "The Rebirth of a Codex: Virtual Work on the Ambrosian Palimpsest of Plautus," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Comedy*, ed. Michael Fontaine and Adele C. Scafuro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 680–98, at 682, 683.

47 O. Seyffert, review of *T. Macci Plauti fabularum reliquiae Ambrosianae*, ed. Guilelmus Studemund, *Zeitschrift für das Gymnasial-Wesen* 44 (1890): 557–61, at 557.

48 Ibid., 559.

49 E. A. Sonnenschein, "A Plautine Palimpsest of the Ambrosian Library," *The Classical Review* 4, no. 7 (1890): 308–10, at 308; F[ritz] S[chöll], review of *T. Macci Plauti fabularum reliquiae Ambrosianae*, ed. Guilelmus Studemund, *Literarisches Centralblatt für Deutschland* (1890): 1375–78, at 1375.

So, time and again, we encounter similar kinds of virtues: carefulness, precision, and patience, sometimes also sharp-mindedness or perseverance, with a characteristic lack of emphasis on originality, creativity, or intellectual courage. It would be possible to call these qualities "philological virtues," thereby emphasizing their origin in what Franz Schultz called a "philological ethos."[50] I however prefer to call them "virtues of criticism," so as to highlight not their origin, but their goal. On the one hand, this allows us to say that qualities like attentiveness and meticulousness were supposed to contribute to historical and philological *Kritik* as practiced by Strasbourg historians, linguists, and philologists alike. On the other hand, this phrasing also leaves room for different virtues taking center stage in activities other than source editing and seminar teaching. For although *Kritik* and its accompanying virtues were central to how Strasbourg scholars conceived of their work, criticism was not the only thing that mattered to them. There were other genres to which they contributed—survey courses, narrative histories, occasional speeches—and other expectations that they had to meet. Accordingly, if this chapter so far has illustrated the prevalence of an "ethos of criticism," I will use the rest of the chapter to add three points of nuance: (1) there were other virtues, too, that mattered; (2) typical for the ethos at Strasbourg were not only virtues, but also evaluative attitudes; and (3) a shared commitment to virtues of criticism did not prevent humanities faculty from developing different "personae" or ways of being a scholar.

Other virtues

First of all, Strasbourg scholars did more than editing old sources: they also wrote monographs, research articles, and narrative histories, while some even edited textbooks or encyclopedic handbooks. Clearly, these genres made different demands on authors than an edition or medieval sources. Take Wilhelm Scherer, the historian of German literature, who shortly after this appointment at Strasbourg wrote a *Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung im elften und zwölften Jahrhundert* (History of German poetry in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, 1875). The book tried to offer a "comprehensive image"

50 Rainer Kolk, "Liebhaber, Gelehrte, Experten: Das Sozialsystem der Germanistik bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Germanistik im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Jürgen Fohrmann and Wilhelm Voßkamp (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1994), 48–114, at 76, quoting Franz Schultz, "Die Entwicklung der Literaturwissenschaft von Herder bis Wilhelm Scherer," in *Philosophie der Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Emil Ermatinger (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1930), 1–42, at 37.

of early Middle High German poetry by tracing influences, pointing out analogies, and identifying developments over time.[51] According to a critical reviewer, this exercise was more "journalistic" than scientific, partly because preliminary studies were still missing, partly also because Scherer's habit of indicating uncertainties only in his footnotes showed a painful lack of "scientific love of truth."[52] Other colleagues, however, while granting that Scherer could "lose himself in clouds of conjectures, in the nimbus of parallels, in the realm of lightheartedness [and] of poetic euphoria," appreciated his interpretative courage and welcomed the book for the stimulus it provided.[53] Although most of its conjectures were impossible to prove, the author at least presented a possible picture of how things hang together.[54]

Scherer was not alone in trying his hands at narrative synthesis. In *Die geistigen und socialen Strömungen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (The spiritual and social currents of the nineteenth century, 1899), his philosophy colleague Theobald Ziegler also cast his net widely. Emerging out of a lecture series given in 1896–97,[55] the book offered a panoramic view of German intellectual life since the Enlightenment. Judging by reviews in the popular press, most attractive about the book was its perceived combination of "thoroughness of research" with an accessible style of writing.[56] Ziegler was hailed as an author who "thinks clearly and writes well."[57] Indeed, according to his Austrian colleague Friedrich Jodl, Ziegler was the right person for such a synoptic work because he possessed all the qualities needed for the job: an "unambiguous national attitude," an "unprejudiced and independent position" in religious matters, and a talent for writing both "lively" and "understandably to all."[58] Unmistakably, these were other qualities than those fostered in seminar rooms or needed for preparing source editions.

51 Wilhelm Scherer, *Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung im elften und zwölften Jahrhundert* (Strasbourg: Karl J. Trübner, 1875), vii.

52 [Friedrich Zarncke?], review in *Literarisches Centralblatt für Deutschland* (1876): 151–53, at 153.

53 [Franz] Sachse, review in *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 31 (1877): 93–99, at 97; Erich Schmidt, review in *Deutsche Rundschau* 7 (1876): 294–99, at 295.

54 [Elias] Steinmeyer, review in *Anzeiger für deutsches Alterthum und deutsche Litteratur* 1 (1876): 234–40, at 235; W. Wilmanns, review in *Historische Zeitschrift* 36 (1876): 518–23, at 519.

55 Roscher, *Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität*, 372, n. 1030.

56 F. D. in "Litterarische Rundschau," *Westermanns Illustrierte Deutsche Monatshefte* 90 (1901): 530–40, at 536.

57 Adolf Hausrath, "An der Neige des Jahrhunderts," *Deutsche Rundschau* 98 (1899): 313–15, at 315.

58 Fr. Jodl, review in *Euphorion* 6 (1899): 772–79, at 775. More critical was the Austrian Catholic *Allgemeines Litteraturblatt* 11 (1902): 39–42.

Similarly, in the realm of teaching, lecture courses (*Vorlesungen*) required different didactic qualities than research-intensive seminars. Given the frequency with which Strasbourg professors were being excused for not lecturing with the rhetorical power and emotional intensity of a Heinrich von Treitschke, it looks like mediocre performance in the lecture hall could be framed as a virtue rather than a vice.[59] Careful, conscientious scholars, after all, would betray their ethos by abstracting too much from what they could analyze in painstaking detail. Still, when Studemund, the meticulous source editor, taught a survey course on Roman literature, he did not hesitate to sacrifice on accuracy when necessary for the sake of clarity.[60] Others even acquired a reputation for inspirational lecturing. Otto Liebmann's philosophy lectures were described as "little pieces of art," delivered with contagious enthusiasm.[61]

Consequently, a first qualifying observation is that the ethos of criticism at Strasbourg was most manifest in *certain* genres of research and teaching, but not in *all* of them. Despite their great commitment to philological and historical critique, Strasbourg humanities scholars also contributed to genres that required other qualities than accuracy and attention to detail. Interestingly, the desire to engage in more than philological *Kleinarbeit* manifested itself not only among scholars skeptical about source-editing projects. When Weizsäcker's assistants tried to discriminate between *habitationes* and *habitationibus*, they could also deeply long for more challenging or satisfying work. "Lost in the abysses of editions," Ernst Bernheim, for instance, envied his colleague Karl Lamprecht for book projects that allowed him to follow his own inclinations.[62] Likewise, Theodor Nöldeke, while agreeing to contribute to Michael Jan de Goeje's large-scale edition of the *Tarikh al-Tabari*, warned his Dutch colleague in advance: "In particular, I have a horror of the work of transcribing; I prefer correcting ten proof sheets over transcribing half a sheet."[63] Or as Nöldeke sighed on another occasion: he would have greatly

59 Marcks, "Hermann Baumgarten (III)," 3; Hermann Bloch, "Paul Scheffer-Boichorst (25. Mai 1843–17. Januar 1902)," *Historische Zeitschrift* 89 (1902): 54–71, at 66; C. Snouck Hurgronje, "Theodor Nöldeke: 2. März 1836–25. Dezember 1930," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 85 (1931): 239–81, at 279.

60 Collard, *Trois universités allemandes*, 21.

61 R. Eucken, "Ansprache bei der Bestattung," *Kant-Studien* 17 (1912): 1–5, at 3.

62 Ernst Bernheim to Karl Lamprecht, 9 February 1883, in *"Über das eigentliche Arbeitsgebiet der Geschichte": Der Briefwechsel zwischen Karl Lamprecht und Ernst Bernheim sowie zwischen Karl Lamprecht und Henri Pirenne 1878–1915*, ed. Luise Schorn-Schütte and Mircea Ogrin (Cologne: Böhlau, 2017), 49–51, at 50.

63 Theodor Nöldeke to Michael Jan de Goeje, 7 April 1874, as quoted in Snouck Hurgronje, "Theodor Nöldeke," 262.

preferred to write a monograph on the Sasanian Empire instead of editing Tabari's account of it.[64] So, despite the fact that virtues of criticism were seen as indispensable for serious scholarship, Strasbourg scholars also engaged, or dreamt of engaging, in types of teaching and research that made demands on other, less philological virtues.

Evaluative attitudes

If virtues of criticism existed alongside other virtues, a second point that needs to be made is that these virtues were often colored by *evaluative attitudes*. Criticism, after all, not only served the *wissenschaftliche* goal of acquiring knowledge; it was also charged with normative meaning, informed by religious assumptions, or loaded with political overtones, all of which left their mark on the ethos lived out by Strasbourg humanities scholars. Although these evaluative stances often remained implicit, they manifested themselves, among other things, in how scholars positioned themselves vis-à-vis their subject matter—how they identified with their topics of research or, by contrast, distanced themselves from it.

A vivid example of distanced criticism is offered by Theodor Nöldeke's history of the Qur'an. Reviewing a broad range of sources, from ancient Arabic biographies of Mohammed to manuscript commentaries on the Qur'an, Nöldeke tried to sort out what was historically reliable and what was not. In many cases, "lies," "pious frauds," and unbridled "fantasy" on the part of the authors yielded negative results: neither "dogmatic" nor "uncritical" sources could pass Nöldeke's reliability test.[65] So, while Nöldeke presented himself as open-minded, free from prejudice, cautious, and skeptical of tradition and authority alike,[66] these were exactly the virtues he found lacking in his source material. And this was not the only way in which Nöldeke contrasted between "us," modern European scholars, and them, "superstitious Muslims" haunted by religious fantasies "that no one seriously investigating the matter will believe sincerely."[67] In later years, he even

64 Theodor Nöldeke to Georg Hoffmann, 24 October 1877, as quoted in Bernhard Maier, *Gründerzeit der Orientalistik: Theodor Nöldekes Leben und Werk im Spiegel seiner Briefe* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2013), 69.

65 Theodor Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Quorâns* (Göttingen: Dieterich 1860), xxix, 5, 20, xxi.

66 Ibid., xxxi, 214, v, xvi, 51. Reviewers also hailed Nöldeke's "thorough" and "critical" habits of mind: [Moritz Steinschneider], review in *Hebräische Bibliographie* 4 (1861): 67–69; H[einrich] E[wald], review in *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen* (1860): 1441–57, at 1444.

67 Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Quorâns*, 38, 223 (cf. ibid., 50, 214).

stated, in private correspondence, that it are not "the worst features of our modern being" that make "dreamers and seers" like Mohammed appear to us as "incomprehensible."[68] In other words, the distance between Nöldeke, the self-declared rationalist, and the world of ancient Islam was almost complete.

Things were less clear cut for Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, a New Testament critic who argued that the Gospel of Mark offered a more reliable image of Jesus than the Gospel of Matthew.[69] In his scholarly publications, Holtzmann proceeded from the assumption that the Bible had to be treated like Homer or the pre-Socratic fragments, without any preconceived idea about their religious, philosophical, or literary value.[70] This, however, did not prevent him from climbing the pulpit of Strasbourg Cathedral on Sunday to deliver sermons that treated even Matthew's words as nourishment for the soul.[71] There are indications that even Holtzmann's "Markan priority" hypothesis was informed by a liberal Protestant agenda. In the context of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*, at least, the thesis that Matthew was of disputable reliability was welcomed by anticlerical Protestants, as it allowed them to dismiss Matthew 16:18 ("upon this rock I will build my church") as a proof text for apostolic succession.[72]

While Holtzmann negotiated distance and proximity, unambiguous identification with the past under study could be found in the fields of history and art history. At a time when even a specialist reference work like the *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Straßburg* could be presented as a monument of "national conviction,"[73] explicit glorification of the German past seemed hardly necessary: studying the national past as such already counted as an act of patriotism. Nonetheless, not a few scholars chose to write in the first person plural, thereby conveying how much they identified with the past under scrutiny. The art historian Georg Dehio, for instance, almost routinely referred to "our people," "our history," "our national life," and "the fortunes

68 Nöldeke to Hoffmann, 22 February 1886, as quoted in Maier, *Gründerzeit der Orientalistik*, 66.

69 John S. Kloppenborg, "Holtzmann's *Life of Jesus* according to the 'A' Source," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 4 (2006): 75–108, 203–23.

70 Heinrich Holtzmann, *Recht und Pflicht der biblischen Kritik: Ein Vortrag* (Karlsruhe: G. Braun, 1874).

71 H. J. Holtzmann, *Gesammelte Predigten*, [vol. 1] (Berlin: Hans Friedrich, 1901), chaps. 2, 3, 8, 9, 11, and 13.

72 William R. Farmer, "State Interesse and Markan Primacy: 1870–1914," in *Biblical Studies and the Shifting of Paradigms, 1850–1914*, ed. Henning Reventlow and William R. Farmer (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 15–49, at 32–33.

73 "Vorwort," in *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Strassburg*, vol. 1, ed. Wilhelm Wiegand (Strasbourg: Karl J. Trübner, 1879), v–vii, at vi.

of our nation," even when writing in a professional journal.[74] Indeed, for Dehio, Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II was "one of ours, even when we gradually come to realize that he himself hardly felt German and was not [German] insofar as his upbringing, language, and way of thinking are concerned."[75] Arguably, this identification with a past claimed as "German" was one of the motives behind Dehio's dedication to heritage conservation. As he argued in 1905, at a university ceremony attended by Emperor Wilhelm II: "We do not conserve a monument because we think it is beautiful, but rather because it is a part of our national existence."[76] Clearly, Dehio's age of critique also was an age of nationalism. Historical criticism could serve nationalist history writing just as easily as it could support an Orientalist "othering" of the East.

One implication of this is that German nationalism at the Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität was more than a matter of displaying patriotic virtues (as distinguished from scholarly virtues). Typical of the nationalist fervor cultivated at Strasbourg was that critical study *as such* was supposed to add to the glory of the fatherland. Historical or philological inquiry therefore not only demanded scholarly virtues (accuracy, precision, patience), but also an evaluative stance (identification with the German nation-state) which lent a particular flavor to the virtues in which Strasbourg students were socialized. More generally, this implies that virtues, despite their prominence in nineteenth-century scholarly thinking, cannot capture each and every aspect of the ethos prevalent at Strasbourg. The academic ethos was characterized by virtues of criticism, but also, no less importantly, by identifications and dissociations—modes of "positioning" that revealed how Strasbourg scholars related normatively to the German past, the Christian tradition, and the Orientalist "other."

Different personae

Finally, even if Strasbourg professors shared an ethos of criticism and found each other enamored of the German Empire, these similarities did not

74 G. Dehio, "Deutsche Kunstgeschichte und deutsche Geschichte," *Historische Zeitschrift* 100 (1908): 473–85, at 480, 482, 484, 479.

75 Georg Dehio, "Die Kunst Unteritaliens in der Zeit Kaiser Friedrichs II.," *Historische Zeitschrift* 95 (1905): 193–205, at 194.

76 Georg Gottfried Dehio, *Denkmalschutz und Denkmalpflege im neunzehnten Jahrhundert: Rede zur Feier des Geburtstages Sr. Majestät des Kaisers, gehalten in der Aula der Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität Strassburg am 27. Januar 1905* (Strasbourg: J. H. Ed. Heitz, 1905), 9.

prevent them from developing different "scholarly personae" or ways of being a scholar.[77] Patience and accuracy could be lived out in the seclusion of a scholar's own study, in careful manuscript study, but could be practiced also in Egyptian kings' tombs, by scholars who tried to decipher ancient hieroglyphs while being surrounded by hordes of startled bats.[78]

A Strasbourg professor who came close to personifying the first persona was Paul Scheffer-Boichorst, a historian whose virtuosity in historical criticism was known near and far.[79] Unlike Bernheim and Nöldeke, Scheffer did not dream of writing monographs or survey texts: he willingly restricted himself, more exclusively as time went on, to issues in medieval history of which he thought that truth and falsehood had not yet been sufficiently sorted out.[80] This type of research required ingenuity and sharp-mindedness, but also great familiarity with printed and archival sources. Consequently, if Scheffer was not teaching, he could be found in archives, bent over medieval manuscripts, or in his study, surrounded by notes and books.[81] Reportedly, even during dinner, Scheffer (a lifelong bachelor) sometimes had a transcript laying next to his plate.[82] Although it was a commonplace in obituaries to exonerate a deceased scholar from the charge of having been a *Stubengelehrte*, or armchair scholar, Scheffer seemed to live the cliché: "The young Strasbourg professor expected nothing from life except comfortable silence for his work."[83]

The Egyptologist Johannes Dümichen, by contrast, was an "outdoor" type of scholar: a fieldworker who was most in his element when traveling in the Nile valley. At a time when fieldwork abroad was anything but common, Dümichen's research trips were a rich source of stories about suffering and sacrifice, complete with anecdotes about the indefatigable scholar spending long hours copying inscriptions under the burning Egyptian sun.[84] If these

77 I elaborate on the concept of personae in Herman Paul, "Introduction: Scholarly Personae: What They Are and Why They Matter," in *How to Be a Historian: Scholarly Personae in Historical Studies, 1800–2000*, ed. Herman Paul (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 1–14, and "Introduction: Scholarly Personae in the History of Orientalism," in Engberts and Paul, *Scholarly Personae in the History of Orientalism*, 1–16.

78 Georg Ebers, *Richard Lepsius: Ein Lebensbild* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1885), vii.

79 Bloch, "Scheffer-Boichorst," 62.

80 Ibid., 58–59; E. Dümmler, "Gedächtnissrede auf Paul Scheffer-Boichorst," in *Abhandlungen der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften aus dem Jahre 1902* (Berlin: Verlag der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1902), 1–16, at 14.

81 Ibid., 13; Bloch, "Scheffer-Boichorst," 66.

82 K. Hampe, "Paul Scheffer-Boichorst," *Historische Vierteljahrschrift* 5 (1902): 280–90, at 286.

83 Bloch, "Scheffer-Boichorst," 57.

84 Georg Ebers, "Johannes Dümichen," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung* (26 February 1894): 1–6, at 2.

travels already brought him a reputation beyond academic circles,[85] richly illustrated books like the *Geschichte des alten Aegyptens* (History of ancient Egypt, 1879) added to this fame. As a result, Baedeker, the German publisher of travel guides, contracted Dümichen to coauthor a volume on Upper Egypt, thereby following the example of the Prussian crown prince, who had chosen Dümichen as his personal guide when touring the pyramids in 1869.[86] All this explains why, in his Strasbourg inaugural, Dümichen could literally call his chair "the office of a guide through ancient Egypt," while comparing his course syllabus to a "travel itinerary."[87]

As apparent as the differences between Scheffer's and Dümichen's personae are, these differences do not imply, however, that Scheffer's virtues of criticism were of only marginal importance to Dümichen. The *Geschichte des alten Aegyptens* was largely based on inscriptions that the author himself had transcribed. Moreover, apart from this narrative history book, Dümichen's scholarly output largely consisted of source publications full of carefully copied hieroglyphs.[88] The exactitude and sharp-mindedness required for this transcription work were not entirely unlike the precision and sagacity that Scheffer needed at his desk. Indeed, at times, Dümichen's work in Egypt resembled Studemund's research in Milan: both men tried to decode ancient scripts, with the help of modern technologies, to produce transcripts that were as reliable as possible.[89] So, despite the fact that Dümichen was less of a scholarly recluse than Scheffer, he did engage in work to which virtues of criticism were crucial. Judging by obituaries appearing after Dümichen's death in 1894, this collecting and publishing of valuable inscriptions was what his fellow Egyptologists eventually judged to be his greatest contribution.[90]

85 See "Dümichen," in *Brockhaus' Conversations-Lexikon*, 13th ed., vol. 5 (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1883), 634.

86 K. Baedeker, *Ägypten: Handbuch für Reisenden*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1891), v; Ebers, "Johannes Dümichen," 4.

87 Johannes Dümichen, *Über die Tempel und Gräber im alten Ägypten und ihre Bildwerke und Inschriften: Vorlesung gehalten in der Kaiserlichen Universität zu Strassburg am XIX. November MDCCCLXXII* (Strasbourg: Karl J. Trübner, 1872), 4, 22.

88 See, among other titles, Johannes Dümichen, *Altägyptische Kalenderinschriften in den Jahren 1863–1865 an Ort und Stelle gesammelt* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1866); *Altägyptische Tempelinschriften in den Jahren 1863–1865 an Ort und Stelle gesammelt* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1867); *Historische Inschriften altägyptischer Denkmäler in den Jahren 1863–1865 an Ort und Stelle gesammelt* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1867).

89 In Dümichen's case, photography was the technology that facilitated his transcription work. See Johannes Dümichen, *Resultate der auf Befehl Sr. Majestät des Königs Wilhelm I. von Preußen im Sommer 1868 nach Aegypten entsendeten archäologisch-photographischen Expedition*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Alexander Duncker, 1869).

90 H[einrich] B[rugsch] and A[dolf] E[rman], "Johannes Dümichen, geb. 15. October 1833, gest. 7. Februar 1894," *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde* 32 (1894): 63; Wilhelm

What these examples show is that a broadly shared commitment to virtues of criticism among humanities scholars in Strasbourg was, to some extent, compatible with a variety of personae and scholarly ways of life. Not all professors were *Stubengelehrten*; not all of them were hesitant to reach out to educated middle-class readers.

Conclusion

Where does all this leave us? When in 1897 the historical economist Gustav Schmoller looked back on the years of his professoriate in Strasbourg, he noticed that many of his colleagues at the time shared a commitment to what he called "realism." For Schmoller, this term referred to a conception of scholarship in which empirical research, driven by what had become known as the "scientific method," mattered more than bold attempts at determining how all human knowledge fits together. Realism thus indicated dissociation from the idealist legacy that had shaped so much of German university life in earlier parts of the century. Also, it implied a focus on scientific work, with professors engaging in research instead of occupying parliamentary seats and writing for *bildungsbürgerliche* audiences, as had been customary in earlier decades. For Schmoller, it was "sharper criticism," "stricter methods," and "new results" that captured the *corps d'esprit* in the Alsatian capital.[91]

Although the picture sketched in this chapter is broadly compatible with Schmoller's, I have emphasized the *ethos* displayed by Strasbourg humanities scholars rather than their methodologies, partly to understand why they spoke so highly about virtues like precision, accuracy, and sharp-mindedness, but partly also to examine how such virtues of criticism related to the nationalist ambitions of the Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität. One of the things this chapter has made clear is that the ethos prevalent at Strasbourg consisted of more than virtues of criticism. Even though *Kritik* was seen as a defining mark of *Wissenschaftlichkeit*, scholars also engaged in activities for which imagination, creativity, and synthetic abilities were

Spiegelberg, "Johannes Dümichen: Geb. 15. October 1833, gest. 7. Februar 1894," *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes* 16 (1894): 74–77, at 75.

91 Gustav Schmoller, "Von der Straßburger Jubelfeier: Worte in Namen der früheren Lehrer der Kaiser Wilhelm-Universität gesprochen zu Straßburg am 1. Mai 1897," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung* (7 May 1897): 6–7, at 7. On the *Methodenstreit* that caused Schmoller to emphasize this empiricist leaning, see Jens Herold, *Der junge Gustav Schmoller: Sozialwissenschaft und Liberalkonservatismus im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 189–93.

just as indispensable qualities as sharp-mindedness and meticulousness. Also, this chapter has shown that *Kritik* was not a matter of virtues alone: virtues of criticism were often colored by evaluative attitudes, which made visible how scholars normatively positioned themselves vis-à-vis their subject matter. Finally, a shared commitment to *Kritik* did not prevent Strasbourg humanities scholars from embracing different scholarly personae. Far from being homogeneous, their ethos of criticism could be lived out in different ways, by fieldworkers in faraway countries as well as by scholars absorbed in ancient manuscripts.

All this implies that a research focus on communities of scholars, at a single university or otherwise, may bring to light certain aspects of scholarly habits, norms, and values that tend to remain invisible in studies of single virtues or vices. Apart from that it can show how virtues overlapped and interacted with each other, it can highlight the extent to which such constellations of virtues were genre specific. Lecture courses, after all, made other demands on professors than private exercises, just as wide-ranging handbooks required other abilities than critical editions of medieval texts. Also, the perspective adopted in this chapter allows us to see that scholars' self-representations (self-congratulatory accounts like Müller's inaugural address) did not always match their actual working practices (Studemund pouring chemical reagents on old manuscripts in Milan). Even if Schmoller was right in emphasizing "sharper criticism" and "stricter methods" as distinctive of the ethos cultivated at Strasbourg, historians of the humanities not only want to know what standards scholars propagated, but also how they worked out in practice.

Part II

Rhetorical Uses

4. Hypercriticism: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Vice

Abstract: This chapter traces the history of a scholarly vice of little renown: hypercriticism. Focusing on classical philologists and Biblical scholars in nineteenth-century Germany, it examines how *Hyperkritik* developed from a technical philological term into a pejorative label that was widely invoked to discredit the latest trends in classical philology and, especially, Biblical scholarship. Methodologically, this broad use of the term challenges historians' preference for treating scholarly virtues and vices as norms tied to scholars' research practices. This chapter, therefore, develops a rhetorical approach, in which scholarly vice terms are interpreted as parts of a repertoire of scholarly "don'ts" on which both specialists and nonspecialists could draw in addressing the perceived ills of scholarly work.

Keywords: epistemic vices, scholarly vices, historical criticism, history of philology, history of Biblical scholarship

Introduction

One of the most talked-about books among German classical philologists in the mid-1830s was Petrus Hofman Peerlkamp's 1834 commentary on Horace's *Odes*.[1] The book prompted a "deluge" of responses, as one historian put it, most of which aimed to prove, "with the degree of knowledge and taste bestowed upon them by the muses," that Horace's *Odes* were not as badly corrupted as Peerlkamp maintained.[2] This controversy had only just begun, however, when another iconoclast study claimed the attention of

1 P. Hofman Peerlkamp, *Q. Horatii Flacci carmina* (Haarlem: Vincent Loosjes, 1834).

2 Lucian Müller, *Geschichte der klassischen Philologie in den Niederlanden* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1869), 113; Müller, "Ein Besuch bei Hofman Peerlkamp," *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie* 9 (1863): 171–86, at 171.

Paul, Herman. *Virtues and Vices in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities: Explorations of a Discourse*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025.
DOI 10.5117/9789048562985_CH04

many: David Friedrich Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu* (The life of Jesus, 1835).[3] Although the debates prompted by the two books were in many ways incomparable, with Strauss's attack on the reliability of the gospels causing greater turmoil in educated middle-class circles than Peerlkamp's revisionist views on Horace,[4] there were also similarities. Perhaps the most striking parallel was that Strauss and Peerlkamp were both accused of "hypercriticism," with *Hyperkritik* being a technical term for an excessively critical attitude vis-à-vis the historical record. In both cases, moreover, this accusation had ramifications beyond the realm of textual scholarship. Hypercriticism was associated with a lack of respect for tradition that was religiously heterodox and, in the reactionary climate of the 1830s, potentially politically subversive. As the *Gymnasium* teacher and Horace specialist Lobegott Samuel Obbarius put it in a review of Peerlkamp's book: "I find in this publication the sad sign of a literary Sansculottism, for which nothing is sacred and inviolable anymore, which only wants to put its beloved I on the throne," and for this reason "is closely connected to the political Sansculottism that is haunting France and parts of Switzerland and southern Germany."[5]

What is remarkable about this argument is not that it accused Peerlkamp of a scholarly vice—a way of behaving, reasoning, or writing that scholars regarded as detrimental to their work[6]—but that it offered a *symptomatic reading* of this vice, in which Peerlkamp's hypercriticism served as evidence of an iconoclastic attitude that was manifesting itself in the worlds of learning and politics alike.[7] Similarly, when the Thuringian pastor Johann Friedrich Weingart accused Strauss of "immoral Sansculottism of the highest kind,"

3 David Friedrich Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: C. F. Osiander, 1835).

4 Erik Linstrum, "Strauss's *Life of Jesus*: Publication and the Politics of the German Public Sphere," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 71, no. 4 (2010): 593–616; William Madges, *The Core of Christian Faith: D. F. Strauss and His Catholic Critics* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987); Edwina G. Lawler, *David Friedrich Strauss and His Critics: The* Life of Jesus *Debate in Early Nineteenth-Century German Journals* (New York: Peter Lang, 1986).

5 [Lobegott Samuel] Obbarius, review of *Q. Horatii Flacci carmina* by P. Hofman Peerlkamp, *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Paedagogik* 6 (1836): 355–62, at 362.

6 On the history of scholarly vices, see Sari Kivistö, *The Vices of Learning: Morality and Knowledge at Early Modern Universities* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Herman Paul and Alexander Stoeger, *Dogmatism: On the History of a Scholarly Vice* (London: Bloomsbury, 2024).

7 I use "symptomatic reading" in a nontechnical sense, a shorthand for interpretations that treat the perceived deficiencies of individual scholars as evidence of broader societal ills. On the Althusserian (Marxist, Freudian) connotations of the term in literary theory, see Robert J. C. Young, "Rereading the Symptomatic Reading," in *The Concept in Crisis: Reading Capital Today*, ed. Nick Nesbitt (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 35–48.

he was treating *Das Leben Jesu* as evidence of "the efforts of several talented minds […] to demolish the sacred laws of the eternal world order." Without discussing Strauss's arguments in any detail, he presented "hypercriticism in the field of scholarship" as an acute religious and societal danger.[8] These symptomatic readings of Peerlkamp's and Strauss's hypercriticism were not unique: the nineteenth century saw a broader tendency to turn hypercriticism from a scholarly vice into a pejorative label that nonspecialist authors could use to discredit unwelcome research findings or entire bodies of scholarly literature. Although hypercriticism never ceased to be a scholarly vice—it continued to be invoked in methodology manuals and learned periodicals—the most striking development between the 1830s and the 1880s was its appropriation and use by authors who perceived "critical" scholarship as a threat to deeply held beliefs.

There are two reasons why this history merits attention. First, compared to prejudice, speculation, and dogmatism, hypercriticism is a scholarly vice of little renown. Although much discussed by nineteenth-century historians, philologists, and Biblical scholars, it has so far been ignored in the historical literature on scholarly virtues and vices.[9] Also, whereas the conceptual history of "criticism" (*Kritik*) before and after Immanuel Kant has been traced in some detail,[10] this is not the case for the term's

8 [Johann Friedrich] Weingart, "Religiöse Gegenstände," *Allgemeiner Anzeiger und Nationalzeitung der Deutschen* (1836): 3209–17, at 3213, 3214.

9 On virtues and vices in the nineteenth-century *Geisteswissenschaften*, see Herman Paul, "An Ethos of Criticism: Virtues and Vices in Nineteenth-Century Strasbourg," in *Writing the History of the Humanities: Questions, Themes, and Approaches*, ed. Herman Paul (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 193–216 [chapter 3 in this volume]; Elise Garritzen, *Reimagining the Historian in Victorian England: Books, the Literary Marketplace, and the Scholarly Persona* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023); Christiaan Engberts, *Scholarly Virtues in Nineteenth-Century Sciences and Humanities: Loyalty and Independence Entangled* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022); Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, "Virtues of History: Exercises, Seminars, and the Emergence of the German Historical Discipline, 1830–1900," *History of Universities* 34, no. 1 (2021): 27–40; Lorraine Daston, "Objectivity and Impartiality: Epistemic Virtues in the Humanities," in *The Making of the Humanities*, vol. 3, ed. Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 27–41.

10 Benedetto Bravo, "*Critice* in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and the Rise of the Notion of Historical Criticism," in *History of Scholarship: A Selection of Papers from the Seminar on the History of Scholarship Held Annually at the Warburg Institute*, ed. Christopher Ligota and Jean-Louis Quantin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 135–95; Werner Schneiders, "Vernünftiger Zweifel und wahre Eklektik: Zur Entstehung des modernen Kritikbegriffes," *Studia Leibnitiana* 17 (1985): 143–61; Giorgio Tonelli, "'Critique' and Related Terms Prior to Kant: A Historical Survey," *Kant-Studien* 69 (1978): 119–48; Claus von Bormon, Helmut Holzhey, and Giorgio Tonelli, "Kritik," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 4, ed. Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, and Gottfried Gabriel (Basel: Schwabe, 1976), 1250–82.

two principal others, *Unkritik* and *Hyperkritik*.[11] The first objective of this chapter, therefore, is to fill this lacuna by mapping the vicissitudes of hypercriticism in and around the fields of classical philology and Biblical scholarship in nineteenth-century Germany.[12]

More important, however, is the chapter's second, methodological aim. While scholarly virtues and vices are receiving growing historiographical attention, the case of hypercriticism poses a challenge to one of the currently most prominent approaches in the history of the humanities: a praxeological approach that seeks to embed scholarly virtues and vices in academic research practices like reading, editing, drawing, and measuring.[13] Lorraine Daston adopts such an approach by interpreting objectivity as cherished by historians in the Rankean tradition as a virtue originating in "the practices of the new-style scientific historian." While acknowledging that Ranke's pupils disagreed about the meaning and importance of objectivity, Daston argues that the term's core meaning was shaped by the broadly shared practice of collecting sources and subjecting them to "source criticism" (*Quellenkritik*).[14] Similarly, with examples from the same tradition, Markus Krajewski states that the virtue of exactitude emerged out of, and contributed to, "practices of excerpting, copying, paraphrasing, redescribing" and techniques like the card index as a "medium for storing and processing historical facts."[15] By emphasizing the entanglement of ideals and practices, this praxeological approach helpfully prevents scholars' talk of virtues and vices from evaporating into mere language. The price paid for this, however, is that the rhetoric of virtue and vice—that is, the way in which people spoke about objectivity, exactitude, and hypercriticism—disappears from attention, especially

11 Although Mouza Raskolnikoff's book, *Histoire romaine et critique historique dans l'Europe des Lumières: la naissance de l'hypercritique dans l'historiographie de la Rome antique* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1992), seems an exception, it treats hypercriticism as an analytical category rather than an actors' term. The same applies to Robert Villers's essay, "Gérard de Beseler: misères et grandeurs de l'hypercritique," in [Jean Bart et al.], *Mélanges offerts au Professeur Louis Falletti* (Paris: Dalloz, 1971), 545–59.

12 On the entangled histories of these two fields, see Catherine Conybeare and Simon Goldhill, eds., *Classical Philology and Theology: Entanglement, Disavowal, and the Godlike Scholar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

13 On the promise of such a praxeological approach to the history of the humanities, see Steffan Martus and Carlos Spoerhase, *Geistesarbeit: Eine Praxeologie der Geisteswissenschaften* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2022).

14 Daston, "Objectivity and Impartiality," 31.

15 Markus Krajewski, "Geisteswissenschaftliche Genauigkeit: Zwischen epistemischer Tugend und medialer Praktik," in *Epistemische Tugenden: Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart eines Konzepts*, ed. Ruben Hackler, Andreas Gelhard, and Sandro Zanetti (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 217–37, at 222, 226.

insofar as virtues and vices were invoked outside of the academic realm, by people without much firsthand experience of scholars' research practices. In other words, what the praxeological approach hides from view is what Lutz Raphael calls the "scientification of the social," or the appropriation of scholarly terms by people outside of the academic establishment.[16]

To remedy this deficiency, this chapter proposes a *rhetorical approach*, attentive to how scholarly virtue terms and their negative counterparts, scholarly vice terms, were used both inside and outside of the academic realm to articulate evaluative stances toward ongoing scholarly developments. This rhetorical approach does, of course, not deny the importance of praxeological research. Insofar as the term hypercriticism was used by classical philologists and Biblical scholars themselves, there is a sense in which it emerged out of reflection on the risks inherent to conjectural reasoning, or out of evaluative practices in which scholars assessed the credibility of specific conjectures. Seen from this perspective, hypercriticism was intimately connected to philology's quest for authenticity and commitment to correcting errors.[17] Unlike the praxeological approach, however, the rhetorical approach proposed in this chapter does not limit itself to the scholarly realm. It seeks to trace how scholarly virtues and vices were invoked in multiple contexts, not only by specialists but also by school teachers entrusted with the task of teaching Homer or pastors worried about the latest advances in Biblical scholarship. It seeks to understand why technical terms like *Hyperkritik* found their way among nonspecialists and, more specifically, what uses these nonspecialists made of idioms imbued with the authority of "science" (*Wissenschaft*). If praxeological research explores the relationship between scholars' virtues and their research practices, the rhetorical approach supplements this by tracing scholars' talk of virtue and vice across genres, with special attention to the rhetorical stances and strategies that this vocabulary allowed for.[18]

16 Lutz Raphael, "Die Verwissenschaftlichung des Sozialen als methodische und konzeptionelle Herausforderung für eine Sozialgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 22, no. 2 (1996): 165–93.

17 Irene Peirano Garrison, "Source, Original, and Authenticity between Philology and Theology," in Conybeare and Goldhill, *Classical Philology and Theology*, 86–109; Simon Goldhill, "Ad Fontes," in *Time Travelers: Victorian Encounters with Time and History*, ed. Adelene Buckland and Sadiah Qureshi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 67–85.

18 While this approach is obviously indebted to conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*) and the history of political discourse as practiced by Quentin Skinner, it adds a rhetorical dimension by examining authors' strategies of persuasion—a long-term topic in rhetorical history as advocated in *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Kathleen J. Turner (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998), and *Reframing Rhetorical History: Cases, Theories, and Methodologies*, ed. Kathleen J. Turner and Jason Edward Black (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press,

The chapter proceeds in five steps. After a sketch of the emergence and consolidation of hypercriticism as a scholarly vice term prior to the 1830s, it examines how the expression acquired public prominence in the controversies provoked by Peerlkamp and Strauss. It goes on to examine how, in the half-century following these debates, *Hyperkritik* transformed from a personal vice into a pejorative shorthand for questionable trends in classical philology and Biblical scholarship at large. Although academic researchers continued to use the term ad hominem, the third quarter of the century saw especially *Gymnasium* teachers and Protestant clergy using *Hyperkritik* more generically, sometimes to the point of reifying it into an evil power threatening neo-humanist education or Christian faith. A brief comparison across confessional borders reveals that Jewish and Roman Catholic authors also contributed to this discourse. With its implied commitment to "healthy," unexaggerated criticism, the notion of hypercriticism allowed them to pose as guardians of true scholarship—an attractive stance for authors who were frequently denied a claim to scientific status because of their religious allegiances. In its concluding remarks, the chapter suggests that, in this respect, hypercriticism was not unique: several other virtue and vice terms also found their way into religious and political controversies.

The emergence of the term

The idea that criticism could overstep its bounds, especially in relation to canonical texts, was of course not new. Antoine Godeau and Jean Mabillon were only two of many seventeenth-century authors who warned that criticism "should remain within its limits," that is, refrain from applying its ingenious tricks to Scripture, while also avoiding "criticism only for the sake of practicing criticism," driven by passions detrimental to faith and scholarship alike.[19] There was, moreover, no lack of labels for designating such impertinent behavior. While Momus, the Greek deity who had dared to

2022). By doing so, the rhetorical approach examines scholars' talk of virtue and vice not only *referentially* (as denoting intellectual habits or character traits that were perceived as conducive and detrimental, respectively, to the pursuit of scholarship) but also *performatively*, with an eye to how authors "did things with words." I elaborate on this in the introduction to this volume.

19 Antoine Godeau, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, vol. 1 (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1653), 198; Jean Mabillon, *Traité des études monastiques, divisé en trois parties*, vol. 1 (Paris: Charles Robustel, 1691), 295, quoted here in the English translation by John Paul McDonald: *Treatise on Monastic Studies* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004), 188.

criticize his fellow gods on Mount Olympus, was an identification figure for religious and literary critics throughout the early modern period, his name also served as a byword for excessive criticism (with Luther at some point calling Erasmus a "true Momus" who "mocks and trifles with everything").[20] Pyrrho, likewise, lent his name to excessive doubt, with the specter of Pyrrhonism haunting the early-eighteenth-century Republic of Letters not unlike the threat of hypercriticism would do in nineteenth-century Europe.[21] Like skepticism, moreover, Pyrrhonism was a term that could be used derogatorily. Calling someone a *Pyrrho redivivus*, analogous to how Luther called Erasmus a Momus, amounted to diagnosing them with pathological doubt.[22]

While hypercriticism belonged to the same word field as Pyrrhonism and skepticism, it was not nearly as old.[23] Originating in the sixteenth century, *hypercritica* had entered scholarly parlance as shorthand for responses to criticism or reflections on the critic's task.[24] By the early seventeenth century, however, the term was used accusatorily ("the hypercriticall controller of Poets," "too Hypercritical upon so short a Digression"), with the prefix denoting an excess of critical zeal.[25] Dictionaries codified this meaning by defining the hypercritic as someone "above, or passing the common sort of Criticks, a Master Critick," "over critical," "over exact," engaged in "more

20 Quoted in George McClure, *Doubting the Divine in Early Modern Europe: The Revival of Momus, the Agnostic God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 90. See also Donatella Capaldi, *Momo: Il demone cinico tra mito, filosofia e letteratura* (Naples: Liguori, 2011).

21 Anton M. Matytsin, *The Specter of Skepticism in the Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016); Markus Völkel, *"Pyrrhonismus historicus" und "fides historica": Die Entwicklung der deutschen historischen Methodologie unter dem Gesichtspunkt der historischen Skepsis* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1987); Carlo Borghero, *La certezza e la storia: Cartesianesimo, pirronismo e conoscenza storica* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1983).

22 See the examples in Winfried Schröder, *Ursprünge des Atheismus: Untersuchungen zur Metaphysik- und Religionskritik des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1988), 358; Theobald Freudenberger, "Die Annales Collegii Herbipolensis Societatis Jesu und ihr Verfasser Johannes Spitznase aus Mühlhausen in Thüringen," *Würzburger Diözesangeschichtsblätter* 43 (1981): 163–262, at 165, 166.

23 The term is notably absent from Silvia Rizzo, *Il lessico filologico degli umanisti* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1973).

24 Iulius Caesar Scaliger, *Poetices libri septem* (Lyon: Ionannes Crispinum, 1561), 295; Edmund Bolton, "Hypercritica; or a Rule of Judgment for Writing, or Reading Our History's" (1621), in *Ancient Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poësy*, ed. Joseph Haslewood, vol. 2 (London: Robert Triphook, 1815), 221–54.

25 [William Camden], *Remaines Concerning Brittaine*, 4th ed. (London: Simon Waterson, 1629), 13; A. Cowley, *Poems* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1656), 36, both referring to Julius Caesar Scaliger (who was not only among the first to use the term but also the first to become known as a hypercritic).

than ordinary Judgment or Censure."[26] The hypercritic so defined was an embodiment of virtue turned into vice ("that hypercriticall Momus") and, as such, an object of contempt and ridicule.[27] Gilles Ménage's 1638 satire on the French Academy, ironically addressed "to our academic lords, our lords the hypercritics, sovereign arbiters of words," is a case in point.[28] "Here is the hypercriticism," wrote Ménage on another occasion, "which sovereignly judges all works: which censors my books; which treats them as ridiculous."[29] Clearly, Ménage hoped to return the compliment by turning the hypercritic into a figure of mockery—not unlike the pedant whose vices had been ridiculed by generations of French and Italian playwrights.[30] Hypercritics, wrote another French critic, are men with "very sharp eyes to see the slightest faults, and who take pleasure in noticing them."[31] By the early eighteenth century, then, hypercriticism had come to denote a reduction *ad absurdum* of what criticism was supposed to be. It symbolized both *excessiveness* (criticism gone too far) and *absurdity* (too obviously wrong to be taken seriously).

Although older meanings of the term did not immediately disappear—throughout the eighteenth century, it remained possible to sign a letter to the editor with "Hypercriticus"[32]— excessiveness and absurdity established themselves as dominant connotations. In the satirical prose of Jonathan Swift and Laurence Sterne, hypercritics were readers pedantic enough

26 T[homas] B[lount], *Glossographia: Or a Dictionary* (London: Tho. Newcomb, 1656), s.v. hypercritick; E. Coles, *An English Dictionary* (London: Peter Parker, 1677), s.v. hypercritick; E[dward] P[hillips], *The New World of Words: Or a General English Dictionary*, 4th ed. (London: W. R., 1678), s.v. hypercriticism (unpag. appendix); N. Bailey, *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (London: E. Bell, etc., 1721), s.v. hypercriticisms.

27 [Thomas Coryate], *Coryates Crambe, or His Colwort Tvvise Sodden* (London: William Stansby, 1611), unpag. ("To the Reader").

28 [Gilles Ménage], *Le Parnasse alarmé* (Paris: [Augustin Courbé], 1649), 3.

29 [Gilles Ménage], *Observations de Monsieur Ménage sur la langue française*, vol. 2 (Paris: Claude Barbin, 1676), 194.

30 Jocelyn Royé, *La figure du pédant de Montaigne à Molière* (Geneva: Droz, 2008); Antonio Stäuble, *"Parlar per lettera": Il pedante nella commedia del cinquecento e altri saggi sul teatro rinascimentale* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1991). I owe these references to Arnoud Visser.

31 Review of *Observations sur le nouveau breviaire de Cluni* by Jean-Baptiste Thiers, *Journal des sçavans* (1702): 693–94, at 694. See also [Pierre Defontaines], *Paradoxes litteraires au sujet de la tragédie d'Ines de Castro* (Paris: Noel Pissot, 1723), 38.

32 Perhaps the best-known example, widely discussed in studies of Benjamin Franklin, is Nathaniel Gardner's "To the Author of the New-England Courant," *The New-England Courant* 67 (5–12 November 1722): 1–2. For examples from *The London Magazine*, some fifty years later, see Samuel Baudry, "'The Reviewers Reviewed': Criticism in Eighteenth-Century Letters to the Editor," *XVII–XVIII*, special issue 3 (2013): 301–12.

to correct the dinner scenes in a novel or to measure the accuracy of the narrated time between two events in *Tristram Shandy* with a "scholastic pendulum."[33] Writing in 1763, a British author even proposed a *Hypercritical and Anticritical Monthly Review*, designed as a publication outlet for critics who, in Swift's memorable words,

> travel through this vast World of Writings, to pursue and hunt those *monstrous Faults* bred within; to drag out the *lurking Errors*, like *Cacus* from his Den, to multiply them like Hydras Heads, and rake them together like *Augea*'s Filth.[34]

This tradition of ridiculing hypercriticism would persist until well into the nineteenth century.[35]

If Swift made fun of overzealous literary critics, textual scholars also came to be seen as susceptible to excessive criticism.[36] In the overlapping communities of classical philologists and Biblical scholars, *Hyperkritik* became a word of disapproval for conjectures or emendations that were too radical to be convincing. When Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, commenting on a passage in Plutarch on Sophocles's tragedies, proposed to substitute the name of Sophocles for Euripides, a reviewer objected that this was "hypercriticism and learned chicane."[37] Another reviewer admitted that the authenticity of many speeches recorded by ancient historians was doubtful. Dismissing all of them as unreliable, however, would be excessive: "That is obviously a hypercritical judgment!"[38] Also, in response to Johann

33 Simon Wagstaff [= Jonathan Swift], *A Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation* (London: B. Motte and C. Bathurst, 1738), lv–lvi; [Laurence Sterne], *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1760), 55, 56.

34 Thomas Marshall, "On the Hypercritical Monthly Reviewers," *The Palladium Extraordinary* (1763): 80–84, at 84, quoting [Jonathan Swift], *A Tale of a Tub*, 2nd ed. (London: John Nutt, 1704), 78.

35 E.g., C. F. J. [= James Freeman Clarke], "Ars Critica: A Conversation on Modern Poetry," *The Western Messenger* 7 (1839), 105–12. On the genre more generally: Alexander Košenina, *Der gelehrte Narr: Gelehrtensatire seit der Aufklärung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004).

36 E.g., Johann Gottlieb Schummel, *Uebersetzer-Bibliothek zum Gebrauche der Uebersetzer, Schulmänner und Liebhaber der alten Litteratur* (Wittenberg: Samuel Gottfried Zimmermann, 1774), 227; Gotthilf Traugott Zacharia, *Philosophisch-theologische Abhandlungen als Beilagen zur biblischen Theologie zu gebrauchen*, ed. Christian Gottlieb Perschke (Lemgo: Meyer, 1776), 24; Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 5 (London: A. Strahan, 1788), 548 n. 1.

37 N. N., review of *Gotthold Ephraim Lessings Leben des Sophocles*, ed. Johann Joachim Eschenburg, *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* (1791): 2109–11, at 2111.

38 Gf., review of *Ueber den deutschen Styl* by Johann Christoph Adelung, *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* 73 (1787): 3–20, at 13.

David Michaelis's hesitations regarding "the elect lady and her children" in 2 John 1—Why does the apostle not mention the lady's husband?—the Jena theologian Samuel Gottlieb Lange responded: "This is real hypercriticism. Where would we end up if we would be offended by something like this?"[39] Lange's rhetorical question is an interesting one because of its implied slippery slope argument. Although charges of hypercriticism were often prompted by small points of disagreement, they derived their force from the suggestion that an author's interpretive habits would have devastating consequences if applied, not to a single Bible verse or line of Horace, but to all of Scripture or the whole Horatian corpus.

This potential for presenting specific conjectures, often at the level of single words, as evidence of an unbounded Pyrrhonism with potentially dangerous implications for other texts became characteristic of *Hyperkritik* as used by classical philologists and Biblical scholars in the decades around 1800. Was it appropriate (to give one more example from the German lands) for the editors of a medieval Latin abridgment of the *Iliad* to replace *corpus* by *pignus* or to emend *icta* into *laesa* for the sake of stylistic consistency? A reviewer of the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* believed it was not. In his eyes, a combination of "exaggerated critical willfulness" and "hypercritical anxiety" had caused the editors to make "many very arbitrary changes in the text." What was un-Latin about *Tydideus*, why should *cerebrum revulsum* be regarded as corrupted, and on what grounds did the editors reject the perfectly sensible proposal to read *et Pirous una* for *Pigorius una*? At stake in these questions was more than Homer's *Iliad*. Confronted with so many "useless conjectures heaped upon each other," the reviewer could but wish that "the good genius of criticism" would prevent such hypercritical editing from becoming the norm—for otherwise, he feared, we would have to subject who knows how many other texts to similar surgical treatment.[40]

Although the decades around 1800 saw the term being applied at ever larger scales, to the point that a German philologist in 1819 worried about "a hypercritical chasing [...] especially in classical literature,"[41] the term's significance at this stage should not be overestimated. Hypercriticism hardly played a role in the *Fragmentenstreit* of the 1770s or in the dispute unleashed

39 Samuel Gottlieb Lange, *Die Schriften Johannis des vertrauten Schülers Jesu*, vol. 3 (Weimar: Industrie-Comptoir, 1797), 161.

40 Fw., review of *Incerti auctoris* (*vulgo Pindari Thebani*) *Epitome Iliados Homericae* by Theodorus van Kooten and Henricus Weytingh, *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* 9 (1812): 145–63, at 155, 148, 155, 156.

41 Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, *Die Nibelungen: Ihre Bedeutung für die Gegenwart und für immer* (Breslau: Josef Max, 1819), 185.

by Friedrich August Wolf's *Prolegomena zu Homer* (1795). Wolf himself only rarely used the term, though in a telling way. Commenting on "the people outside"—a rhetoric figure similar to the "mob" (*Pöbel*) in German Enlightenment discourse[42]—Wolf urged readers to harbor no illusions about the fate of his Homer criticism: the unenlightened public will dismiss it "as a web of vain subtleties, as a learned chiromancy." Indeed, ignorant readers will engage in "mockery about hypercritical questions," using the vice term hypocritically, without knowledge of the issues at stake, but determined to counter this perceived attack on their beloved poet.[43] Clearly, Wolf associated *Hyperkritik* with a sense of mistrust that men of learning would provoke by prioritizing philological criticism over aesthetic appreciation of classical texts—which in retrospect was an accurate prophecy of things to come.[44]

If hypercriticism played only a limited role in the controversies of the day, how can we explain that the term nonetheless became part of scholars' repertoire of vice terms? What, if anything, did hypercriticism add to existing terms like skepticism and Pyrrhonism? Perhaps most decisive was the ascendency of *Kritik* in the study of literature, philology, and philosophy. As Giorgio Tonelli and others have shown, by the time Immanuel Kant published his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Critique of pure reason, 1781), criticism had become a buzzword in the entire world of learning.[45] It captured the aspirations of literary reviewers just as those of source-critical philologists and philosophers dissatisfied with Wolffian or Leibnizian modes of thinking. Although *Kritik* in these various contexts meant very different things, the near ubiquity of the term offers a clue as to why hypercriticism was added to scholars' repertoire of terms. In most of the examples surveyed so far, *Hyperkritik* was presented as a vice of men who took pride in their *Kritik*. Charges of hypercriticism were responses to scholars' fascination with criticism.[46] Compared to skepticism or pedantry, then, hypercriticism

42 Roman Widder, "Streit, Infamie, Hass: Figuren der Kritik im Fragmentenstreit," in *Hass/Literatur: Literatur- und kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zu einer Theorie- und Diskursgeschichte*, ed. Jürgen Brokoff and Robert Walter-Jochum (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2019), 261–89, at 267–71.

43 Friedrich August Wolf to Christian Gottlieb Heyne, 18 November 1795, in *Briefe an Herrn Hofrath Heyne von Professor Wolf: Eine Beilage zu den neusten Untersuchungen über den Homer* (Berlin: G. C. Nauk, 1797), 3–23, at 18, 13.

44 For another occurrence of the term in Wolf, see [Friedrich August] W[olf], "Anfang der Odyssee," *Literarische Analekten* 2 (1820): 137–66, at 152.

45 Tonelli, "Critique," 132–47; J. Colin McQuillan, *Immanuel Kant: The Very Idea of a Critique of Pure Reason* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2016), 3–20.

46 Kant's critical philosophy also prompted charges of hypercriticism, most notably from Johann Gottfried Herder, who preferred to keep away from "this region of hypercriticism of the sound understanding in which one builds without materials, exists without existence,

had the advantage of conveying that a Momus-like questioning of each and everything was criticism gone too far—a perversion of something good. In the context of scholarly controversy, this was an attractive feature of the term. While objections to *Kritik* as such could easily prompt countercharges of *Unkritik* or dogmatism, *Hyperkritik* presupposed at least rhetorically a commitment to sound criticism. Hypercriticism, in other words, allowed authors to reject conjectures or arguments that they perceived as excessively critical while presenting themselves, in line with the demands of *Wissenschaft*, as advocates of "healthy" criticism.[47]

Peerlkamp and Strauss

If we interpret the 1830s controversies with which we started against this background, the first thing to note is that charges of hypercriticism as leveled against Peerlkamp and Strauss broadly followed the patterns identified above. When Peerlkamp's reviewers complained about hypercriticism—"a work of hypercriticism," "the editor's hypercriticism," "the newest conspicuous instance of bold hypercriticism"—they did so, first of all, because of perceived excesses.[48] Peerlkamp judged large parts of Horace's *Odes* inauthentic because they failed to meet the impossibly high standard of what Peerlkamp regarded as Horace's own Latin. The ironic result, as one commentator put it, was that Peerlkamp "drove out Horace with Horace himself [*Horatium*

knows without experience, and works without powers" (J. G. Herder, *Gott: Einige Gespräche* [Gotha: Karl Wilhelm Ettinger, 1787], 166–67; the English translation is taken from *God: Some Conversations*, trans. Frederick Burkhardt [New York: Hafner, 1949], 153). Similarly, a Catholic critic judged that Kantian hypercriticism was too far removed from "healthy common sense" to be convincing (Benedikt Stattler, *Anhang zum Anti-Kant in Widerlegung der Kantischen Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* [Munich: Joseph Lentner, 1788], 92; see also Stattler, *Anti-Kant*, vol. 2 [Munich: Joseph Lentner, 1788], 402). Following Kant himself, who had ranked Johann Gottlieb Fichte among his "hypercritical friends" (Immanuel Kant to Johann Heinrich Tieftrunk, 13 October 1797, in *Kant's Briefwechsel*, [ed. Rudolf Reicke], vol. 3 [Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1902], 205–7, at 205), others argued that they preferred Kant's criticism over Fichte's hypercriticism, with the prefix here as elsewhere expressing a sense of excess. See, e.g., [Johann Otto Thiess], *Johann Otto Thiess: Geschichte seines Lebens und seiner Schriften*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Christian Gottfried Kratsch, 1801), 383–85; [Johann Gottfried Gruber], "Ueber den Geist und die Tendenz der neueren Aesthetik [I]," *Neue Leipziger Literaturzeitung* 4 (1804): 2289–304, at 2291.

47 So, e.g., Fr. C. H. Kruse, *Blicke auf die alten Völker und Städte des östlichen Germaniens* (Leipzig: P. G. Kummer, 1822), xiv–xv.

48 Obbarius, review, 355; [Gottfried] Bernhardy, review of *Q. Horatii Flacci carmina* by P. Hofman Peerlkamp, *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik* (1835), 737–42, 745–56, at 749; Karl Wilhelm Justi, *Hiob: Neu übersetzt und erläutert* (Kassel: J. J. Bohne, 1840), xi.

ex Horatio ipso expulit]."[49] One line of defense against this mistreatment of a beloved poet was to say that stylistic consistency had been Horace's priority no more than it had been Shakespeare's or Goethe's.[50] "Horace is not a pedant or a pedantic and hypochondriac Dutch schoolmaster," wrote the *Gymnasium* teacher Eduard Döhler; "he is a poet, a true poet at that, who enthusiastically writes for receptive minds, not for cold rational beings."[51] Another argument, brought forward by Gottfried Bernhardy, was that Peerlkamp's hypercriticism was too subjective and arbitrary to qualify as *Wissenschaft*.[52] Last but not least, there was the *reductio ab absurdum*, or the argument "that such a procedure can lead to nothing but bottomless criticism."[53] It was in the context of this argument that "the dominance of a certain critical feeling […] which recognizes nothing as true and genuine except that which meets its own subjective requirements" appeared as most threatening to the sociopolitical order. As Obbarius rhetorically asked: "What would happen to our school system, what would happen to our ancient, revered authors if no authority […] appears as sacred anymore?"[54] Although Lucian Müller exaggerated in reporting that Peerlkamp's book was treated as "a sign of ever-increasing moral corruption and the imminent end of the world," he correctly saw that the critics' real point of concern was not the textual integrity of Horace's *Odes* but the Pandora's box opened by critics who dared to call even the most venerable traditions into question.[55]

As Marilyn Chapin Massey has argued, moral-political concerns played a role also in the debate provoked by *Das Leben Jesu*. Although Strauss's criticism of the gospels was hardly more radical than that of Reimarus and Lessing in the 1770s,[56] his argument that Jesus was a product of the

49 Johann Casper von Orelli as quoted in John Edwin Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: [Cambridge] University Press, 1908), 277.

50 This argument would also be made repeatedly against Karl Lachmann's criticism of Homer, e.g., in N. N., "Homerische Literatur," *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* (1844): 501–7, 509–16, at 514; H. Düntzer, "Ueber Lachmann's Kritik der homerischen Gesänge," *Allgemeine Monatsschrift für Literatur* (1850): 273–95, at 277–78; [Wilhelm] Bäumlein, "Betrachtungen über Homer's Ilias: Zweiter Artikel," *Zeitschrift für die Alterthumswissenschaft* 8 (1850): 145–74, at 165–66.

51 Eduard Döhler, review of *Q. Horatii Flacci epistola ad Piones* by P. Hofman Peerlkamp, *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Paedagogik* 16 (1846): 440–48, at 441.

52 Bernhardy, review, 742.

53 Obbarius, review, 355.

54 Ibid., 355, 362.

55 Müller, "Besuch," 171, echoing Peerlkamp's own retrospective on the reception of his book ("Ad arma, clamabatur, ad arma") in P. Hofman Peerlkamp, *Q. Horatii Flacci carmina*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Frederik Muller, 1862), xxix.

56 A point emphasized by Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien, ihr Verhältniß zu einander, ihren Charakter und Ursprung* (Tübingen: Ludw. Fr. Fues, 1847), 46–47.

mythic imagination of his early followers had explosive potential in the political context of the 1830s. As the Young Hegelian philosopher Arnold Ruge pointed out in 1839, Strauss's replacement of the "genius" of Jesus by the "spiritual democracy" of Christian congregations that recognized, or created, Jesus as a figure of religious significance amounted to a democratization of Christianity.[57] This leads Massey to suggest that the Life of Jesus controversy was, among other things, a proxy for a debate on political freedom—allowing the educated middle classes to discuss democracy and revolution in the same veiled manner in which Karl Gutzkow's controversial novel, *Wally, die Zweiflerin* (Wally the skeptic, 1835), opened up a space for imagining alternatives to the existing religious-political order.[58]

True as this may be, the dozens of commentators who accused Strauss of *Hyperkritik* mostly worried about other perceived impertinencies. The most important of these was the sacrilege that Strauss committed by applying his critical tools to the holy of holies, "condemning and torturing the most sacred life story to the most shameful death."[59] Many a reviewer felt that Strauss's "tearing down of thousand-year-old sanctuaries" justified a tone of holy indignation.[60] Insofar as Strauss, like Peerlkamp, was charged with "immoral Sansculottism of the highest kind," this was not so much an accusation of political radicalism as a declaration of protest against the profanity of ridiculing "the sanctuary of religion with bitter mockery."[61] Secondly, reviewers spoke about hypercriticism in relation to Strauss's method, which many perceived as "negative," "destructive," or only engaged with "negating and contradicting."[62] This not merely referred to Strauss

57 Arnold Ruge, review of *Zwei friedliche Blätter* by David Friedrich Strauss, *Hallische Jahrbücher für deutsche Wissenschaft und Kunst* 2 (1839): 985–88, 993–1004, at 1002.

58 Marilyn Chapin Massey, *Christ Unmasked: The Meaning of* The Life of Jesus *in German Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), esp. 34–37. See also, more cautiously, Michael Ledges-Lomas, "Strauss and the *Life of Jesus* Controversy," in *The Oxford History of Modern German Theology*, vol. 1, ed. Grant Kaplan and Kevin M. Vander Schel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 614–32, at 615–16, and, on the Gutzkow controversy, Erwin Wabnegger, *Literaturskandal: Studien zur Reaktion des öffentlichen Systems auf Karl Gutzkows Roman "Wally, die Zweiflerin" (1835–1848)* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1987).

59 Johann Ernst Osiander, *Apologie des Lebens Jesu gegen den neuesten Versuch, es in Mythen aufzulösen* (Tübingen: Ludw. Friedr. Fues, 1837), 322.

60 C. Ullmann, review of *Das Leben Jesu* by David Friedrich Strauss, *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 2 (1836): 770–816, at 773; N. N., review of *Bemerkungen über "Das Leben Jesu"* by Christoph Benj. Klaiber, *Literatur-Blatt* (1836): 398–400, at 398.

61 Weingart, "Religiöse Gegenstände," 3213.

62 Christoph Benj. Klaiber, *Bemerkungen über "Das Leben Jesu kritisch bearbeitet von D. Fr. Strauss"* (Stuttgart: Beck und Fränkel, 1836), 39, 55; Otto Krabbe, *Vorlesungen über das Leben Jesu für Theologen und Nichttheologen* (Hamburg: Joh. Aug. Meißner, 1839), 14; Osiander, *Apologie*, 434.

failing to offer a convincing alternative to the views he demolished—the author's modest attempts in that direction did not satisfy even his closest sympathizers[63]—but also, more importantly, to Strauss rejecting the historicity of the gospel narratives without giving serious consideration to historical sources that commentators believed to testify to the reliability of the gospels. Along these lines, Ferdinand Guericke argued that Strauss's ignoring of positive witnesses (e.g., Eusebius and Papias of Hierapolis, in the case of Mark) was evidence of "a hypercriticism that destroys all historical ground, turning everything upside down."[64]

The superlative expressions used by many of Strauss's critics confirm that hypercriticism was a vice of excess. Time and again, critics spoke about "the most decisive hypercriticism" or "the most audacious and most malicious hypercriticism."[65] A sense of excess also speaks from the adjective *zügellos* ("unrestrained") as well as from Johann Ernst Osiander's portrayal of Strauss as a modern Icarus, plummeting down out of "the aerial region of myth and the ether of speculation."[66] Perhaps the most intriguing testimony to Strauss's perceived excessiveness can be found in satirical accounts of the sort written by Julius Friedrich Wurm. This Protestant theologian took Strauss's methods *ad absurdum* by applying them to Luther, suggesting that the reformer had been but a figment of the sixteenth-century imagination.[67] Others even called the existence of Strauss himself into question:

> The fact that in newspapers, critical journals, and literary magazines there is a lot of talk back and forth about a certain Dr. Strauss, evaluating, praising, and blaming him, does not prove anything about the *real*

Similarly: [Karl Gottfried Wilhelm] Theile, "Zur Biographie Jesu," *Repertorium der gesammten deutschen Literatur* 12 (1837): 173–76, at 174; Ferdinand Florens Fleck, *Die Vertheidigung des Christenthums: Mit Hinblick auf Strauss und die geistesverwandte Richtung* (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1842), 220; Wilhelm Böhmer, *Die christliche Dogmatik oder Glaubenswissenschaft*, vol. 2 (Breslau: Gratz, Barth und Comp., 1843), 29, 147, 299.

63 Ledges-Lomas, "Strauss," 623.

64 Heinrich Ernst Ferdinand Gueri[c]ke, *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Leipzig: K. F. Köhler, 1843), 263–64.

65 Johannes von Kuhn, *Das Leben Jesu, wissenschaftlich bearbeitet*, vol. 1 (Mainz: Florian Kupferberg, 1838), 51; Ferdinand Florens Fleck, *Philosophie und christliche Theologie im Widersprache und höheren Einklange* (Leipzig: Friedrich Fleischer, 1846), 335.

66 Osiander, *Apologie*, 322, 424. On the trope of Icarus in the nineteenth-century discourse on scholarly vices, see Sjang ten Hagen and Herman Paul, "The Icarus Flight of Speculation: Philosophers' Vices as Perceived by Nineteenth-Century Historians and Physicists," *Metaphilosophy* 53, nos. 2–3 (2023): 280–94 [chapter 8 in this volume].

67 Julius Friedrich Wurm, *Auszüge aus der Schrift: Das Leben Luthers kritisch bearbeitet von Dr. Casuar, Mexiko 2836* (Tübingen: Ludwig Friedrich Fues, 1836).

existence of Dr. Strauss. Dr. Strauss is probably just the *idea*, the *legend*, the *allegory* of rationalism.[68]

Although not all satires on Strauss explicitly mentioned the vice of hypercriticism, the Dorpat theologian Carl Friedrich Keil was presumably not the only one who read them as parodic illustrations of the "absurdity" of Strauss's "hypercriticism."[69]

While the *Life of Jesus* controversy propelled the vice of hypercriticism into the center of attention, none of the connotations of the term reviewed so far were new. Excessiveness and absurdity were established layers of meaning, while mockery and reduction *ad absurdum* also belonged to scholars' existing polemical repertoire. Even the fact that Peerlkamp and Strauss, each in their own way, came to be seen as personifications of hypercriticism was not new: Julius Caesar Scaliger and Pierre Harduin had enjoyed such reputations, too.[70] What was new, however, was that several commentators took Strauss's book as evidence of a hypercriticism that was gaining ground among Biblical scholars or in the world of learning at large. Osiander, for one, stated that historical criticism with its "eccentric negations" had initially made "bold attacks in the profane field," then "ventured even bolder ones on more authentic works, such as Plato's and Cicero's," before entering the field of Biblical scholarship.[71] Likewise,

68 [H. W. E.?] v[on] Keyserlingk, "Des Doctor Strauß 'Das Leben Jesu': Eine Sage des 19ten Jahrhunderts," *Literatur-Blatt* (1836): 313–16, at 313. Another specimen of the genre was Samuel Robert Geier, "Die Alexander-Mythen verglichen mit den sogenannten evangelischen Mythen: Ein Beitrag zur Kritik über die Schrift von Strauss: *Das Leben Jesu*," *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie* 8 (1838): 119–58. Also, Richard Whately's persiflage of David Hume's critique of miracles, *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte* (1819), was translated into German and applied to Strauss's book: *Das Leben Napoleon's kritisch geprüft: Nebst einigen Nutzanwendungen auf "Das Leben Jesu, von Strauss"* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1836).

69 [Carl Friedrich] Keil, "Beurtheilende Uebersicht der in neuster Zeit über das Leben Jesu Christi erschienenen Schriften [II]," *Mittheilungen und Nachrichten für die evangelische Geistlichkeit Russlands* 1 (1838), 54–83, at 69.

70 In his response to Peerlkamp, Obbarius (review, 362) explicitly recalled Harduin's warning example, as did several contributors to the *Life of Jesus* debate: e.g., G. C. Adolf Harless, *Die kritische Bearbeitung des Lebens Jesu von Dr. Dav. Friedr. Strauß nach ihrem wissenschaftlichen Werthe beleuchtet* (Erlangen: Carl Heyder, 1836), 22; Johannes Zeller, *Stimmen der deutschen Kirche über das Leben Jesu von Doctor Strauss: Ein Beitrag zur theologischen Literaturgeschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts für Theologen und Nichttheologen* (Zürich: Bürklischen Offizin, 1837), 65; Carl Ludwig Willibald Grimm, *Die Glaubwürdigkeit der evangelischen Geschichte mit Bezug auf Dav. Friedr. Strauss und Bruno Bauer und die durch Dieselben angeregten Streitigkeiten* (Jena: C. Hochhausen, 1845), 32.

71 Osiander, *Apologie*, 58.

Strauss's archenemy, the conservative church politician Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, believed that the "unlimited arbitrariness" of Straussian criticism reflected a "general tendency of the age toward historical skepticism," which had manifested itself in the study of Homer before gaining a foothold in Biblical scholarship.[72] What is noticeable about these arguments is that they came close to attributing agency, not to scholars with vicious habits, but to the vice of hypercriticism itself. By the 1830s, such reification was still rare.[73] Most commentators wrote in a more personal register about "Straussian hypercriticism"[74] or about the *Hyperkritiker* that Strauss had become.[75] In retrospect, however, those who warned against the reified threat of "modern hypercriticism" or "newfangled hypercriticism" paved the way for things to come.[76]

Classical philology

What, then, happened in the half a century after Peerlkamp and Strauss? Most conspicuously, hypercriticism transformed from a personal vice, to which only individuals were prone, into a pejorative that could denote entire fields or schools of thought. Hypercriticism became shorthand for traditions of scholarship that commentators believed to be excessively suspicious of the textual integrity of the *Iliad*, the Pentateuch, or the Pauline epistles. More specifically, "the sharp knife of hypercriticism" became a metonymical symbol of academic researchers who in the eyes of their critics denied the

72 Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, *Die Authentie des Pentateuches*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Ludwig Oehmigke, 1836), 124, xxiv, xxi.

73 See, however, Friedrich Kruse, who as early as 1822 spoke about "our sublime hypercriticism, which does not, like the bee, arduously suck and extract honey from all flowers but rather, like the wasp, prefers to destroy or gnaw on the noblest fruits without producing anything worthwhile itself" (*Blicke*, 59).

74 E.g., "Schriften gegen das Leben Jesu von Strauß," *Kritische Prediger-Bibliothek* 17 (1836): 829–65, at 856; [Ludwig?] Geyer, review of *Das Leben Jesu*, vol. 1, by Johannes Kuhn, *Literarische Zeitung* 6 (1839): 29–30, at 29; Osiander, *Apologie*, 127; N. N. review of *Das Leben Jesu* by K. Hase, *Zeitschrift für die gesammte lutherische Theologie und Kirche* 1 (1840): 154.

75 [Philipp Schaff], "Ein Wort über die theologische Kritik [II]," *Literarische Zeitung* 10 (1843): 969–75, at 972; Osiander, *Apologie*, v.

76 N. N., "Blick auf die Revolutionen der Schweiz in der neuesten Zeit überhaupt, und auf die Züricher vom 6. September dieses Jahres insbesondere [II]," *Minerva* 4 (1839): 345–400, at 373, 378 n. 1. The revolution discussed in this article was the *Züriputsch*, prompted by Strauss's 1839 appointment in Zürich, on which see Frederick C. Beiser, *David Friedrich Strauß, Father of Unbelief: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 132–39.

aesthetic qualities of Homer's poetry or the divine inspiration of the Bible.[77] In tandem with this, the term assumed an agency of its own, to the extent that "the hypercriticism," with a definite article, came to be depicted as a force intent on destroying aesthetic education and Christian faith. Such reification, finally, was most common among nonspecialists, that is, among *Gymnasium* teachers and conservative Protestants whose love of Homer and the Bible exceeded their confidence in the critical work of academic scholars. These overlapping trends, however, did not manifest themselves with equal force everywhere: significant differences existed between fields as well as between confessions.

At first sight, the trends just mentioned largely seemed to bypass the field of classical philology. In the decades following the 1830s, the word hypercriticism appeared primarily in book reviews and in the small print of footnotes. In most cases, the term denoted artificial distinctions as between Anaea and the Anaeans in Sophocles's *Antigone* or unwarranted emendations like the substitution of *brutis* for *mutis* in Tacitus's *Histories*.[78] Also, following established usage, classical philologists used cautious phrases like "shouldn't we be allowed to assume, without being hypercritical" to justify a conjecture or, alternatively, to keep an interpretational problem unresolved in the absence of conclusive evidence ("Who dares to decide here? [...] Only hypercriticism could want to do it").[79] Along similar lines, Friedrich von Raumer, writing about Xenophon's *Anabasis*, declared that "only a hypercriticism that puts small, insignificant things under the magnifying glass and ignores everything larger, could find another author for the *Anabasis*."[80] In all of these cases, charges of hypercriticism referred to how individual philologists dealt with individual texts—not to an entire field or tradition of scholarship.[81]

77 Johann Christoph Matthäus, *Die evangelischen Pericopen des christlichen Kirchenjahres*, vol. 1 (Ansbach: E. H. Gummi, 1844), 155.

78 *Des Sophokles Antigone, Griechisch und Deutsch*, ed. August Böckh (Berlin: Veit, 1843), 203; Cornelius Tacitus, *Der Freiheitskampf der Bataver unter Claudius Civilis*, ed. Carl Christ. Conr. Völker, vol. 2 (Elberfeld: Bädeker, 1863), 52.

79 Ferdinand Hauthal, *Beiträge zur Geschichte, Verbesserung, Feststellung und Erklärung des Textes der Satiren des Persius*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1837), 446; H. Düntzer, *Rettung der aristotelischen Poetik: Ein kritischer Versuch* (Braunschweig: G. C. E. Meyer, 1840), 157.

80 Friedrich von Raumer to August Boeckh, 23 December 1849, in *Antiquarische Briefe*, ed. Friedrich von Raumer (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1851), 30–36 at 33–34.

81 This is true also for other uses of the "hyper" prefix, as in *Hyperhermeneutik* (a term coined by the historian Ernst Bernheim), *Hyperontologie* (of which the philosopher Eduard von Hartmann found himself accused in the Pessimism Controversy), and the *Hyperscharfsinn* and *Hypercriticismus* that the economist Gustav Schmoller detected in Max Lehmann. See

This personal focus of the vice term is confirmed by textbooks like August Boeckh's *Encyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften* (Encyclopedia and methodology of the philological sciences, 1877). For Boeckh, hypercriticism was a "wandering path" on which "exaggerated doubt" led critical minds astray. He ranked it as a vice of excess, in the company of uninhibited political passion and "unbridled fantasy."[82] Following in Boeckh's footsteps, the Homer specialist Arthur Ludwich associated hypercriticism with an "unbridled lust for divination [*effrenata divinandi libido*]," with all the ambiguous connotations with which this ancient philological term was imbued.[83] Additional evidence of hypercriticism retaining its personal focus is the fact that Peerlkamp's treatment of Horace remained a point of reference. Until at least the late nineteenth century, his name served as a byword for hypercriticism.[84] Tellingly, in 1899, a reviewer of a new Horace edition could declare that the editor's impertinences were reminiscent of Peerlkamp's "hypercritical subtlety," even to the extent that "such a provocation to subjective criticism that has not been heard of since the days of Peerlkamp."[85]

Although none of this implied the existence of a hypercritical school, philologists had been hinting at this possibility ever since the Peerlkamp controversy, most concretely by delineating the philologist's task with Scylla and Charybdis metaphors or with the quasi-Aristotelian argument that

Ernst Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode: Mit Nachweis der wichtigsten Quellen und Hülfsmittel zum Studium der Geschichte* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1889), 418; R. Haym, "Die Hartmann'sche Philosophie des Unbewußten [III]," *Preußische Jahrbücher* 31 (1873): 257–311, at 258; Gustav Schmoller (1893) as quoted in Waltraut Reichel, *Studien zur Wandlung von Max Lehmanns preussisch-deutschem Geschichtsbild* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1963), 78–79.

82 August Boeckh, *Encyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften*, ed. Ernst Bratuscheck (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1877), 340.

83 Arthur Ludwich, *Aristarchs Homerische Textkritik nach den Fragmenten des Didymos*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1885), 466; Anthony Grafton, "Divination: Towards the History of a Philological Term," in *The Marriage of Philology and Scepticism: Uncertainty and Conjecture in Early Modern Scholarship and Thought*, ed. Gian Mario Cao, Anthony Grafton, and Jill Kraye (London: Warburg Institute, 2019), 47–69.

84 H. Düntzer, *Kritik und Erklärung der horazischen Gedichte*, vol. 1 (Braunschweig: G. C. E. Meyer, 1840), 313; J. Könighoff, review of *Q. Horatius Flaccus*, ed. Franciscus Ritter, *Zeitschrift für Alterthumswissenschaft* 14 (1856), 460–72, at 468; Wilhelm Freund, *Trienium philologicum oder Grundzüge der philologischen Wissenschaften, für Jünger der Philologie zur Wiederholung und Selbstprüfung* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Violet, 1874), 104; Th. Fritzsche, "Studien über Horaz," *Philologus* 35 (1876): 477–92, at 477.

85 [Josef] Häußner, review of *Q. Horati Flacci carmine* by Lucian Müller, *Berliner Philologische Wochenschrift* 19 (1899): 174–77, at 176.

criticism must steer a course between *Unkritik* and *Hyperkritik*.[86] Hermann Köchly, for example, wrote in 1842 that philologists must navigate between a faithful ("orthodox") clinging to received texts and a "supposedly genial hypercriticism," which

> with contempt for everything that has been handed down historically, according to the subjective norm of aprioristically constructed principles, and even according to momentary whims molds the writings of the ancients in the most arbitrary way, especially by excising what is supposedly unauthentic.

Although Köchly only mentioned "the paradoxes of a Hoffmann-Peerlkamp" as an illustration of the latter, his reified rhetoric suggested that hypercriticism was a real-existing power that could make its impact felt across the discipline.[87] In 1873, Germany's leading classical philologist, Friedrich Ritschl, conveyed the same idea in arguing that research on ancient Jewish–Roman relationships had recently swung back and forth between "credulity" and "almost fanatical scepsis," with the latter having reached an extreme in the "radical hypercriticism" of Heinrich Graetz. While Ritschl did not refute Graetz's arguments in detail, he, too, argued for a "golden middle road" between uncritical and hypercritical thinking.[88]

Such depersonalized uses of the term circulated especially among *Gymnasium* teachers who were worried about a growing chasm between neo-humanist education (*Bildung*) and philological research (*Forschung*). As Bas van Bommel has shown, this concern manifested itself most markedly in the second half of the century, in response to academic philologists who seemed to care more about their scientific status than about the exemplary function of the classics.[89] When classics teachers complained about a "disparaging hypercriticism" or "more and more unbridled,

86 For some glimpses on the popularity of Scylla and Charybdis metaphors in the discourse of scholarly virtues and vices, see Werner Schneiders, *Aufklärung und Vorurteilskritik: Studien zur Geschichte der Vorurteilstheorie* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1983), 8, 133, 144.

87 H. Köchly, review of *Emendationes in Sophoclis Trachinias* and *Sophoclis Tragoediae*, vol. 2, by Eduard Wunder, *Zeitschrift für die Althertumswissenschaft* 9 (1842): 747–802, at 748.

88 F. Ritschl, "Eine Berichtigung der republicanischen Consularfesten: Zugleich als Beitrag zur Geschichte der römisch-jüdischen internationalen Beziehungen," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 28 (1873): 586–614, at 587–88 n. 2, in response to H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Leopold Schnauß, 1856), 500, 503.

89 Bas van Bommel, *Classical Humanism and the Challenge of Modernity: Debates on Classical Education in 19th-Century Germany* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 64–93, esp. 68.

all-consuming hypercriticism,"[90] they referred to an overdose of "book learning," which treated classical authors as "mummies" and thereby contributed to students losing "the enjoyment of the Homeric poems" and the "desire and love of studying them."[91] "The hunt for variants that emerges out of philological hypercriticism," explained a *Gymnasium* teacher, is a "useless torment" for students: it gives them stones for bread by discussing copying errors instead of timeless beauty.[92] According to another teacher, such mind-numbing hypercriticism had its roots in Wolf, whose "extremely negative-critical" attitude in source-critical matters had "not only bequeathed itself to many philologists but also seeped into the *Gymnasien* of northern Germany." As a result, Greek and Latin classes had been turned into propaedeutic philological seminars, in which the study of the classics was pursued as an end in itself rather than as a means for familiarizing the youth with "the model of a public and private life build on the most exalted ideas."[93]

In short, while classical philologists continued to use hypercriticism as shorthand for a personal vice, a growing number of authors began to use hypercriticism as the proper name of a scholarly approach or academic trend. Prominent among these authors were school teachers who worried about the destructive effects of excessive philological criticism on neo-humanist education. Without exaggerating the distance between academic philologists

90 Hermann Bender, *Grundriss der römischen Literaturgeschichte für Gymnasien* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1876), 41; R. Merkel, "Die Gedichte des Hesiodus [II]," *Philologus* 17 (1861): 307–20, at 311. See also [Heinrich Ludolf] Ahrens, "Ueber die Mischung der Dialekte in der griechischen Lyrik," in *Verhandlungen der dreizehnten Versammlung deutscher Philologen, Schulmänner und Orientalisten in Göttingen von 29. September bis 2. October 1852* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1853), 55–80, at 75; A. Deuerling, "Ueber die Lesung der alten Klassiker an Gymnasien," *Blätter für das bayerische Gymnasialschulwesen* 2 (1866): 287–98, at 291; *Des Q. Horatius Flaccus Oden und Epoden*, ed. Theodor Kayser (Tübingen: Franz Fues, 1877), vii.

91 [August] Geffers, "Humanismus und Realismus, in historischer Entwicklung und Folge," in *Encyclopädie des gesammten Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesens*, ed. K. A. Schmid, vol. 3 (Gotha: Rudolf Besser, 1862), 589–644, at 639; Ernst Neissner, "Der Kampf des Horaz für eine bessere Geschmacksrichtung in der römischen Poesie," in *Programm des Gymnasiums zum heiligen Kreuz in Dresden* (Dresden: E. Blochmann und Sohn, 1867), 1–49, at 4; Chr. Bähr, review of *Homer's Odyssee* and *Anhang zu Homer's Odyssee* by Karl Friedrich Ameis, *Heidelbergische Jahrbücher der Literatur* 58 (1865): 548–52, at 551.

92 Ludwig Noiré, *Pädagogisches Skizzenbuch* (Leipzig: Veit, 1874), 25.

93 G. M. Pachtler, *Die Reform unserer Gymnasien* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1883), 91, 89. In addition to Wolf, Lachmann was sometimes singled out as responsible for this trend: A. J. Mordtmann, "Zur Homer-Literatur," *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* (1885): 681–85, 694–97, at 683; [Johann Nepomuk] Sepp, "Die Abkunft der heutigen Griechen von den alten Hellenen [I]," *Der Sammler* 56, no. 79 (1887): 3–5, at 3.

and *Gymnasium* teachers in this period,[94] one might say that hypercriticism came to represent a threat that was felt especially by men entrusted with teaching the very texts that philologists were scrutinizing for discrepancies and inconsistencies.

Protestant Biblical scholarship

In this respect, the field of Biblical scholarship resembled that of classical philology.[95] When Biblical scholars were accused of hypercriticism, the charges also came primarily from readers whose attitude toward the texts at stake was one of reverence more than suspicion. Also, most of these readers were no academic specialists. Although Biblical scholars, just like classical philologists, used hypercriticism as a *terminus technicus* for unwarranted conjectures or exaggerated doubt,[96] the term found its widest application outside the pages of specialist journals, in the writings of pastors and others who felt that excessively critical scholarship was thwarting readers' ability to read the Bible as God's Word. There was, however, a difference of intensity: complaints about "Old and New Testament hypercriticism" were more numerous and often also more emotional than teachers' objections to the newest hypotheses in Horatian studies.[97] Tellingly, an 1893 gathering of

94 See Stefan Kipf, "Der Schulmann als vir doctissimus: Preußische Schulprogramme im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit," *Zeitschrift für Germanistik* 23, no. 2 (2013): 259–75.

95 Although Wolf-style Hellenism had pushed the Hebrew world beyond the purview of most German *Altertumswissenschaftler*—a point made by Anthony Grafton, "Juden und Griechen bei Friedrich August Wolf," in *Friedrich August Wolf: Studien, Dokumente, Bibliographie*, ed. Reinhard Markner and Giuseppe Veltri (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999), 9–31—Irene Peirano Garrison ("Source, Original, and Authenticity") rightly emphasizes that philologists and Biblical scholars drew on largely similar methods. Also, halfway through the century, border traffic between the two fields had not yet become unusual: both Peerlkamp and Lachmann made forays into New Testament criticism. See Bart L. F. Kamphuis, *New Testament Conjectural Emendation in the Nineteenth Century: Jan Hendrik Holwerda as a Pioneer of Method* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 70–80; Winfried Ziegler, *Die "wahre strenghistorische Kritik": Leben und Werk Carl Lachmanns und sein Beitrag zur neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft* (Hamburg: Kovač, 2000).

96 E.g., Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi*, ed. Eduard Zeller, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Fues, 1866), 89; Paul Wilhelm Schmidt, *Neutestamentliche Hyperkritik, an dem jüngsten Angriff gegen die Aechtheit des Philipperbriefes auf ihre Methode hin untersucht: Nebst eine Erklärung des Briefes* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1880).

97 The quote comes from [Hermann Friedrich Hugo] Schlemm, "Die Autorität des göttlichen Wortes gegenüber der wissenschaftlichen Kritik der heiligen Schrift, insbesondere des alten Testaments, in der Gegenwart," *Kirchliche Monatsschrift* 12 (1893): 737–71, at 766. Notably, few commentators distinguished between hypercritical treatment of the Old and New Testaments,

Protestant clergy in Saxony featured several speakers who pulled out all the stops in cautioning that the authority of Scripture was "undermined more and more" by "negative criticism," while simultaneously assuring their audience that, nonetheless, God's Word will outlive "the critical heroes of our days."[98] That conference was not unique: there were plenty of occasions on which church members could hear pastors or theology professors defend "the glory of the Bible against the attacks of its critics" or sound a note of alarm about "what remains of the Old Testament" in the hands of Julius Wellhausen.[99] Perhaps the uncrowned king of the genre was the Greifswald theologian Otto Zöckler, who from the early 1860s to his death in 1906 issued a steady stream of warnings against "hypercritical skepticism," "hypercritical arbitrariness," and "hypercritical exaggeration," especially but not only in Biblical scholarship.[100] One wonders: What made the vice of hypercriticism such an attractive polemical device for conservative Protestants in Zöckler's generation?

To some extent, their criticism continued a tradition inaugurated with the Life of Jesus controversy. Although clear demarcations between liberal and conservative Protestants had not existed at that time, hypercriticism and related pejoratives, such as *Afterkritik*, had been used most frequently by authors suspicious of modern Biblical criticism.[101] More generally, the

even though the gospels and the Pauline epistles were for many Protestants a "canon within the canon."

98 Schlemm, "Autorität des göttlichen Wortes," 741, 740; [Karl?] Seidenstücker, "Die Autorität des göttlichen Wortes gegenüber der wissenschaftlichen Kritik der heiligen Schrift, insbesondere des Alten Testaments, in der Gegenwart," *Kirchliche Monatsschrift* 12 (1893): 521–42, at 542.

99 Gottfried Hasenkamp, *Die Herrlichkeit der Bibel gegenüber den Angriffen ihrer Kritiker: Ein Zeugnis aus der Gemeinde für die Gemeinde* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1888); R. F. Grau, *Was bleibt vom Alten Testament? Vortrag am 16. Februar 1891 in Berlin gehalten* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1891).

100 Otto Zöckler, *Kritische Geschichte der Askese: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte christlicher Sitte und Cultur* (Frankfurt am Main: Heyder & Zimmer, 1863), v; *Die Sprüche Salomonis theologisch-homiletisch bearbeitet* (Bielefeld: Velhagen und Klasing, 1867), 23, 25; *Das Hohelied und der Prediger theologisch-homiletisch bearbeitet* (Bielefeld: Velhagen und Klasing, 1868), 168. Interestingly, Zöckler was one of few who detected hypercriticism in the natural sciences, too: *Theologia naturalis: Entwurf einer systematischen Naturtheologie vom offenbarungsgläubigen Standpunkte aus*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Heyder & Zimmer, 1860), 146. On Zöckler's life-long fight against hypercriticism, see Svenja Meindl, *Otto Zöckler: Ein Theologe des 19. Jahrhunderts im Dialog mit den Naturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2008), 123–25.

101 *Afterkritik* ("spurious criticism") was a term popularized in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laokoon* (1766). It was used at a modest scale throughout the early-nineteenth-century world of letters. Unlike *Hyperkritik*, with its connotations of excess, *Afterkritik* denoted a "criticism that appears to aim at the truth but acts according to false principles," especially insofar as it aims to reach an "intended result" or prove an a priori truth. See *Vollstandigstes Wörterbuch*

term had always resonated most strongly among authors with high views of Scripture.[102] However, what had changed between the 1830s, when the debate had focused on "the hypercritical enterprise of Dr. Strauss," and the 1870s, when Zöckler found himself fighting a whole army of "hypercritical enemies of Christianity,"[103] was the emergence of a theological and political divide between liberal and conservative Protestants. By the early years of the Wilhelmine era, this divide had become broad enough for clergy and theologians to speak about distinct "parties" or "currents" (*Richtungen*) in the Protestant world.[104] Although liberals and conservatives were not the only parties—there were influential *Vermittlungstheologen* aiming for middle-ground positions[105]—the religious press gave ample space to the opposed extremes of "traditional dogmatists" and "modern rationalists." A periodical like *Der Beweis des Glaubens*, of which Zöckler was a listed contributor, provided endless variations on the latter image, constantly warning its readers against "accusers and opponents of the faith," whose "sharply negative criticism is trying to shake the historical facts of the Christian faith."[106] It was especially in contexts like this, where suspicion of Biblical criticism served as a shibboleth of orthodoxy, that hypercriticism

der deutschen Sprache, ed. Wilhelm Hoffmann, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Dürr, 1861), 94; Ludwig Clauss, *Beiträge zur Kritik und Exegese der Psalmen* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1831), viii; Moritz Drechsler, *Die Unwissenschaftlichkeit im Gebiete der alttestamentlichen Kritik belegt aus der Schriften neuerer Kritiker besonders der Herren von Bohlen und Vatke* (Leipzig: Karl Tauchnitz, 1837), 43, 59, 92, 106. Nonetheless, the terms were also used combined or interchangeably. See, e.g., Franz Schettler, *Der Protestantismus des Herrn Professor Dr. L. Lange zu Jena, kritisch beleuchtet* (Magdeburg: Albert Falckenberg, 1845), 47 ("hyper- or pseudo- or after-critical").

102 The church historian Philipp Schaff is a case in point: see his *Geschichte der apostolischen Kirche nebst eine allgemeinen Einleitung in der Kirchengeschichte*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Otto Holtze, 1854), 600; *Germany: Its Universities, Theology, and Religion* (Philadelphia, PA: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1857), 101; *Geschichte der alten Kirche: Von Christi Geburt bis zum Ende des sechsten Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: J. C. Hinrichs, 1867), 22.

103 [Karl Gottfried Wilhelm] Theile, "Zur Biographie Jesu," *Repertorium der gesammten deutschen Literatur* 12 (1837): 173–76, at 174; [Otto] Z[öckler], review of *Christliche Apologetik auf anthropologischer Grundlage* by Christian Eduard Baumstark, *Der Beweis des Glaubens* 15 (1879): 263–66, at 265.

104 Carl Schlager, *Zur Charakteristik der zwei religiösen Richtungen in der protestantischen Kirche nach ihren Unterscheidungs- und Berührungspunkten* (Aarau: H. R. Sauerländer, 1872); A. H. Braasch, *Ist ein Zusammenwirken der verschiedenen Richtungen innerhalb der evangelisch-protestantischen Kirche möglich?* (Berlin: Carl Habel, 1878); Paul Wilhelm Schmidt, *Was trennt "die beiden Richtungen" in der evangelischen Kirche? Ein Beitrag zur Schätzung der kirchlichen Gegensätze* (Berlin: Carl Habel, 1880).

105 Johannes Wallmann, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands seit der Reformation*, 6th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 211–28.

106 [Otto Zöckler et al.], "Vorwort," *Der Beweis des Glaubens* 1 (1865): 1–5, at 1, 2.

came to serve as a rhetorical weapon, similar to how "dogmatism" was employed by liberal critics against conservative Protestants.[107]

One reason why hypercriticism became such a weapon of choice was that it allowed conservative Biblical scholars to counter the liberal argument that their work was "unscientific." If Biblical scholars in the liberal camp made themselves guilty of a vice that was widely seen as violating scholarly standards, conservatives could return the compliment by denying liberal theologians their exclusive claim to *Wissenschaftlichkeit*. Precisely this is what Zöckler did. In an 1887 defense of the "scientific" aspirations of conservative theology, prompted by Emil Schürer's dismissive remark that Zöckler *cum suis* were advocating a relapse into seventeenth-century Biblicism,[108] he argued that "the principle of critical arbitrariness, fantastic guessing, and estimations based on subjective whims" that he saw at work in liberal Biblical scholarship was at odds with established methodological standards.[109] Notably, this was not a charge of doctrinal heresy but of scholarly deficiency. Zöckler presented himself as a custodian of scientific criticism, committed to a virtuous mean between uncritical thinking and a "pseudoscientific hypercriticism" that was destroying "healthy and normal critical work" with an "overload of source-destroying perspicacity [*quellenschneidende Scharfsinn*]."[110]

Secondly, although the vice of hypercriticism was occasionally attributed to individual authors, it was more common to speak generically about "the newer hypercriticism," "omniscient hypercriticism," or a "hypercritical current" (*Richtung*) in modern Biblical scholarship—with the last of these phrases almost explicitly alluding to the *Streit der Richtungen* in German Protestantism.[111] At one point, Zöckler even discussed "the developmental

107 Stephen Holthaus, *Fundamentalismus in Deutschland: Der Kampf um die Bibel im Protestantismus des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, 2nd ed. (Bonn: Kultur und Wissenschaft, 2003), 140–325; Caroline Schep and Herman Paul, "Denial of Coevalness: Charges of Dogmatism in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities," *History of European Ideas* 48, no. 6 (2022): 778–94, at 783–86 [chapter 5 in this volume].

108 E. Schürer, review of *Kurzgefasster Kommentar zu den heiligen Schriften Alten und Neuen Testamentes*, vols. 1–2, ed. Hermann Strack and Otto Zöckler, *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 11 (1886): 532–39, at 534.

109 O. Zöckler, *Wider die unfehlbare Wissenschaft: Eine Schutzschrift für konservatives theologisches Forschen und Lehren* (Nördlingen: C. H. Beck, 1887), 27.

110 Ibid., 56, 26. Similarly: Z[öckler], review of *Christliche Apologetik*, 265.

111 Carl Friedrich Keil, *Commentar über das Evangelium des Johannes* (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1881), 18; Franz Delitzsch, *Neuer Commentar über die Genesis* (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1887), 140; [Otto] Z[öckler], review of *De Elohistae Pentateuchi sermone* by Carolus Victor Ryssel, *Der Beweis des Glaubens* 15 (1879): 151.

phases of modern hypercriticism," thereby turning an individual vice term into a long-term scholarly trend.[112] This was not without precedents. If hypercriticism had initially been attributed to individuals like Strauss, the rise to dominance of New Testament criticism as practiced in Tübingen by Ferdinand Christian Baur and others prompted talk of a "hypercritical school," "the hypercritical opinions of the Tübingen School," and "Tübingen hypercriticism."[113] By the 1870s, hypercriticism was no longer attributed only to figures "at the extreme Left"[114] but associated with a wide range of scholars, from Karl Heinrich Graf and Ferdinand Hitzig in Germany to Abraham Kuenen and Édouard Reuss elsewhere in Europe. Increasingly, it was their names that epitomized the vice, in characteristic combinations like "Hitzig–Olshausian" or "Graf–Kuenenian" hypercriticism.[115] From there, it was only a small step to argue that a hypercritical attitude was characteristic of the whole "liberal army force" that Zöckler was fighting.[116]

All this is strikingly reminiscent of how *Gymnasium* teachers depersonalized the vice of hypercriticism. In both cases, skepticism regarding traditional authorship claims or the textual integrity of canonical writings was not merely read symptomatically, as evidence of an excessively critical *Zeitgeist*, but elevated into a defining mark of modern scholarship. As such, hypercriticism ceased to be an accusation requiring careful textual analysis: it became close to an emotionally charged "ism," overlapping with reified images of "liberalism" and "modernism" and used primarily for confessional boundary work.

Catholic and Jewish voices

As much as these internal Protestant quarrels contributed to hypercriticism becoming a polemical device, the term also resonated among Jewish and Catholic scholars, albeit in slightly different ways. Although a detailed

112 [Otto] Zöckler, "D. Nösgen's 'Geschichte der Offenbarung,'" *Der Beweis des Glaubens* 30 (1894): 71–74, at 74.

113 [H. E. F.] G[uericke], review of *Das Markus-Evangelium* by Adolf Hilgenfeld and *Das Markusevangelium nach seinem Ursprung und Charakter* by F. Chr. Baur, *Zeitschrift für die gesammte lutherische Theologie und Kirche* 12 (1851): 743–47, at 747; N. N., review of *Das Johanneische Evangelium* by Christoph Ernst Luthardt, *Theologisches Literaturblatt* (1854): 1097–102, 1105–8, at 1100.

114 As Schaff had done in 1854: *Geschichte der apostolischen Kirche*, 117.

115 [Felix] Himpel, review of *Die Psalmen* by August Rohling, *Theologische Quartalschrift* 54 (1872): 148–61, at 151; N. N., "Zur apologetischen Literatur der katholischen Kirche [II]," *Theologisches Literaturblatt* 9 (1888): 303–4, at 304.

116 Zöckler, *Wider die unfehlbare Wissenschaft*, 16, 39.

comparison across confessional borders cannot be undertaken here, I will briefly attend to some Catholic and Jewish voices, if only to correct the impression that *Gymnasium* teachers and conservative Protestants were the only ones who worried about hypercriticism.

Catholic authors had a long history of dismissing Protestant scholarship as hypercritical. As early as 1817, a German Catholic polemicist railed against "modern philologists and hypercritical Bible researchers […] who turn the comforting factual truths of revelation into myths."[117] Strauss and the Tübingen School provided Catholic authors with even more reason to distance themselves from the "Protestant hypercriticism of our time."[118] In Catholic cultural criticism, this Protestant hypercriticism became nothing short of a trope, which easily combined with "rationalism," "Darwinism," and "modern unbelief."[119] This Protestant aberration, moreover, was seen as manifesting itself not only in Biblical scholarship but also among church historians who dared to question the reliability of saints' lives or the authenticity of relics.[120] While some authors associated hypercriticism with Protestant or Protestant-inspired assaults on the Catholic tradition,[121] others adopted the Protestant habit of measuring hypercriticism against the standard of "healthy criticism" rather than the authority of tradition.[122] In all cases, however, the threat of hypercriticism was located outside of the Catholic community, among Protestants and nonbelievers. It was only in the so-called modernist crisis of the early 1900s, when Catholic Biblical scholars like Alfred Loisy were diagnosed with heresies formerly reserved to liberal Protestants, that hypercriticism became a polemical device for

117 [Karl Moritz Eduard] Fabritius, *Spiegel eines wahrhaft-christlichen Kirchen-Aufsehers* (Stuttgart: Joh. Fried. Steinkopf, 1817), 77.

118 [Guido Görres], "Vorwort der Redaction," *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland* 28 (1851): 780–85, at 780.

119 Fr[anz] Kaulen, "Leben der Heiligen," *Theologisches Literaturblatt* 2 (1867): 161–63, at 163; N. N., review of *Göttliches Wissen und göttliche Macht des Johanneischen Christus* by Karl Müller, *Schlesisches Pastoralblatt* 3 (1882): 118–19, at 118; B. S., review of *Der Kaiser in Vorarlberg* by Adolf von Berlichingen, *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach* 24 (1883): 321–24, at 322.

120 F. J. Clemens, *Der heilige Rock zu Trier und die protestantische Kritik* (Koblenz: W. Blum, 1845), 93.

121 Joseph Schiferle, *Zweite Pilgerreise nach Jerusalem und Rom, in den Jahren 1856 und 1857 unternommen*, vol. 2 (Augsburg: R. Kollmann, 1859), 421, 488; Hugo Weiss, *David und seine Zeit: Historisch-exegetische Studien vornehmlich zu den Büchern Samuel's* (Munster: Theissing, 1880), 4; [Paul Keppler], "Bilder aus dem Orient [II]," *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland* 114 (1894): 180–91, at 183.

122 Joh. Bapt. Wirthmüller, *Encyclopädie der katholischen Theologie: Eine propädeutische Einleitung in ihr Studium* (Landshut: Joh. Thomann, 1874), 701; Heinrich Kihn, *Enzyklopädie und Methodologie der Theologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1892), 295.

internal use, though without losing its Protestant connotations.[123] Writing in 1905, the Breslau theologian Joseph Pohle spoke for many when he presented Loisy as a sad example of a Catholic scholar who had fallen under the spell of "Protestant hypercriticism."[124]

The Jewish case was different insofar as charges of hypercriticism were made internally at a much earlier stage. Initially, it was Protestant Biblical scholars who exemplified the dangers of hypercriticism.[125] Heinrich Graetz, the Jewish historian whom Friedrich Ritschl had criticized for his hypercritical views, preferred to attribute the vice to "philologists of other faiths."[126] In the early 1860s, however, he changed his mind. "For a decade," Graetz wrote, Jewish exegetes have "started to emendate without end," thereby creating a "hypercritical movement" almost as radical as the Tübingen School around Baur.[127] Most likely, this criticism was targeted at Abraham Geiger and Samuel David Luzzatto, two key representatives of the emerging "Science of Judaism" (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*). In the 1850s, both of them had published controversial studies in Biblical scholarship.[128]

123 Around the same time, "Catholic hypercriticism" emerged as a polemical tag in a debate over the perceived cultural inferiority of German Catholicism: Justus Benevolus [= E. M. Hamann], *Katholische Kritik und Hyperkritik: Auch eine Antwort auf "Veremundus"* (Munich: Rudolf Abt, 1899); N. N., "Katholische Hyperkritik," *Pastor Bonus* 18 (1906): 281–83.

124 Joseph Pohle, *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik in sieben Büchern*, vol. 1 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1905), 249. See also Johannes Kübel, *Geschichte des katholischen Modernismus* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1909), 78.

125 M. Kalisch, *A Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament, with a New Translation*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855), ix–x, 382. Just how much Kalisch abhorred "that school of Biblical critics which dismembers the sacred writings, quite as arbitrarily and blindly as many hypercritical philologists of the last century dissected Homer's songs into incoherent fragments" (ix–x) is apparent from one of his later books, in which a fictional character named Arthur Berghorn embodies a criticism "perverted" into hypercriticism: M. A. Kalisch, *Path and Goal: A Discussion on the Elements of Civilisation and the Conditions of Happiness* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1880), 7.

126 H. Grätz, "Die talmudische Topographie [I]," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 2 (1853): 106–13, at 106. On Graetz's aversion to hypercriticism, see also *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, vol. 5 (Leipzig: Leopold Schnauß, 1860), 538; *Schir Ha-Schirim oder das Salomonische Hohelied*, trans. H. Graetz (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1871), 126; Kerstin von der Krone, *Wissenschaft in Öffentlichkeit: Die Wissenschaft des Judentums und ihre Zeitschriften* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 70 n. 53.

127 H. Grätz, "Zur hebräischen Sprachkunde und Bibelexegese," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 10 (1861): 20–28, at 20. As early as 1845, Moritz Steinschneider had raised his voice against the *Hyperkritik* of the Jewish Orientalist Salomon Munk: M. Steinschneider, "Theologie und Philosophie," *Zeitschrift für die religiösen Interessen des Judenthums* 2 (1845): 118–20, at 118, 120.

128 Chanan Gafni, "Samuel David Luzzatto and Abraham Geiger on the Textual Criticism of the Bible: Continuity or Conflict?" in *Deutsch-jüdische Bibelwissenschaft: Historische, exegetische*

A decade later, Ludwig Philippson, the long-time editor of the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, echoed Graetz in observing that "Jewish scholars, too" were falling prey to "confused and confusing hypercriticism" in the study of the Pentateuch. Philippson was also referring to Biblical scholarship as pursued under the aegis of the Science of Judaism (which in passing he denied its claim to scientific status with the argument that hypercriticism "is no science" but a mixture of "haphazard interpretation" and "arbitrary criticism").[129]

How hypercriticism reflected the changing entanglements of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish Biblical scholarship, each with its own internal dynamics and investment in boundary work, is a topic for another occasion. For the purposes of this chapter, the examples just mentioned suffice to demonstrate that hypercriticism found its way outside of the Protestant world. More specifically, they show that for Catholic and Jewish authors, just as for most classics teachers and Biblical scholars of conservative Protestant inclination, hypercriticism was less of a personal vice than a polemical shorthand for a skeptical attitude in matters of source criticism that was perceived as simultaneously gaining ground and threatening canonical texts. Several Jewish and Catholic authors, moreover, followed Protestant models by criticizing hypercriticism, not on religious grounds, but with the argument that its exaggerations were detrimental to real science. It was a way of fighting the enemy with a weapon of their own, rejecting its iconoclasm in terms pretending to be "scientific."[130]

und theologische Perspektiven, ed. Daniel Vorpahl, Sophia Kähler, and Shani Tzoref (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 161–70. On Graetz's attitudes toward Biblical criticism, see also Ran HaCohen, *Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible: German-Jewish Reception of Biblical Criticism*, trans. M. Engel (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 170–81.

129 [Ludwig Philippson], "Die Wissenschaft des Judenthums," *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* 36 (1872): 221–24, at 223.

130 In his posthumously published *Kirchengeschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, ed. Eduard Zeller (Tübingen: L. Fr. Fues, 1862), Ferdinand Christian Baur countered such charges with the question "whether so-called hypercriticism is not actually the true and necessary criticism" (370). Perhaps the most elaborated response to conservative "vice-charging" came from the Dutch New Testament scholar William Christiaan van Manen, who devoted no less than two essays to his critics' habit of rejecting the newest scholarly findings as a mere "wave of hypercriticism": W. C. van Manen, "Hyperkritiek," *De Tijdspiegel* 52 (1895): 158–73; "A Wave of Hypercriticism," *The Expository Times* 9 (1898): 205–11, 257–59, 314–19. See also, in about the same years, Gotthard Deutsch, "The Share of the Jewish People in the Culture of the Various Nations and Ages," in *Judaism at the World's Parliament of Religions: Comprising the Papers on Judaism Read at the Parliament, at the Jewish Denominational Congress, and at the Jewish Presentation* (Cincinnati, OH: Robert Clark, 1894), 175–92, at 175.

Conclusion

What this history of hypercriticism shows is that the vice term almost without exception conveyed more than unease about a specific emendation or conjecture. Even philologists objecting to something as detailed as the substitution of *corpus* by *pignus* used hypercriticism, not as shorthand for errors at the level of individual words, but as a diagnostic label for a spirit of revisionism that might have dangerous implications for other canonical texts. This was a context in which symptomatic readings of controversial studies like Peerlkamp's and Strauss's could flourish. Both books were read as manifesting not only their authors' lack of virtue but also, more disturbingly, an iconoclastic attitude that reviewers feared was gaining ground in scholarship and politics alike. Among other things, such symptomatic readings enabled authors in subsequent decades to speak in even more generic terms about hypercritical schools and trends. The chapter has shown that such broad uses of the term were especially prevalent among *Gymnasium* teachers and Protestant clergy of conservative inclination who worried about the corrosive effects of critical scholarship on canonical texts, be it the *Iliad* or the Bible. In the second half of the century, the *Streit der Richtungen* among German Protestants even turned *Hyperkritik* into a polemical device, used for aims far removed from those of philologists hesitating between *corpus* and *pignus*. Nonetheless, the term's scientific connotations remained crucial for Protestant scholars as well as for several Catholic and Jewish authors: these connotations allowed them to challenge hypercriticism on "scientific" rather than confessional grounds. What this suggests is that hypercriticism found its way into the arena of religious controversy precisely because it was a scholarly vice, codified in philological manuals and used in learned periodicals.

These vicissitudes of the term fall outside of the scope of praxeological approaches to the history of scholarly virtues and vices as advocated by Daston and Krajewski. As helpful as it is to examine the relationships between scholars' catalogs of virtue and their day-to-day research practices, this is only part of the story. Scholars' talk of virtue and vice also drew on and contributed to broader, societal discourses of virtue and vice, while serving as intellectual ammunition in controversies at the intersection of science, religion, politics, and morality. This is why the praxeological approach should be supplemented with a rhetorical one, attentive to how scholarly virtues and vices were invoked inside and outside of the academic realm, by specialists and nonspecialists alike, as an idiom imbued with the authority of *Wissenschaft*. Such a rhetorical approach may help situate scholarly vocabularies in their societal contexts and elucidate the cross-fertilization between scholars' standards of virtue and those circulating in other segments of society.[131] Moreover, in ways reminiscent of Raphael's "scientification of the social," it may trace how scholarly virtues and vices found their way outside of the walls of academia, as traveling concepts that challenge simple binaries between "insiders" and "outsiders" in the history of the humanities.[132]

Drawing on such a rhetorical approach, follow-up research may want to carry the story of hypercriticism into the twentieth century. It may examine how hypercriticism was invoked in controversies like the *Babel-Bibel-Streit*,[133] used by influential scholars like Benedetto Croce and Johan Huizinga,[134] gradually gave way to other pejorative phrases like "historicism,"[135] yet persisted in historical methodology manuals[136] and even came to enjoy renewed interest from postwar French thinkers like Henri Lefebvre and Jacques Derrida.[137] Just as interesting, however, would be a rhetorical analysis of other scholarly virtues and vices, such as dogmatism. A rhetorical approach may elucidate how critics of dogmatism from Immanuel Kant to anti-communists in Cold War America drew on a discursive repertoire established by seventeenth-century authors (Thomas Hobbes, Joseph Glanvill, Thomas Spratt) and codified in eighteenth-century Enlightenment texts. More specifically, it may be able to explain why in the post-Darwinian

131 As in Jamie Cohen-Cole, *The Open Mind: Cold War Politics and the Sciences of Human Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), and Gayle Rogers, *Speculation: A Cultural History from Aristotle to AI* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

132 Raphael, "Verwissenschaftlichung des Sozialen"; Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

133 J. Lieblein, "Aegypten, Babel und Bibel," *Deutsche Revue* 28 (1903): 284–97, at 293; Leopold Goldschmied, *Der Kampf um Babel-Bibel im Lichte des Judentums* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1903), 4, 21; A. Meyenberg, *Ist die Bibel inspiriert? Orientierende Wanderungen durch die Gebiete der modernen Bibelfragen* (Luzern: Räber, 1907), 8, 55, 58.

134 Benedetto Croce, *Teoria e storia della storiografia*, 2nd ed. (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1920), 24–25, 123; J. Huizinga, *De wetenschap der geschiedenis* (Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1937), 19, 128.

135 Annette Wittkau, *Historismus: Zur Geschichte des Begriffs und des Problems*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994); Herman Paul and Adriaan van Veldhuizen, eds., *Historicism: A Travelling Concept* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021).

136 Gilbert J. Garraghan, *A Guide to Historical Method*, ed. Jean Delanglez (New York: Fordham University Press, 1946), 45–46, 190; Hans Nabholz, *Einführung in das Studium der mittelalterlichen und der neueren Geschichte: den Studierenden der Geschichte zugedacht* (Zurich: Schulthess & Co., 1948), 41; Léon E. Halkin, *Éléments de critique historique* (Liège: H. Dessain, 1960), 49–51.

137 Rodolphe Gasché, *The Honor of Thinking: Critique, Theory, Philosophy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 21–37.

controversies of the 1870s and 1880s accusations of dogmatism went back and forth, with "the Haeckels, the Spencers, and the Huxleys of the present day" being depicted as dogmatists just as routinely as opponents of Darwin found themselves accused of "narrow-minded dogmatism."[138] A rhetorical approach may demonstrate, in other words, that scholarly virtues and vices mattered not only to academics but found their way into sometimes unexpected corners of public attention.

138 Joseph Hassell, "Evolution by Natural Selection Tested by Its Own Canon, and Shown to Be Untenable," *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 19 (1885): 53–67, at 55; G. G. Zerffi, *Dogma and Science: A Lecture Delivered before the Sunday Lecture Society* (London: Sunday Lecture Society, [1876]), 18. Cf. Bernard Lightman, "The Creed of Science and Its Critics," in *The Victorian World*, ed. Martin Hewitt (London: Routledge, 2012), 449–65.

5. Denial of Coevalness: Charges of Dogmatism in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities

With Caroline Schep

Abstract: What did it mean for scholars to be accused of dogmatism? In exploring this question, the chapter focuses on philosophy and Biblical scholarship in nineteenth-century Germany. Textbooks in both fields offered teleological narratives of dogmatic belief having given way to critical thinking. This template, in turn, allowed for a specific type of vice-charging. When neo-Kantian philosophers and liberal Protestant theologians accused their opponents of dogmatic thinking habits, this implied that the accused clung to outdated modes of thought. This chapter argues that such temporal connotations were inherent to the vice of dogmatism. Accusations of dogmatism amounted to a "denial of coevalness," as Johannes Fabian calls it: a "temporal othering" that relegated opponents to a stage from which modern *Wissenschaft* had long emancipated itself.

Keywords: epistemic vices, scholarly vices, historical criticism, dogmatism, history of philosophy, history of Biblical scholarship

Introduction

Few key concepts in the humanities' vocabulary have received as much historical attention as the German *Kritik* and its English equivalents, "criticism" and "critique." In unraveling what *Kritik* meant to, for instance, Immanuel Kant and his contemporaries in eighteenth-century Europe, historians have distinguished between philological criticism, literary criticism, critique of

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taste, logical critique, and, of course, Kant's critique of pure reason.[1] Whereas some of these variants reached no further back than the sixteenth or seventeenth century,[2] work by René Nünlist and others shows that philological criticism in particular had much older roots.[3] Also, for the nineteenth century, historians of the humanities have repeatedly pointed out how much weight the adjective "critical" carried for historians and philologists in a time of academic discipline formation.[4] Ever since Reinhart Koselleck's *Kritik und Krise* (Critique and crisis, 1959), historians have also been attentive to how critique related to real or hoped-for political transformations in an age of revolutions.[5] On top of that, there is a growing number of studies on more recent transmutations of *Kritik*, from Frankfurt School–style ideology critique in the mid-twentieth century to the emergence of critical gender studies, the challenges of postcolonial critique in an era of decolonization, or the still ongoing controversy over postcritique as propagated by Rita Felski and others.[6] If anything, this body of literature shows that critique is not a

1 J. Colin McQuillan, *Immanuel Kant: The Very Idea of a Critique of Pure Reason* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2016), 3–20. See also Giorgio Tonelli, "'Critique' and Related Terms Prior to Kant: A Historical Survey," *Kant-Studien* 69 (1978): 119–48; Claus von Bormon, Helmut Holzhey, and Giorgio Tonelli, "Kritik," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 4, ed. Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, and Gottfried Gabriel (Basel: Schwabe & Co., 1976), 1250–82.

2 Benedetto Bravo, "*Critice* in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and the Rise of the Notion of Historical Criticism," in *History of Scholarship: A Selection of Papers from the Seminar on the History of Scholarship Held Annually at the Warburg Institute*, ed. Christopher Ligota and Jean-Louis Quantin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 135–95; Nicholas Hardy, *Criticism and Confession: The Bible in the Seventeenth Century Republic of Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

3 René Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work: Terms and Concepts of Literary Criticism in Greek Scholia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Franco Montanari, "From Book to Edition: Philology in Ancient Greece," in *World Philology*, ed. Sheldon Pollock, Benjamin A. Elman, and Ku-ming Kevin Chang (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 25–44.

4 Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, "Leopold von Ranke: la passion de la critique et le séminaire d'histoire," in *Lieux de savoir*, vol. 1, ed. Christian Jacob (Paris: Albin Michel, 2007), 462–82; Marieke Winkler, "Criticism in the History of the Modern Humanities: The Case of Literary Studies in the Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Netherlands," *History of Humanities* 3, no. 2 (2018): 303–25.

5 Reinhart Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise: Eine Studie zur Pathogenese der bürgerlichen Welt* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1959); Kurt Röttgers, *Kritik und Praxis: Zur Geschichte des Kritikbegriffs von Kant bis Marx* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975).

6 María del Rosario Acosta López and J. Colin McQuillan, eds., *Critique in German Philosophy: From Kant to Critical Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2020); Karin de Boer and Ruth Sonderegger, eds., *Conceptions of Critique in Modern and Contemporary Philosophy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Elizabeth S. Anker and Rita Felski, eds., *Critique and Postcritique* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017); Didier Fassin and Bernard E. Harcourt, eds., *A Time for Critique* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

timeless ideal, but an essentially contested concept that could, and can, be enlisted for a variety of intellectual and political purposes.

Yet if critique must be historicized, sensitive to contexts in which it was performed, then why have historians so little to say about "dogmatism," one of the most frequently invoked negative counterparts of *Kritik*?[7] Kant was not alone in contrasting his critical project with the dogmatism of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Christian Wolff, or with the "dogmatic slumber" of his own precritical period.[8] In his footsteps, many nineteenth-century humanities scholars dissociated themselves in the name of critique from "dogmatic" ideas, assumptions, or beliefs. This habit, moreover, was not limited to authors versed in Kantian thinking or familiar with philosophical treatises like Friedrich von Schelling's *Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kritizismus* (Letters on dogmatism and criticism, 1795). Philological and historical criticism, too, were routinely contrasted with "dogmatic" attitudes toward Scripture, literary texts, or the national past. Still, despite its prominence as criticism's principal other, the term *Dogmatismus* has not nearly received as much historical attention as *Kritik*. The few studies that do exist largely limit themselves to tracing the emergence and development of "dogmatic" (systematic) medicine, law, and theology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, well before *dogmatisch* acquired the pejorative connotations that it has retained ever since Kant.[9]

This lack of attention would be understandable as long as dogmatism would be nothing other than a lack or absence of critique. If "dogmatic" were synonymous with "uncritical," the term would hardly require special attention. However, as this chapter will show, the range of meanings and connotations that nineteenth-century scholars associated with dogmatism was much broader. Although "uncritical" was a prominent layer of meaning, the term could convey a variety of other messages, too. Depending on the issues at stake, it could denote unfounded reasoning, stubborn adherence to contested or one-sided theories, unwarranted loyalty to superseded

7 Only Werner Schneiders, "Vernünftiger Zweifel und wahre Eklektik: Zur Entstehung des modernen Kritikbegriffes," *Studia Leibnitiana* 17 (1985): 143–61, devotes a couple of pages (156–61) to the largely negative connotations that "dogmatism" had in German Enlightenment philosophy.

8 Abraham Anderson, *Kant, Hume, and the Interruption of Dogmatic Slumber* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Manfred Gawlina, *Das Medusenhaupt der Kritik: Die Kontroverse zwischen Immanuel Kant und Johann August Eberhard* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 107–11.

9 Hubert Filser, *Dogma, Dogmen, Dogmatik: Eine Untersuchung zur Begründung und zur Entstehungsgeschichte einer theologischen Disziplin von der Reformation bis zur Spätaufklärung* (Munster: LIT, 2001); Maximilian Herberger, *Dogmatik: Zur Geschichte von Begriff und Methode in Medizin und Jurisprudenz* (Frankfurt am Main; Vittorio Klostermann, 1981).

modes of thinking, or a constraining of independent thought (e.g., by church authorities). This semantic flexibility of the term, paired to its clearly dismissive connotations, suggests that defenders of *Kritik* did something more than stating the obvious in juxtaposing critical and dogmatic reasoning. If dogmatism was not merely a negative counterimage of critique, but a pejorative accusation of intellectually vicious conduct that could take on a variety of forms, then at least three questions present themselves: (1) Why were advocates of critique so eager to dissociate themselves from dogmatism? (2) Were they alone in charging others with dogmatism, or did the term also find acceptance among scholars who did not identify unreservedly with *Kritik* (e.g., theologically conservative Biblical scholars who looked with suspicion at the advances of Biblical criticism)? (3) What was rhetorically effective about charges of dogmatism—and to what extent can this rhetorical power help explain the term's ubiquity in nineteenth-century scholarly discourse?[10]

Focusing on the humanities in nineteenth-century Germany,[11] the chapter explores these three questions in two fields that, each in their own way, tried to come to terms with *Kritik*: the field of philosophy, in which critique had strong Kantian connotations, and that of Biblical scholarship, in which philological *Kritik* defined the intellectual agenda. These two fields, then, allow us to examine how dogmatism was positioned vis-à-vis the two most dominant concepts of critique available in the nineteenth century. For each of the two fields, we will study the uses of dogmatism in a selection of influential textbooks as well as in controversies in which accusations of *Dogmatismus* went back and forth. The philosophical debate is the so-called "Pessimism Controversy" (*Pessimismusstreit*) that occupied

10 Methodologically, these questions favor a type of cultural history that treats academic discourse not primarily as a vehicle for expressing (philosophical, scientific) *positions*, but as a *practice* in which scholars engage to formulate, justify, attack, and defend ideas. See Roger Chartier, *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), esp. 11–13, and, more recently, Stefanie Stockhorst, "Doing Enlightenment: Forschungsprogrammatische Überlegungen zur 'Aufklärung' als kultureller Praxis," *Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert* 42, no. 1 (2018): 11–29.

11 Following conventional practice—e.g., Efraim Podoksik, ed., *Doing Humanities in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Leiden: Brill, 2020)—we take "humanities" to denote the entire spectrum of what Wilhelm Dilthey and his contemporaries called the *Geisteswissenschaften*, including philosophy and theology as well as the emerging social sciences (psychology, economy, political science). For a more differentiated analysis of *humanities* and *Geisteswissenschaften*, see Herman Paul, "Introduction: What Is the History of the Humanities?" in *Writing the History of the Humanities: Questions, Themes, and Approaches*, ed. Herman Paul (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 1–24.

German philosophers from the 1860s onwards, but gained momentum with the publication of Eduard von Hartmann's *Philosophie des Unbewußten* (Philosophy of the unconscious, 1869). Around the same time, in the early 1870s, Biblical scholars from across the theological spectrum responded, often with less than full approval, to David Friedrich Strauss's book, *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (The old and the new faith, 1872). As in the *Pessimismusstreit*, a flood of brochures and articles appeared in which both "critique" and "dogmatism" served as markers of intellectual orientation. Both of these debates therefore give us ample occasion to examine: What did *Dogmatismus* mean to nineteenth-century German humanities scholars and why did they use the term so often?

Beyond the past: Textbook narratives of progress

Judging by some of the most widely used German history of philosophy textbooks, such as Friedrich Ueberweg's *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Outline of the history of philosophy, 3 vols., 1863–66),[12] Kant's critical legacy determined to no small extent what dogmatism was understood to mean. Just as Kant had used the term to denounce philosophers who dared to make metaphysical claims without prior "critical" reflection on the epistemological limits of this enterprise,[13] so Ueberweg defined dogmatism as the vice of ignoring what Kant's critique had so convincingly pointed out, namely that speculation about the existence of God and the immortality of the soul is epistemologically unwarranted. Dogmatism thereby betrayed a lack of respect for the "limitations of human knowledge."[14] Likewise, in his *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (History of modern philosophy, 8 vols., 1852–93), Kuno Fischer defined the difference between *Kritik* and *Dogmatismus* in truly Kantian terms:

> To see things as given, regardless of the conditions of their knowledgeability, means to look at them dogmatically; not to regard it as given, but

12 An overview of textbooks used in this period is provided by Gerald Haltung, "Philosophical Historiography in the 19th Century: A Provisional Typology," in *From Hegel to Windelband: Historiography of Philosophy in the 19th Century*, ed. Gerald Haltung and Valentin Pluder (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 9–24.

13 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 119 (B xxxv).

14 Friedrich Ueberweg, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie von Thales bis auf die Gegenwart*, vol. 3 (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1866), 32–33, 126.

to derive it from the conditions of knowability (that is, from the same conditions from which knowledge follows), is to consider it critically.[15]

A second way in which Kant helped define dogmatism is that his definition of Enlightenment as "human being's emancipation from its self-incurred immaturity" was invoked as a standard that dogmatists were unable to meet.[16] Fischer, most notably, argued that dogmatic thinkers "were held captive" or, in an alternative phrasing, had "not freed themselves" from a legacy of pre-Kantian rationalism. Wilhelm Windelband also varied on this theme in portraying Kant as a teacher who had forced his students "to think for themselves" instead of satisfying themselves with "dead dogmatic lectures."[17]

Yet the most important way in which Kant marked the difference between critique and dogmatism was that textbook authors presented him as having inaugurated a new, critical phase in modern philosophy. According to Ueberweg, "the time of empiricism, dogmatism, and skepticism," had lasted from Francis Bacon and René Descartes in the seventeenth century to David Hume in the eighteenth. As it had since then been surpassed by "the time of Kantian criticism,"[18] dogmatism for Ueberweg was clearly a thing of the past. Similarly, Fischer distinguished between a "dogmatic" and a "critical" phase in modern philosophy, telling his readers that philosophy had "ascended" from the one to the other.[19] In this scheme of things, therefore, Kantian criticism had not only been a force of progress, but also was allowed to define what was "new" and what was "old."[20]

In histories of Biblical scholarship published in about the same years—usually no separate publications, but historical surveys that appeared as opening chapters in broadly conceived *Einleitungen* ("Introductions")

15 Kuno Fischer, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, vol. 6 (Heidelberg: Friedrich Bassermann, 1872), 437.

16 Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" in Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, trans. David L. Colclasure, ed. Pauline Kleingeld (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 17–23, at 17.

17 Wilhelm Windelband, *Die Geschichte der neueren Philosophie in ihrem Zusammenhange mit der allgemeinen Cultur und den besonderen Wissenschaften dargestellt* vol. 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1880), 12.

18 Ueberweg, *Grundriss*, vol. 3, 1.

19 Kuno Fischer, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Heidelberg: Friedrich Bassermann, 1867), vi, 743, 837.

20 On the politics of periodization involved in such definitions, see *Breaking up Time: Negotiating the Borders between Present, Past, and Future*, ed. Chris Lorenz and Berber Bevernage (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

to the field—the name of Kant appeared less often. Also, in marked contrast to their colleagues in philosophy, Biblical scholars spent little time reflecting on epistemological issues. The themes of independent thinking and emancipation from outmoded ways of thinking, however, were as important to Adolf Hilgenfeld and Heinrich Julius Holtzmann as to Ueberweg, Fischer, and Windelband. Hilgenfeld, for instance, depicted the emergence and development of Biblical criticism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a story of light conquering darkness. Darkness had ruled as long as Scripture had been approached "dogmatically," as an authoritative canon of divinely inspired books. In seventeenth-century Lutheranism, dominated by "the strict dogmatism of orthodoxy," as well as in the Catholic Church of those days, "all free inquiry was bound by the strict ban of the dogma of inspiration." Light had only emerged with figures like Johann Salomo Semler, an Enlightenment theologian in eighteenth-century Halle who "broke the ban of the old-Protestant dogma of inspiration" by exploring historical questions regarding the origins of Biblical texts. "From the supra-historical height of dogmatics, the collection of holy scriptures was brought down to historical ground."[21] In Hilgenfeld's teleological account, dogmatism thus denoted an attitude of reverence for the "authority" of Scripture, which hampered "free" historical inquiry by holding to a doctrine of divine inspiration that left little room for human authorship. Notably, Hilgenfeld referred to this "attitude" in the past tense, as characteristic of Lutheran orthodoxy in early modern Germany, from which Semler and subsequent generations of Biblical scholars had managed to "free" themselves. Accordingly, in Hilgenfeld's narrative, dogmatism appeared as a thing of the past—as a form of coercion from which scientific theology had successfully escaped.[22]

This view of things was hardly original. When Hilgenfeld, back in the early 1840s, had attended Wilhelm Vatke's theology classes in Berlin, he had heard a similar story about "criticism" emancipating itself from the "old perspective," with Semler playing a key role in expelling the "darkness" that had long prevented Biblical criticism from seeing the light of day.[23] Around the same time, Eduard Reuss's textbook on New Testament criticism had postulated a centuries-long "period of the reign of tradition," followed by a

21 Adolf Hilgenfeld, *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Leipzig: Fues, 1875), 178, 180, 180–81.

22 Ibid., 5, 22, 10.

23 Wilhelm Vatke, *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in das Alte Testament: Nach Vorlesungen*, ed. Hermann G. S. Preiss (Berlin: Emil Strauss, 1886), 13, 11.

"period of the reign of criticism" launched by Semler and other critics committed to breaking the power of "scholastic dogmatism."[24] By the 1870s, this schematic juxtaposition of "old" dogmatism and "new" criticism had become a standard template for textbooks in Biblical scholarship. Holtzmann was only one among others who depicted Reformed theology in the Reformation era as a blend of "Scriptural doctrinalism and traditionalism," taught with "doctrinaire strictness." Only in the late seventeenth century, figures like Richard Simon and Johann David Michaelis had paved the way for the "critical school" inaugurated by Semler, Baur, and Strauss.[25]

Textbook authors in both philosophy and Biblical scholarship thus associated dogmatism with a superseded stage in the development of their field. Although they defined the vice in different ways, they broadly agreed that dogmatism had been most influential prior to the rise of *Kritik*—be it Kantian critique or Biblical criticism. This, however, prompts a follow up question: If dogmatism belonged to the past more than to the present, why did textbook authors continue to fight it?

The relapse motif: Denial of coevalness

The short answer is that scholars in both fields were concerned about perceived comebacks of dogmatic modes of thinking. Dogmatism was not safely buried in the past; it could make unexpected or at least unwelcome reappearances. This is most apparent in the case of Biblical scholarship, where Holtzmann and his liberal colleagues kept insisting on the need for liberation from dogmatism precisely because they worried about a "dogmatically operating restauration" that they associated with conservative figures like Johann von Hofmann and Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg.[26] In the 1830s, the threat posed by these conservative theologians had been real enough: Hengstenberg's political influence in Prussia had been such that liberal critics like W. M. L. de Wette had been forced to leave the University of Berlin.[27] By the 1870s, much of this conservative political influence had waned. Nonetheless, a book like David Friedrich Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu*

24 Eduard Reuss, *Die Geschichte der Heiligen Schriften des Neuen Testaments* (Halle: C. A. Schwetschke, 1842), viii, 130, 252.

25 Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1886), 178, 179, 189.

26 Ibid., 196.

27 Marilyn Chapin Massey, *Christ Unmasked: The Meaning of* The Life of Jesus *in German Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 47–55.

für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet (The life of Jesus for the German people, 1864) still met with opposition from theologians who valued doctrinal orthodoxy over the advancement of Biblical *Wissenschaft*.[28] It was such opposition to liberal Biblical criticism that Holtzmann had in mind when he complained about a revitalization of "seventeenth-century orthodoxy." Recognizable from afar by the "conservative instinct of traditionalism," this theology, in Holtzmann's view of things, was not "free," but "bound" to traditional church doctrine and as such at odds with the liberation agenda of Strauss and his followers.[29]

Philosophers, too, observed that pre-Kantian dogmatism could make undesirable comebacks. Ueberweg, for instance, criticized Johann Gottlieb Fichte for granting dogmatic concepts like "the absolute I" a prominent place in what he himself dared to call a critical philosophy.[30] As Fischer's textbook recalled, Fichte himself had denounced the German *Naturphilosophie* of his day for revitalizing "an older dogmatic mode of thinking."[31] Likewise, Windelband pointed out that even Kantians like the Halle professor Johann Heinrich Tieftrunk had become dogmatic to the extent that they had "diverted from Kant's spirit."[32]

Against the background of textbook narratives about the progressive development of *Kritik*, this "relapse" motif can be interpreted as a rhetorical strategy that denied dogmatic modes of thinking a place in the present. It depicted conservative theologians and uncritical philosophers not merely as mistaken, but as representatives of a bygone era. Whereas the textbook authors stylized themselves as men of progress, they portrayed their opponents as men of the past, who as such did not deserve a hearing in the present. Rhetorically, this amounted to what Johannes Fabian called a "denial of coevalness" or a refusal to admit certain voices to the present conversation.[33] In textbooks at least, advocates of *Kritik* eagerly placed "dogmatic" colleagues in a time different from their own.

28 Yet as Frederick C. Beiser argues in his *David Friedrich Strauß, Father of Unbelief: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 237, the 1864 book did not nearly become as much a *succès de scandale* as Strauss's 1835 book, *Das Leben Jesu*, had been.

29 Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch*, 198, 193, 198.

30 Friedrich Ueberweg, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 3, 6th ed. (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1883), 291–92.

31 Kuno Fischer, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, vol. 5 (Heidelberg: Friedrich Bassermann, 1869), 766.

32 Windelband, *Geschichte*, vol. 2, 186.

33 Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 25–35.

The Pessimism Controversy

To what extent did scholars use this rhetorical strategy also in contexts of controversy? An insightful case study is the German *Pessimismusstreit*, in which several participants accused each other of dogmatic habits of mind. As Frederick C. Beiser has shown, the debate covered a range of topics, went on for decades, and is therefore not easily summarized. At bottom, however, the controversy was a response to Arthur Schopenhauer's grim message of human life not being worth living (the first phase of the controversy, in the 1860s) and to Eduard von Hartmann's hardly less pessimistic view that suffering is more typical of human existence than happiness (the second phase, in the 1870s). While part of the debate focused on the relative truth of these gloomy messages, Schopenhauer's and Hartmann's critics also questioned whether happiness was an appropriate standard for measuring the worth of human life (didn't this worth depend instead on the morality of someone's life, as Kant had said?). Neo-Kantian critics also worried about the "quietist" implications of pessimist philosophy and about its blurring of the boundaries between philosophy and worldview. Whereas the neo-Kantians preferred to see philosophy as a *Wissenschaft*, central to which was logical analysis, Schopenhauer and Hartmann seemed to turn it into a *Weltanschauung*.[34]

This helps explain why, in the Pessimism Controversy, "dogmatism" first of all referred to inappropriate transgressions of epistemological limits. This becomes apparent as we zoom in on three philosophers whom Beiser identifies as key players in the second phase of the controversy: Eugen Dühring, "the first thinker to mount a systematic response to Schopenhauer's pessimism," Eduard von Hartmann, "the most famous pessimist" in early Wilhelmine Germany, and Hans Vaihinger, a prominent voice among Hartmann's "most persistent" neo-Kantian critics.[35] Characteristically, the latter called both Hartmann and Dühring "systematic dogmatists"

34 See Frederick C. Beiser, *After Hegel: German Philosophy, 1840–1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 158–215 and, in greater detail, Beiser, *Weltschmerz: Pessimism in German Philosophy, 1860–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

35 Beiser, *Weltschmerz*, 87, 122, 165. We have not included Julius Frauenstädt, because this Schopenhauer commentator contributed more to the first than to the second phase of the *Pessimismusstreit*. Nonetheless, as his *Schopenhauer-Lexikon: Ein philosophisches Wörterbuch, nach Arthur Schopenhauers sämmtliche Schriften und handschriftlichem Nachlaß bearbeitet*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1871), makes clear, Frauenstädt's understanding of dogmatism drew largely on Kant (see esp. 129–30). He made a habit of calling it, with clear temporal connotations, "the old dogmatism that Kant has knocked over," "the dogmatism that Kant has destroyed," or simply "pre-Kantian dogmatism" (130); Julius Frauenstädt, *Neue Briefe über die Schopenhauer'sche*

because of their attempts "to prove against Kant that knowledge and truth are possible." To the extent that they "want to know something, and if that is not possible, at least want to claim something," they show themselves "infected by the disease of dogmatism."[36] Although Hartmann preferred to disagree—"nobody who knows my writings will believe Vaihinger that his tag of dogmatism fits me"[37]—his own take on dogmatism was rather similar. He, too, equated dogmatism with knowledge that "considers itself to be absolute," thereby mistaking probability for certainty and hypothesis for unquestionable truth.[38]

Other connotations of the term, however, quickly interfered with this Kantian one. Hartmann, for instance, spoke in one and the same breath about "dogmatism," "naïve belief," and "unfounded prejudice."[39] Also, writing less than a decade after the First Vatican Council (1869–70) that had famously defined the dogma of papal infallibility, he dissociated himself from philosophers who, "in their dogmatic narrow-mindedness, are far more sure of their own infallibility than the Pope of his."[40] Varying on this theme, Vaihinger claimed that dogmatists do whatever they can—"at any price," "fearing no means," to the point of "sacrificing logic on the altar of their dogmas"—to keep their systems intact.[41] Apart from denoting transgressions of epistemic limits, dogmatism could thus refer to a stubborn refusal to subject one's own ideas to critical scrutiny.

As in the textbooks, however, most important were the temporal connotations of the term. To the extent that philosophy was supposed to have left its dogmatic past behind, charging someone with a "relapse" into dogmatism was a serious accusation. In a book-length critique of *Die Philosophie des Unbewußten*, one of Hartmann's critics put it unequivocally: "What was forgivable before Kant, vain dogmatizing, is unforgivable after Kant. May all the Hartmanns at long last learn as much from the clear words of the clear

Philosophie (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1876), 145; Frauenstädt, *Blicke in die intellectuelle, physische und moralische Welt, nebst Beiträgen zur Lebensphilosophie* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1869), 12.

36 Hans Vaihinger, *Hartmann, Dühring und Lange: Zur Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie im XIX. Jahrhundert: Ein kritischer Essay* (Iserlohn: J. Baedeker, 1876), 48, 51–52.

37 Eduard von Hartmann, *Neukantianismus, Schopenhauerianismus und Hegelianismus in ihrer Stellung zu den philosophischen Aufgaben der Gegenwart* (Berlin: C. Duncker, 1877), 48.

38 Ibid., 25.

39 Ibid., 55.

40 Eduard von Hartmann, "Symptome des Verfalls im Künstler- und Gelehrtenthum" (1872), in Hartmann, *Gesammelte Studien und Aufsätze gemeinverständlichen Inhalts* (Berlin: Carl Duncker, 1876), 184–205, at 200.

41 Vaihinger, *Hartmann, Dühring und Lange*, 48, 199.

Königsberg thinker."[42] Hartmann, in turn, saw Vaihinger "still clinging to certain remnants of positive dogmatism, which in his case too have evaded critical disintegration and destruction."[43] On other occasions, too, Hartmann spoke about a "relapse into the dogmatic narrow-mindedness of belief in an absolute knowledge," "a relapse into positive dogma," or a "falling back into dogmatic narrow-mindedness."[44] Even Kant's philosophy, according to Hartmann, contained "remnants of a naive dogmatic realism" or, "a remnant of the old metaphysical dogmatism"—all phrases with clear temporal connotations.[45] Although modern philosophy, in Hartmann's assessment, had made "decisive progress over the earlier dogmatic self-certainty," this move beyond dogmatism had "so far stopped halfway."[46]

Vaihinger also interpreted the history of modern philosophy as a gradual triumph of *Kritik* over *Dogmatismus*:

> Day after day the dogmatic opponents recede, and more and more critique conquers the field. And it is that alone which feeds into the great international stream of scientific development, while those dogmatic twin directions [of idealism and materialism] lose or get bogged down in the sand.

Against this background, Vaihinger could depict Hartmann's pessimism as a "last flare-up of idealistic dogmatism and a regrettable relapse into a mythological period which modern thought believed to have long since overcome." Clearly, then, for Vaihinger, "dogmatic idealism" belonged to the past more than to the present: "Hartmann's system is not for the future."[47] Dühring, too, also fitted the pattern: he framed dogmatic reasoning as "a setback" (*Rückschlag*) to the days of Kant's *bête noire*, Spinoza.[48]

42 Gustav Knauer, *Das Facit aus E. v. Hartmann's Philosophie des Unbewussten* (Berlin: L. Heimann, 1873), 55. "Vain dogmatizing" may be interpreted as a veiled reference to Joseph Glanvill's *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* (1661).

43 Hartmann, *Neukantianismus, Schopenhauerianismus und Hegelianismus*, 24.

44 Ibid., 58, 79, 103; Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, 5th ed. (Berlin: Carl Duncker, 1873), 826.

45 Eduard von Hartmann, "Zur Orientirung in der Philosophie der letzten hundert Jahre" (1875), in Hartmann, *Gesammelte Studien*, 549–76, at 559; Hartmann, *Kritische Grundlegung des Transcendentalen Realismus* (Berlin: Carl Duncker, 1875), 51.

46 Eduard von Hartmann, "Anfange naturwissenschaftlicher Selbsterkenntnis" (1875), in Hartmann, *Gesammelte Studien*, 445–59, at 448.

47 Vaihinger, *Hartmann, Dühring und Lange*, 202–3.

48 E. Dühring, *Kritische Geschichte der Philosophie von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin: L. Heimann, 1873), 235.

So although the quarreling parties held opposite views on the persuasiveness or epistemological legitimacy of Hartmann-style pessimism, they broadly agreed, not only on dogmatism being a vice that philosophers should avoid, but also on dogmatism being a historically superseded way of thinking. In the heat of controversy, Hartmann, Vaihinger, and Dühring all drew on textbook narratives of philosophical progress to depict each other's work as untimely, old-fashioned, or not in accordance with the "critical" spirit of the age. To the extent that this rhetorical practice relegated opponents to a superseded stage of history—a dogmatic past, sharply distinguished from the critical present—it was a showcase example of what Fabian called "denial of coevalness." Charges of dogmatism were therefore potentially more disturbing in their implications than charges of error or inaccuracy. Calling someone a dogmatist implied exclusion from the present, or at least an unwillingness on the part of the accusing party to accept the other as a conversation partner in the here and now. Dogmatism, in other words, was not only a deadly sin, but also a deadly allegation.

The Old Faith and the New

If the rhetorical power of this "vice-charging"[49] was premised on the belief that modern, critical philosophy had dissociated itself from its dogmatic past, or was at least in the process of doing so, then to what extent were charges of dogmatism also made by authors with different views on how history had developed since the early modern period? In the context of the Pessimism Controversy, this question is hard to answer, given that Hartmann, Vaihinger, and Dühring, not unlike Ueberweg, Fischer, and Windelband, all interpreted the history of modern philosophy as a story of steady progress.[50] In the field of Biblical scholarship, however, not everyone shared the textbook narrative of critical "light" having conquered the "darkness" of dogmatic theology. Germany's theological faculties at the time were divided between "liberals," who almost without exception supported the further advancement of Biblical criticism, and various kinds of more conservatively inclined theologians, whose concerns for doctrinal orthodoxy were greater than their commitment to unraveling the sources of the Pentateuch.[51] By the 1870s, most influential

49 A term from Ian James Kidd, "Charging Others with Epistemic Vice," *The Monist* 99, no. 2 (2016): 181–97.

50 Haltung, "Philosophical Historiography," 13.

51 Thomas Albert Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 273–303.

had become the so-called *Vermittlungstheologe*: scholars who did not reject the project of Biblical criticism as such, but tried to bring its results into accordance with classical Christian doctrine.[52] Although much remains to be researched about the historical views held by these groups, it is clear that the liberal story of progress only appealed to a segment of the academic theological population. Those interpreting the rise of Biblical criticism as a threat to Christian faith held less rose-colored views of history than those believing that *Kritik* in the realm of Biblical scholarship would eventually wash away all *Dogmatismus*.

Given that Biblical scholars from across the theological spectrum contributed to the controversy unleashed by David Friedrich Strauss's 1872 book, *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (The old faith and the new), this debate is a suitable case study for examining how closely charges of dogmatism were tied to progressive historical narratives. Strauss himself minced no words in contrasting his "new" ideas with "the old church faith."[53] The first part of his book in particular was one long argument, in often bitingly ironic prose, against supernatural events (miracles) and speculative constructions like the Trinity. Although Strauss claimed that "we moderns can no longer either excite or even interest ourselves about such a dogma," his fierce criticism of theologians "petrifying" the Genesis creation narratives into the dogma of a six-day creation suggested something else. "For it [the dogma] becomes then at once a barrier, an obstructive rampart, against which the whole onset of progressive reason and all the battering rams of criticism now strike with passionate antipathy."[54] By way of an alternative to such outmoded dogmatism, Strauss sketched the contours of a "modern" worldview, which drew heavily on Darwin's biology, rejected both transcendence and teleology in the evolution of nature, and granted humankind the task of "ennobling" nature through culture—which Strauss came close to identifying with German educated middle-class life, judging by his extensive praise for "our great poets and musicians" (Goethe, Schiller, Mozart, and Beethoven).[55]

52 Friedrich Mildenberger, *Geschichte der deutschen evangelischen Theologie im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1981), 70–81; Annete G. Aubert, *The German Roots of Nineteenth-Century American Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 62–94.

53 David Friedrich Strauss, *Der alte und der neue Glaube: Ein Bekenntniß* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1872), 36, 37, 85, 292.

54 Ibid., 15, 16. The English translation is taken from David Friedrich Strauss, *The Old Faith and the New: A Confession*, trans. Mathilde Blind (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1873), 15, 17.

55 Strauss, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, 295 (see also the appendices 1 and 2).

As Peter Schrembs and others have shown,[56] Strauss's provocative book resonated widely among the German *Bildungsbürgertum*. The book sold in great numbers, went through multiple reprints in a couple of weeks, and elicited a spirited debate to which dozens of scholars, pastors, and publicists contributed.[57] With brochures and articles appearing on an weekly basis, the church historian Friedrich Nippold claimed as early as 1874 that the debate put the Pessimism Controversy in the shadow.[58] Clearly, the cause of these polemics did not lay in Strauss adopting unexpected positions. As many commentators pointed out, the ideas behind *Der alte und der neue Glaube* could already be found in Strauss's theological work of the 1840s and to some extent even in *Das Leben Jesu*, Strauss's work of Biblical criticism that had established his reputation as a radical liberal.[59] Still, *Der alte und der neue Glaube* was sufficiently different to provoke protest from many quarters: Strauss no longer expressed himself in Hegelian terminology, but wrote in plain, accessible language; he did not limit himself to criticizing "old church doctrine," but also sketched a modern alternative; he admitted that this alternative could no longer be called Christian; he presented it as a "faith" (*Glaube*) rather than as a form of "science" (*Wissenschaft*); and he explained at some length how this new faith related to social democracy, the labor question, and the monarchy, thereby touching on a range of sensitive issues. (In the last sections of the book, Strauss even took a stance on universal suffrage and the death penalty.)[60]

In the controversy that soon erupted, some commentators welcomed *Der alte und der neue Glaube* as yet another round in Strauss's lifelong battle against old-fashioned church doctrine. The Munich philosopher Jakob Frohschammer, for instance, drew on textbook narratives of criticism overhauling dogmatism in hailing Strauss's work as a remedy against "dogmatic" forms of Christian theology that he believed to be "no longer

56 Peter Schrembs, "David Friedrich Strauss: Der 'Alte und der Neue Glaube' in der zeitgenössischen Kritik" (PhD thesis, Universität Zürich, 1987).

57 Beiser, *David Friedrich Strauß*, 253.

58 Friedrich Nippold, "Die literarischen Ergebnisse der neueren Straußischen Controverse: Kritische Studie," in L. W. E. Rauwenhoff and Fr. Nippold, *D. Fr. Strauß' alter und neuer Glaube und seine literarische Ergebnisse: Zwei kritische Abhandlungen* (Leipzig: Richter & Harrassowitz; Leiden: S. C. van Doesburg, 1873), 129–246, at 136.

59 Edwina G. Lawler, *David Friedrich Strauss and His Critics: The* Life of Jesus *Debate in Early Nineteenth-Century German Journals* (New York: Peter Lang, 1986); Erik Linstrum, "Strauss's *Life of Jesus*: Publication and the Politics of the German Public Sphere," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 71, no. 4 (2010): 593–616.

60 Strauss, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, 281–90.

tenable."[61] A much greater number of commentators, however, focused on what Strauss called his "new faith." Catholics and orthodox Protestants in particular emphasized how right Strauss was in calling his modern "unbelief" a form of faith. If they had often been accused of clinging to scientifically unsupported ideas, they could now return the compliment by saying that even Strauss admitted his ideas to rest, not on *Wissenschaft*, but on *Glaube*. Their often-made argument that Darwin's evolutionary theory—one of the pillars of Strauss's new faith[62]—was still an unproven "hypothesis" served a similar purpose: it was to highlight that Strauss had just as little ground under his feet "as we" (as one Protestant author candidly confessed).[63] To drive the point home, Strauss's critics made ample use of religious imagery. They described the "new faith" as "new wisdom," a "new gospel," and a "new religious doctrine,"[64] while depicting the "old, strict critic" that Strauss once was as a believer, "as credulous as a young girl who has fallen in love for the first time" and "as devout as one of those most orthodox church believers whom he persecutes because of their blind faith."[65] Heinrich Rotermund even dared to paraphrase Matthew 15:22: "O Str[auss], great is thy faith!"[66]

In this context, charges of dogmatism were repeatedly made. "It is remarkable," wrote a Berlin school teacher in 1874, "that Strauss, otherwise such a fierce opponent of blind faith," now presents "infallible articles of faith," to the point of "*issuing dogmas himself*!"[67] Konstantin Schlottmann, a New Testament scholar from Halle, found Strauss's work "dogmatic" because of all the guesses, hypotheses, and conjectures that it presented as uncontested certainties.[68] Likewise, the old-Catholic Johannes Huber, professor of philosophy in Munich, contrasted Strauss's reputation as a "critic" with his

61 J. Frohschammer, *Das neue Wissen und der neue Glauben: Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von D. F. Strauß' neuester Schrift: "Der alte und der neue Glaube"* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1873), v.

62 Frederick Gregory, *Nature Lost? Natural Science and German Theological Traditions of the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 99–104.

63 "Der Kampf um dem Glauben," *Historisch-politische Blätter für Deutschland* 72 (1873): 447–59, 524–41, 621–33, at 448; H. Rotermund, *Dr. David Fr. Strauß, der alte und der neue Glaube: Vortrag im evangelischen Verein zu Hannover* (Hannover: Heinr. Feesche, 1875), 34.

64 Willibald Beyschlag, *Ein antiker Spiegel für den "neuen Glauben" von D. Fr. Strauß: Vortrag, gehalten zu Erfurt und Halle im März 1873* (Berlin: Ludwig Rauh, [1873]), 20.

65 H. Rotermund, *Dr. David Fr. Strauß, der alte und der neue Glaube: Vortrag im evangelischen Verein zu Hannover* (Hannover: Heinr. Feesche, 1875), 26; W. Schwarz, *Der alte und der neue Glaube von David Friedrich Strauß* (Berlin: F. Berggold, 1874), 35.

66 Rotermund, *Dr. David Fr. Strauß*, 30.

67 Schwarz, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, 31, 35, 48 (emphasis in original).

68 Konstantin Schlottmann, *David Strauss als Romantiker des Heidenthums* (Halle: Waisenhaus, 1878), 48, 49.

"dogmatic" way of issuing bold statements with no other support than the author's own authority. "Assertions like Strauss's [...] are simply dogmatic," Huber concluded, as long as we have to take them "with blind faith in his authority."[69] More generally, commenting on Franz Overbeck's contribution to the Strauss controversy, Heinrich Ewald, the grand old critic of the Tübingen School, sighed that critics most opposed to dogmatism were most likely to get caught in "the chains of their own already fully petrified dogmas."[70]

It is worth noting that orthodox critics were not alone in making such charges of dogmatism. Even theologians broadly sympathetic with Strauss, such as Karl Schwarz, the cofounder of the liberal *Protestantenverein*, noticed that Strauss's argument would have been much stronger if the author hadn't turned Darwin's evolutionary hypothesis into "a fundamental article [of faith] and solid dogma." Had Strauss but listened to Emil du Bois-Reymond, whose lecture on the limits of scientific knowledge Schwarz approvingly cited, instead of to Ernst Haeckel, the man who turned Darwinian biology into a quasi-religious monist worldview![71]

However, whereas the Pessimism Controversy showed that dogmatism, charged with temporal connotations, was often used to relegate opponents to a precritical past, most of Strauss's critics avoided such suggestions of backwardness. Although Strauss's own attacks on orthodox theology were a clear example of denying coevalness, his critics mainly used "dogmatic" as synonymous with "biased," "prejudiced," or taking firm stances in the absence of proper evidence. Time and again, they criticized Strauss's work for lacking "foundations" and for "floating in the air."[72] "It's just a big knot of false assumptions, erroneous conclusions, self-fabricated histories, and self-fabricated problems."[73] Strauss's "most blatant dogmatism," in other words, was perceived as manifesting itself in his lack of *Voraussetzungslosigkeit* or in his habit of mistaking "unproven assumptions" for "the only true system."[74]

69 Johannes Huber, *Der alte und der neue Glaube: Eine Bekenntniß von David Friedrich Strauß kritisch gewürdigt* (Nördlingen: C. H. Beck, 1873), 46, 6.

70 H[einrich] E[wald], review of *Celsus' wahres Wort* by Theodor Keim and *Über die Christlichkeit der heutigen Theologie* by Franz Overbeck, *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen* (1874): 1–19, at 17.

71 Carl Schwarz, *David Friedrich Strauß und sein letztes Werk: Der alte und der neue Glaube* (Gotha: E. F. Thienemann, 1876), 40, 44, 46, referring to Emil du Bois-Reymond, *Über die Grenzen des Naturerkennens: Ein Vortrag in der zweiten öffentlichen Sitzung der 45. Versammlung deutscher Naturforscher und Ärzte zu Leipzig am 14. August 1872 gehalten* (Leipzig: Veit & Comp., 1872).

72 Schlottmann, *David Strauss*, 47–48.

73 U. Stutz, *Der alte und der neue Glaube oder Christenthum und Naturalismus: An Strauß und den zürcherischen Reformern geprüft* (Zürich: Franz Haule, 1874), 235.

74 E. Schumacher, "Bisschof Martensen," *Allgemeine Conservative Monatsschrift für das christliche Deutschland* 41 (1884): 633–51, at 637. On the virtue of not relying on unproven assumptions,

Why, then, did Strauss's orthodox critics abstain from what liberal theologians did not hesitate to do—using dogmatism as a means for excluding others from the realm of the present? It would be wrong to assume that they were impressed by the "newness" of Strauss's heretical ideas. Several authors explicitly challenged the idea of Strauss being "modern" by exposing his ideas as variations on old heresies. Along these lines, Willibald Beyschlag, a leading representative of Protestant *Vermittlungstheologie*, interpreted Strauss's new faith as a blend of stoicism and epicureanism—the ancient Greek philosophies that the apostle Paul in his Areopagus sermon had already exposed as incompatible with Christian faith (Acts 17).[75] A Catholic critic even spoke about a "trivial repetition of old, long-exhausted mockeries," with Strauss resembling the prodigal son from Luke 15, eager to fill his stomach with the pods of the swine.[76] What these arguments sought to achieve was not a denial of coevalness, but what one might call a denial of newness. Assuming that "there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9), they unmasked even the most recent, most radical liberal ideas as "nothing but" (*nichts Anderes als*) heresies known already in Biblical times.[77] This explains why an old-Catholic polemicist could read Strauss's book as illustrating the truth of Proverbs 26:11: "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly."[78]

What these examples suggest is that the meaning of dogmatism was tied, among other things, to how authors positioned themselves in history. Insofar as the term evoked the image of a long-abandoned fortress, home only to "dogmatic night owls and rats,"[79] it presupposed a philosophy of history in which progress in the sense of ongoing liberation of the free-thinking self was the leading motif. The liberal Protestant allergy to orthodox "dogmatism" was, in other words, the flipside of a passionate commitment to what Friedrich Wilhelm Graf and others have identified as the liberation agenda underlying German liberal theology in Strauss's generation.[80] In its idealist

see Jürgen von Kempski, "'Voraussetzungslosigkeit': Eine Studie zur Geschichte eines Wortes," *Archiv für Philosophie* 4, no. 2 (1951): 157–74.

75 Beyschlag, *Antiker Spiegel*, 21.

76 [Paul Leopold] Haffner, "Der alte und neue Glaube: Ein Bekenntnis von David Strauß," *Der Katholik* 53 (1873): 1–39, at 15, 25.

77 Beyschlag, *Antiker Spiegel*, 21.

78 Ibid.

79 "Der alte und der neue Glaube von David Friedrich Strauß," *Süddeutsches evangelisch-protestantisches Wochenblatt* 14 (1873), as quoted in Schrembs, "David Friedrich Strauss," 87.

80 Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, *Kritik und Pseudo-Spekulation: David Friedrich Strauß als Dogmatiker im Kontext der positionellen Theologie seiner Zeit* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1982), esp. 589–90; *Massey, Christ Unmasked*, 81–112; Mildenberger, *Geschichte*, 53–55.

view of history, freedom of conscience would progressively realize itself by challenging the authorities of church, tradition, and political conservatism alike. Widespread as this understanding of history might have been, most of Strauss's orthodox critics did not share it. Their emplotment of history (to borrow a term from Hayden White)[81] resembled tragedy more than romance insofar as they, in various ways, saw themselves engaged in often less than successful struggles to "preserve" historic Christianity in an age of heresy, apostasy, and unbelief. Beyschlag, for instance, perceived himself as living in a "world of faith that seems to be perishing" in the flames of Biblical criticism (with Strauss being the main arsonist).[82] Depicting intellectual developments in nineteenth-century Germany in the darkest of colors, Beyschlag hoped for a revival of old Lutheran faith, which he assigned the task of countering "all of these powerful spirits that have been assaulting German Christian faith for more than a hundred years."[83] Although Beyschlag did not spell out his philosophy of history in much detail, his insistence on the church's task to "withstand" the powers of modern unbelief illustrates his total lack of affinity with the liberal narrative of criticism doing away with superseded dogmas.[84]

This explains why Beyschlag and other nonliberal critics of Strauss could impossibly equate dogmatism with a refusal to bring theology in accord with the times. At the same time, it suggests that if these critics used the term, mainly in accusing Strauss of throwing around unfounded ideas, they did so with a certain irony—as if they wanted to return the compliment by demonstrating that liberal scholars were no less dogmatic than their orthodox colleagues.[85]

81 Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 7–11.

82 Willibald Beyschlag, *Das Leben Jesu*, vol. 1 (Halle: Eugen Strien, 1885), i. See also Willibald Beyschlag, "Deutschland im Laufe des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts: Akademische Gedenkrede, gehalten in der Aula der Universität Halle-Wittenberg am 12. Januar 1900," in Beyschlag, *Zwei akademische Festreden* (Halle: Eugen Strien, 1902), 25–41, at 30.

83 Willibald Beyschlag, "Die Religion und die moderne Gesellschaft," *Deutsche Revue über das gesamte nationale Leben der Gegenwart* 11, no. 3 (1886): 75–83, 173–83, at 80.

84 Ibid., 174.

85 This rhetorical strategy is evident in the case of Heinrich Ewald defending himself against Christian Hermann's Weisse accusation of *Dogmatismus* by stating that Weisse himself smuggled "philosophical suppositions foreign to the Bible" into his Biblical scholarship, or in that of Anton Stára, a Catholic Biblical scholar, who took Johann Heinrich Kurtz's disdain for "dogmatic" strands of scholarship as evidence of a "dogmatic prejudice" on Kurtz's part. See [Heinrich Ewald], review of *Philosophische Dogmatik*, vol. 2, by Christian Hermann Weise, *Jahrbücher der biblischen Wissenschaft* 11 (1860–61): 275–79, at 277; A. Stára, review of *Geschichte des alten Bundes*, vol. 1,

Conclusion

Clearly, then, dogmatism was a derogatory term, used not only to paint stereotypical images of a precritical past, but also, more importantly, to delegitimize the work of colleagues of other philosophical or theological persuasions. In a context where both philosophy and Biblical scholarship found themselves divided between schools or approaches that could not resist fighting each other, dogmatism served a *Kampfbegriff* for scholars engaged in intellectual "boundary work."[86] It could fulfill this function, partly because dogmatism was universally dismissed as a vice that scholars should avoid, partly also because the term was flexible enough to be applicable to a variety of settings. A historicizing analysis as provided in this chapter therefore shows that dogmatism, instead of denoting a well-delineated philosophical or theological position, was an accusation thrown back and forth between quarreling parties, in the service of different intellectual projects.

Although the meanings attached to dogmatism varied from uncritical, in the Kantian sense of epistemologically unreflective, to prejudiced and unfounded, the term's potential for polemical use was perhaps most apparent from its temporal connotations. In textbooks and controversies alike, dogmatism often appeared as a long-superseded attitude, as a thing of the past, and therefore as an obstacle to intellectual progress. What neo-Kantian philosophers criticizing Schopenhauerian pessimism had in common with liberal Biblical scholars annoyed by orthodox doubts regarding the value of Biblical criticism was that they used *Dogmatismus* as a rhetorical means for relegating opponents to a precritical past, thereby denying them a legitimate place in the present. This amounted to what Fabian called a denial of coevalness, or a refusal to accept that the advances of *Kritik* could be interpreted in different ways, as tragedy no less than as romance. At a time when scholarship was widely believed to be a force of progress, it was this denial of coevalness that made accusations of dogmatism more serious in their implications than, for instance, charges of inaccuracy or imprecision (notwithstanding the high regard in which precision was held).[87] Unlike inac-

3rd ed., by Johann Heinrich Kurtz, *Österreichische Vierteljahresschrift für katholische Theologie* 7 (1868): 642–47, at 642.

86 Thomas F. Gieryn, "Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists," *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 6 (1983): 781–95.

87 Markus Krajweski, Antonia von Schöning, and Mario Wimmer, eds., *Enzyklopädie der Genauigkeit* (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2021); M. Norton Wise, ed., *The Values of Precision* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

curacy and imprecision, dogmatism was not merely seen as a vice impairing the reliability of scholarly work; it was interpreted as an unpardonable sin, deserving expulsion from the ranks of present-day *Wissenschaft*.

The fact that Strauss's orthodox critics did not accept these temporal connotations of the term, equating dogmatism instead with lack of proofs or lack of *Voraussetzungslosigkeit*, adds further credence to our conclusion that charges of dogmatism were colored by normative visions of how the field should develop and what qualities or attitudes this demanded from scholars. In the field of Biblical scholarship, attempts to break the power of conservatism and worries over the advances of "unbelief" alike even presupposed full-blown philosophies of history. At stake in them was not merely the future of the discipline, but the fate of Christianity or the cause of liberty. What this suggests is that *Dogmatismus*, not unlike *Kritik*, was a term imbued with visions of past, present, and future or, more specifically, with hopeful or fearful expectations of what the future would hold. If recent scholarship highlights the emancipatory narratives underpinning the cause of critique in, for instance, the postcolonial Global South,[88] this chapter has shown that such philosophies of history already accompanied *Kritik* and *Dogmatismus* in the nineteenth century. It is impossible to understand scholarly virtues and vices without taking into account that such evaluative standards were colored by how scholars expected *Wissenschaft* to contribute to the future.

88 E.g., David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Ayşe Parla, "Critique without a Politics of Hope?" in *A Time for Critique*, ed. Didier Fassin and Bernard E. Harcourt (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 52–70.

6. Virtue Language in Nineteenth-Century Orientalism: A Case Study in Historical Epistemology

Abstract: Examining how nineteenth-century Orientalists accessed the virtues or vices exhibited in Reinhart Dozy's *De Israëlieten te Mekka* (The Israelites in Mecca, 1864), this chapter shows that nineteenth-century Orientalists quarreled about (1) the degree to which Dozy practiced the virtues they considered most important, (2) the extent to which these virtues were kept in balance by other ones, (3) the extent to which these virtues were balanced by other scholars' virtues, and (4) the extent to which they were expected to be balanced by future scholars' work. As these findings challenge historians' conventional focus on single virtues, this chapter argues that balances, hierarchies, and other dependency relations between virtues and vices deserve more attention than they have received so far.

Keywords: epistemic virtues, epistemic vices, historical epistemology, history of philology, Orientalism

Introduction

In December 1863, Karl Marx paid a visit to his Dutch uncle, Lion Philips, in Zaltbommel. One of the striking things he discovered during his stay in this Dutch city was that Biblical criticism made quite a furor in the Netherlands, not only among academic theologians, but also among liberal Protestant pastors who welcomed Biblical criticism as a means for liberating religious practice from what they perceived as the "chains" of dogma and tradition.[1]

1 "Liberal theology" is the customary English rendering of what, from the 1850s onwards, was known in the Netherlands as "moderne theologie." See, e.g., [D. Th. Huet], *Wenken opzigtelijk moderne theologie* (The Hague: J. M. van 't Haaff, 1858), and the debate elicited by this anonymous pamphlet. Although liberal theologians in the 1850s and 1860s fought several battles at once, their

Paul, Herman. *Virtues and Vices in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities: Explorations of a Discourse*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025.
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"Here in Holland," Marx wrote in January 1864 to Friedrich Engels, "the German critical-theological tendency is so very much *à l'ordre du jour* that the parsons acknowledge it openly from the pulpits."[2] At that time, the Protestant pastor in Zaltbommel was J. G. R. Acquoy, a future professor of church history at Leiden University, who was wholeheartedly committed to the liberal cause and did not hesitate, indeed, to share his views with his congregation.[3] More remarkable, however, was the case that Marx reported to Engels just a couple of months later. The Leiden Orientalist Reinhart Dozy had dared to publish a book in which he relegated the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to the realm of fancy, portrayed the ancient Israelites as archaic idolaters, treated the first five books of the Bible as religious mythology, and on top of that equated the famous Black Stone of the Kaaba with a stone god originally worshipped by the Israelite tribe of Simeon. They write me from Holland, Marx added, "that the book has caused a great uproar among theologians there, particularly since Dozy is the most learned Dutch Orientalist—and a professor in Leiden to boot!"[4]

The heated debate sparked by Dozy's book *De Israëlieten te Mekka* (The Israelites in Mecca, 1864) among Dutch and foreign scholars alike—German, French, and English voices quickly joined the discussion—was not only a theological dispute. Although both admirers and opponents treated the book as a specimen of modern Biblical criticism with implications for the study of Islam, the debate was also an extensive reflection on the extent to which Dozy's bold suggestions and hazardous inferences were compatible with standards of serious scholarship. Dozy's book became a *cause célèbre*, well beyond academic circles,[5] not merely because of its iconoclastic agenda, but also because a senior scholar with a well-established reputation for philological accuracy was suddenly being criticized, often in remarkably

uncompromising commitment to Biblical criticism was one of their most important and most contested hallmarks. See Mirjam Buitenwerf-van der Molen, *God van vooruitgang: de popularisering van het modern-theologische gedachtegoed in Nederland (1857–1880)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2007), 34.

2 Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 20 January 1864, in *The Letters of Karl Marx*, trans. Saul K. Padover (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 177.

3 J. G. R. Acquoy, *Jezus Christus de waarheid: leerrede* (Arnhem: G. W. van der Wiel, 1863); idem, *Jezus tegenover de ouden: leerrede* (Arnhem: G. W. van der Wiel, 1867). See also H. C. Rogge, "Johannes Gerardus Rijk Acquoy," *Jaarboek van de Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen gevestigd te Amsterdam 1897* (Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, 1898), 57–96, at 69–70.

4 Marx to Engels, 16 June 1864, in *Letters of Karl Marx*, 186 (translation slightly modified). Marx's source of information was Leon Philips's letter of 12 June 1864, published in Jan Gielkens, *Karl Marx und seine niederländischen Verwandten: Eine kommentierte Quellenedition* (Trier: Karl-Marx-Haus, 1999), 196–97.

5 According to [W. G. C.] Byvanck, "R. Fruin (II)," *De Gids* 63 (1899): II, i–xxxvi, at xxxi n. 1, Dozy's book was even prescribed to grammar school students.

strong language, for violating elementary scholarly standards. Interestingly, Dozy's critics as well as his supporters discussed these standards almost invariably in terms of virtues and vices. Was Dozy a model of "frankness," as the Leiden Old Testament scholar Abraham Kuenen asserted? Or was Dozy guilty of "prejudice" and "dogmatism," as other critics maintained, because he adapted sources to his own purposes and hardly considered alternative interpretative strategies? Was his "shrewdness" to be applauded or did it come too close to "recklessness" and "rashness" to deserve endorsement? One wonders: What did these virtues and vices mean? And why were categories of virtue and vice so important in evaluating *De Israëlieten te Mekka*?

The Dozy affair has, of course, not gone unnoticed by historians of nineteenth-century Orientalism. Most notably, Ran HaCohen has examined how German-Jewish intellectuals responded to Dozy's provocative study, mapping their praise and blame for *De Israëlieten te Mekka* on a confessional map between "orthodoxy" and "liberalism."[6] Additionally, Arnoud Vrolijk and Richard van Leeuwen have argued that personal factors, such as Dozy's fondness for polemics, fueled the debate no less than clashing political and religious agendas.[7] None of these authors, however, have paid more than cursory attention to the language of virtue and vice that Dozy and his colleagues employed. From a disciplinary-historical perspective, this is perfectly understandable. The catalogs of virtues and vices on which Dozy's critics drew in evaluating *De Israëlieten te Mekka* are likely to reflect, in one way or another, the political, religious, and methodological fault lines that divided European Orientalists in the 1860s. These lines of division, in turn, have been extensively analyzed by Suzanne Marchand, Sabine Mangold, and others historians of nineteenth-century Orientalism.[8] If the "shrewdness," "frankness," and "rashness" attributed to Dozy merely offer further illustrations of this by now familiar diversity—the "house divided against itself," as Robert Irwin calls it[9]—historians of Orientalism have little reason to subject discourses of virtue and vice to special scrutiny.

6 Ran HaCohen, *Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible: German-Jewish Reception of Biblical Criticism*, trans. M. Engel (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 140–51.

7 Arnoud Vrolijk and Richard van Leeuwen, *Arabic Studies in the Netherlands: A Short History in Portraits, 1580–1950*, trans. Alastair Hamilton (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 97, 102.

8 Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 102–56; Sabine Mangold, *Eine "weltbürgerliche Wissenschaft": Die deutsche Orientalistik im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004), 78–115.

9 Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 189–236.

If I embark on such a project nonetheless, I do so with the rather different purpose of making a methodological contribution to an emerging field of intellectual history known as "historical epistemology." Although this label can refer to different lines of inquiry,[10] I follow Lorraine Daston in understanding historical epistemology to be a form of intellectual history focused on "the history of categories that structure our thought, pattern our arguments and proofs, and certify our standards for explanation."[11] Daston's study *Objectivity*, coauthored with Peter Galison, illustrates this line of research by examining in detail the changing meanings that nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars attributed to "objectivity." Daston historicizes this virtue by showing, among other things, that late-nineteenth-century accounts of "mechanical objectivity" differed significantly from objectivity in an early-nineteenth-century sense of "truth to nature."[12] Following Daston's example, other historians have examined what virtues such as "impartiality," "curiosity," and "humility" meant in different times and places.[13] This contextualizing approach is a welcome challenge to the often rather universal terms in which contemporary virtue epistemologists, among others, speak about the role of "epistemic virtues" in scholarly inquiry.[14]

Historicizing single virtues, however, is only a first step toward understanding what it meant for a scholar such as Dozy to be accused of "rashness" and "dogmatism" or to be praised for his "shrewdness" while simultaneously

10 As Uljana Feest and Thomas Sturm explain, historical epistemology has alternately been defined as the historical study of (1) epistemological concepts like objectivity, (2) epistemological objects like DNA, and (3) long-term scientific developments. Uljana Feest and Thomas Sturm, "What (Good) Is Historical Epistemology?" *Erkenntnis* 75 (2011): 285–302, at 288.

11 Lorraine Daston, "Historical Epistemology," in *Questions of Evidence: Proof, Practice, and Persuasion across the Disciplines*, ed. James Chandler, Arnold I. Davidson, and Harry Harootunian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 282–89, at 282.

12 Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

13 Kathryn Murphy and Anita Traninger, eds., *The Emergence of Impartiality* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Sari Kivistö, *The Vices of Learning: Morality and Knowledge at Early Modern Universities* (Leiden: Brill, 2014). See also Kathryn M. Olesko, *Physics as a Calling: Discipline and Practice in the Königsberg Seminar for Physics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 366–450, on nineteenth-century virtues of exactitude. Histories of scholarly values, as distinguished from virtues and vices, can be found in M. Norton Wise, ed., *The Values of Precision* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), and Michael Hagner and Manfred D. Laubichler, eds., *Der Hochsitz des Wissens: Das Allgemeine als wissenschaftlicher Wert* (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2006).

14 On which see Jason Baehr, *The Inquiring Mind: On Intellectual Virtues and Virtue Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), and John Greco and John Turri, eds., *Virtue Epistemology: Contemporary Readings* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012).

being criticized for “inaccurate” historical statements. Daston and her colleagues hardly if ever examine to what extent nineteenth-century authors saw virtues as mutually dependent, in these sense that both the meaning and the relative significance of a virtue depended on those of other, complementary or contrasting ones. While Daston’s historical epistemology convincingly shows that virtues must always be situated in time and place, it contributes only little to answering such questions as: How important was “accuracy” in relation to “fruitfulness”? To what extent did “impartiality” imply “transparency”? What was a “talent for conjecture” worth without “carefulness”? And was it regarded as legitimate for scholars to excel in some virtues (say, frankness) at the cost of others (say, precision)?[15]

These are no hypothetical questions. As I will argue in what follows, nineteenth-century scholars such as Dozy’s critics did not define their work in terms of single virtues, but conceived of scholarly performances in terms of weighing and balancing multiple virtues. The debate on Dozy’s *De Israëlieten te Mekka* even suggests four ways in which virtues were seen as depending on each other. The extent to which scholars appreciated Dozy’s “shrewdness” and “frankness” was dependent on (1) the degree to which Dozy practiced these virtues, (2) the extent to which they were kept in balance by other virtues, (3) the extent to which they were balanced by other scholars’ virtues, and (4) the extent to which it was expected that they would be balanced by future scholars’ work. If this is, in one way or another, representative of how nineteenth-century scholars more generally conceived of virtues, vices, and their mutual relations, then historians have a good reason for abandoning the single virtue focus that has dominated historical epistemology so far in favor of the broader, more open-ended question regarding what sort of constellations of virtues scholars appealed to in defining scholarly standards and in evaluating each other’s work. Historical epistemology may then enter a new phase in which balances, hierarchies, and other dependency relations between such virtues as “accuracy,” “frankness,” and “shrewdness” move to the center of attention.

15 Although Daston and Galison admit that epistemic virtues may collide or otherwise stand in tension with each other, they suggest that such tensions are more likely to occur “at the level of specific, workaday choices” (*Objectivity*, 28) than on the ideal-typical level on which their study mostly operates. At the latter level, the primary form of tension that Daston encounters takes the form of friction between “old” and “new” ideals—between the ancient virtue of impartiality and the mid-nineteenth-century virtue of objectivity, for example. See Lorraine Daston, “Objectivity and Impartiality: Epistemic Virtues in the Humanities,” in *The Making of the Humanities*, vol. 3, ed. Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 27–41.

Dozy and his book

Who, first of all, was the man who created such a stir with *De Israëlieten te Mekka*?[16] Reinhart Dozy's biography conformed almost seamlessly to the narrative template of a nineteenth-century scholarly life.[17] Born in 1820, Dozy studied at Leiden University with the Arabic scholar Hendrik Engelinus Weijers. He won a golden medal of the Royal Institute at Amsterdam for his *Dictionnaire détaillé des noms des vêtements chez les Arabes* (1843, published in 1845) and obtained his PhD degree in 1844 with a study on the Abbadid dynasty in Muslim Spain. Two years later, Dozy was made assistant curator of the collection of Oriental manuscripts in Leiden's university library (*adiutor interpretis legati Warneriani*). After publishing his *Recherches sur l'histoire politique et littéraire de l'Espagne pendant le moyen âge* in 1848, he was appointed to a special chair in "general history" at Leiden, which allowed Dozy to teach not only on his beloved medieval Spain, but also, following his fascination for all things French, on Napoleon and French poetry.[18] In 1857, he received a full professorship, which he kept until his death in 1883, shortly after the completion of a two-volume *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (1881). Together with Dozy's four-volume *Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne* (1861), this is regarded as his best and most influential work.[19]

16 On Dozy's life, see Johann Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1955), 181–85; J. Brugman, "Dozy, a Scholarly Life According to Plan," in *Leiden Oriental Connections, 1850–1940*, ed. Willem Otterspeer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 62–81; Catrien G. Santing, "De middeleeuwen met een phrygische muts: De geschiedvisie van Reinart [sic] Dozy en Willem Jonckbloet," *Theoretische Geschiedenis* 26 (1999): 220–37; Vrolijk and Van Leeuwen, *Arabic Studies*, 95–102.

17 On the discursive power of such biographical templates among mid-nineteenth-century scholars at Leiden, see Herman Paul, "'Werken zoo lang het dag is': sjablonen van een negentiende-eeuws geleerdenleven," in *De menselijke maat in de wetenschap: De geleerden(auto)biografie als bron voor de wetenschaps- en universiteitsgeschiedenis*, ed. L. J. Dorsman and P. J. Knegtmans (Hilversum: Verloren, 2013), 53–73.

18 See the lecture notes made by the future historian P. J. Blok, in Leiden University Library (hereafter: LUL), BPL 2982. Blok's opinions on these courses were not particularly favorable: "From a scholarly point of view, Dozy's entertaining historical lectures were a poor affair." Quoted in H. Brugmans, "Levensbericht van P. J. Blok," in *Jaarboek der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen gevestigd te Amsterdam 1930–1931* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1931), 1–30, at 6.

19 The influential German Orientalist Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer reviewed Dozy's work in great detail in his "Studien über Dozy's Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes" (1881–86), in Fleischer, *Kleinere Schriften*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1888), 470–781, and vol. 3 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1888), 1–102. According to M. J. de Goeje, "Levensbericht van Reinhart Dozy," in *Jaarboek van de Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen gevestigd te Amsterdam voor 1883* (Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, [1884]), 12–52, at 47, Dozy was particularly satisified with Fleischer's praise.

These monographic studies as well as the source editions Dozy published—he undertook editions of 'Abd al-Wahid al-Marrakushi's history of the Almohades (1847) and Ibn Idhārī's *Al-Bayan al-Mughrib* (1848–51), among other titles—testify to the "philological ethos" that dominated the study of history, languages, and religion in mid-nineteenth-century Leiden. It was an ethos in which source criticism stood in higher regard than historical synthesis, accuracy counted as more important than originality, and a healthy skepticism, especially vis-à-vis traditional authority, was seen as the beginning of all wisdom ("I am nothing if not critical" was a favorite Shakespeare quotation in nineteenth-century Leiden).[20] Dozy's source editions also furnished the author with a solid reputation among European Arabists. Such a reputation mattered, because trust played an important role in philological scholarship. To no small degree, scholars guaranteed the reliability of a transcript or an inference with their own good name.[21] This explains why Dozy's reputation was frequently invoked in the debate prompted by *De Israëlieten te Mekka*, as a reason why the book generated much interest,[22] as a guarantee that it could not be entirely wrong-headed,[23] as a reason why it deserved serious study,[24] or as a cause of surprise (that "a man of such first-rate manly learning" was able to produce such "wild, youthful leaps and bounds").[25] Dozy's reputation was also seen as deserving

20 Herman Paul, "The Scholarly Self: Ideals of Intellectual Virtue in Nineteenth-Century Leiden," in *The Making of the Humanities*, vol. 2, ed. Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 397–411 [chapter 1 in this volume]. The line from Shakespeare's *Othello* was approvingly quoted by the historian Robert Fruin in his *Afscheidsrede bij het nederleggen van het hoogleeraarsambt aan de Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, den 1sten juni 1894 uitgesproken* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1894), 28, and attributed to Abraham Kuenen by C. P. Tiele, *Elements of the Science of Religion*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1897), 17. The term "philological ethos" is borrowed from Rainer Kolk, "Wahrheit, Methode, Charakter: Zur wissenschaftlichen Ethik der Germanistik im 19. Jahrhundert," *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 14, no. 1 (1989): 50–73, who in turn derives it from Franz Schultz, "Die Entwicklung der Literaturwissenschaft von Herder bis Wilhelm Scherer," in *Philosophie der Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Emil Ermatinger (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1930), 1–42, at 37.

21 Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, "Inventing the Archive: Testimony and Virtue in Modern Historiography," *History of the Human Sciences* 26, no. 4 (2013): 8–26, at 9–11; Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 65–125.

22 J. C. Matthes, "Eene nieuwe ontdekking," *De Tijdspiegel* (1864): II, 349–69, at 349.

23 [Aloys Sprenger], review in *Das Ausland* 37 (1864): 773–76, at 773, and, in almost identical wording, the anonymous review in *The Methodist Quarterly Review* 48 (1865): 120–21, at 121.

24 [Gustav Weil], review in *Heidelberger Jahrbücher der Literatur* 57 (1864): 595–602, at 596.

25 [Petrus Hofstede de] G[root], "De oorsprong van de Mohamedaansche godsdienst," *Waarheid in Liefde* (1865): 373–76, at 373. See also M. Jastrow's review in the *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 13 (1864): 313–17, at 314.

respectful treatment. Thus, when the German rabbi Ludwig Philippson expressed his doubts about the soundness of Dozy's mind after reading *De Israëlieten te Mekka*,[26] the German-Jewish scholar Raphael Kirchheim rebuked him, under reference to the author's reputation, not to write "in such a rejecting, dismissive tone" about the famous Dutch Orientalist, "as if he has was dealing with one of the savants of the *Mainzer Kladderadatsch*."[27]

Philological virtuosity, however, was only one aspect of Dozy's reputation. Like many of his generation, Dozy was "caught between romanticism and historicism, between its grand political and aesthetic dreams and its desire to be counted *wissenschaftlich*."[28] Despite his commitment to the minuteness and exactness favored by the philological ethos, Dozy preferred to model himself after such Romantic French historians as Prosper de Barante and Augustin Thierry. He also valued a well-polished writing style over masses of learned footnotes and did not shrink, to the astonishment of some of his Leiden colleagues, from using poetry as an historical source.[29] Additionally, Dozy had a sharp tongue, judging by his letters, some of which were punctuated with Arabic curses,[30] and by his sometimes ruthlessly critical reviews, through which he alienated several colleagues near and abroad.[31] In his *Recherches*, most notably, Dozy lashed out so harshly at the Spanish Orientalist José Antonio Conde that he acquired the dubious reputation of being "a merciless controversialist."[32]

The proverbial whirlwind that Dozy had to reap after this wind came with *De Israëlieten te Mekka*. This book emerged out of *Het islamisme* (Islamism, 1863), a popular introduction to the history of Islam that Dozy contributed to a series on "The Most Important Religions" published by A. C. Kruseman.[33] During his preparations for this work of synthesis, Dozy

26 [Ludwig Philippson], review in *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* 28 (1864): 589–90, at 589.

27 Raphael Kirchheim, review in *Ben Chananja* 7 (1864): 974–77 and 1000–1001, at 975. The *Kladderadatsch* (1848–1944) was a German satirical periodical.

28 Marchand, *German Orientalism*, 138.

29 Santing, "Middeleeuwen," 221, 225; Brugman, "Dozy," 72.

30 Manuela Marín, "Scholarship and Criticism: The Letters of Reinhart Dozy to Pascual de Gayangos (1841–1852)," in *Pascual de Gayangos: A Nineteenth-Century Spanish Arabist*, ed. Cristina Alvarez Millán and Claudia Heide (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 68–85, at 85 n. 52.

31 See, e.g., ibid., 79–80; LUL, BPL 2487, P. J. Veth to Dozy, 10 December 1843 and 3 January 1846.

32 Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing*, 175. See also Brugman, "Dozy," 66; Daniël van der Zande, "Martinus Th. Houtsma, 1851–1943: Een bijdrage aan de geschiedenis van de oriëntalistiek in Nederland en Europa" (PhD thesis, Utrecht University, 1999), 129; Vrolijk and Van Leeuwen, *Arabic Studies*, 95–97.

33 On this series: Arie L. Molendijk, *The Emergence of the Science of Religion in the Netherlands* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 62–63.

arrived at what he called revolutionary insights into the origins of Islam. As he wrote Kruseman, his publisher, in November 1862: "The result at which I have now arrived is, I think, rather surprising, also for Biblical theology; it is also important, because it puts the origin of Islam in a new light."[34] Although in *Het islamisme*, Dozy did not yet present his changed views, he promised his readers a more detailed exposition of what he had discovered:

> In this way, I have obtained a result that has utterly surprised me, but that cannot be communicated in just a few pages, given that it is closely related to many other, arguably even more important results; it is entirely at odds with reigning views; it sounds very strange, and given that in the realm of scholarship no one can demand to be taken on his word, it requires a lengthy, scholarly demonstration of proof.[35]

Dozy's closest pupil, Michaël Jan de Goeje, who followed the project from nearby, had the exciting feeling of accompanying a discoverer: "Almost every day brought something new. Everywhere new perspectives revealed themselves, one riddle after another came to a solution."[36] Also, Dozy's correspondence shows that colleagues impatiently begged for quick dispatch of the results.[37] When these were eventually published, De Goeje declared in superlatives:

> In this book, we receive a series of revelations regarding the darkest and most enigmatic issues; it provides a key to penetralia on which one had never hoped to behold; it has removed obstacles that one perceived to be insurmountable as if by magic.[38]

Dozy's most revolutionary hypothesis was that the Kaaba stone in Mecca had originally been an ancient Israelite stone god that the Israelite tribe

34 LUL, LTK 1505, Dozy to A. C. Kruseman, 26 November 1862.

35 R. Dozy, *Het islamisme* (Haarlem: A. C. Kruseman, 1863), 2.

36 De Goeje, "Levensbericht van Reinhart Dozy," 37–38.

37 LUL, BPL 2487, Abraham Geiger to Dozy, 16 June 1864 and undated (1864). Writing to Michaël Jan de Goeje, Theodor Nöldeke adopted a more reserved stance: "*Between the two of us*, I have to admit that I do not expect much of the new discoveries that have been promised." LUL, BPL 2389, 1 May 1864 (I owe this reference to Christiaan Engberts).

38 M. J. de Goeje, "Een stap vooruit," *De Gids* 28 (1864): II, 297–312, at 298. Dozy himself spoke in no less exalted prose about "an entire series of discoveries, of a kind I had never made before and had never dared to hope for; discoveries that I trust will receive an honorable place among the great scholarly results achieved in this century, which shall break new grounds in philology, the history of humankind, and the history of religion. I have literally received inspirations, I myself don't know how." LUL, LTK 1505, Dozy to Kruseman, 26 November 1862.

of Simeon had exported to Arabia in the days of King Saul. On etymological grounds, Dozy supposed that the famous "Meccan festival" had been established by these Simeonites after the example of the Baal feasts in ancient Israel, long before the introduction of Jewish monotheism in the time of Ezra. If ancient tradition was right to identify the Baal in Mecca with a stone in a hole, then Dozy believed this to correspond almost neatly to Israel's ancient history. For, in Dozy's view, Abraham and Sarah had not been historical figures, but Hebrew designations for "stone" and "hole," respectively, referring to a stone god and the pit in which this deity resided. The Leiden professor had no difficulty explaining why Genesis personified this stone and this pit into a patriarch and matriarch: this had been the work of editors in the days of Ezra, who rejected such a primitive stone worship from the monotheistic perspective to which Israel had converted after the Babylonian exile. Accordingly, for Dozy, the entire ancient history of Israel, as described in the Pentateuch, had been an invention of tradition by "Ezra and his helpers."[39]

An international debate

Although some of Dozy's speculative conjectures raised many an eyebrow, it was actually not very surprising to find a Leiden professor in the 1860s applying techniques of modern Biblical criticism to questions related to the origins of Islam. First of all, by 1864, the Leiden theological faculty had a reputation for being at the forefront of Old Testament scholarship. It was here that students from all over the world came to study with Abraham Kuenen, whose work contributed significantly to the "documentary hypothesis" often associated with the names of Karl Heinrich Graf (on whom more below) and Julius Wellhausen (a great admirer of Kuenen).[40] For much the same reason, orthodox Calvinists in the Netherlands as well as abroad distrusted all that came from Leiden, lamenting the faculty's betrayal of Reformed orthodoxy.[41] As a former South African student reported back to Kuenen in 1863: "For me,

39 R. Dozy, *De Israëlieten te Mekka van Davids tijd tot in de vijfde eeuw onzer tijdrekening* (Haarlem: A. C. Kruseman, 1864), 8.

40 P. B. Dirksen and A. van der Kooij, eds., *Abraham Kuenen (1828–1891): His Major Contributions to the Study of the Old Testament: A Collection of Old Testament Studies Published on the Occasion of the Centenary of Abraham Kuenen's Death (10 December 1991)* (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

41 E.g., Is. da Costa, *Wat er door de Theologische Faculteit te Leyden al zoo geleerd en geleverd wordt: Eene stem der smart en des beklags* (Amsterdam: H. de Hoogh, 1857); N. N., "Leydsche beginselen," *De Tijdspiegel* (1862): II, 393–408.

my stay in Leiden has become a cause of much sorrow. […] Even before my return to the Cape, I had acquired the reputation of being an heretic teacher [*dwaalleeraar*]."[42] Secondly, by the early 1860s, the origins of Islam had been capturing the fascination of Orientalists for some decades already, as evidenced by Abraham Geiger's and Gustav Weil's much-discussed studies in this area.[43] Of crucial importance, however, was the 1860 publication of Theodor Nöldeke's *Geschichte des Qorâns*. Building on Geiger and Weil, among others, Nöldeke radicalized their "historical-critical" treatment of the Islamic holy book by separating Medina-era and Mecca-era texts as radically as Old Testament scholars distinguished between "J" (Jahwist) and "P" (Priestly Code) elements in the Pentateuch.[44] Dozy repeatedly referred to this book, most notably in *Het islamisme* from 1863.[45] It is this combination of factors that helps explain why a book like *De Israëlieten te Mekka* could emerge from Leiden's theological faculty: its theme was timely and its method consistent with Biblical studies as practiced by Kuenen.

Given the contested character of both, it is also not surprising that, as Marx correctly noticed, *De Israëlieten te Mekka* drew response from far and wide, often in the form of journal articles that sometimes ran to dozens of pages.[46] Authors with a penchant for dramatic generalization used Dozy's book as an occasion for lament over the sorry state of modern science, Leiden Oriental scholarship, or liberal theology in the Netherlands, while others, more focused on the sum and substance of Dozy's arguments, wrote lengthy reviews to subject one or more of Dozy's ideas to critical scrutiny. Judging by translations that appeared both in the Netherlands and abroad, some of these pieces reached a readership beyond the academy. The highly critical response by Heinrich Ewald, "the pope of Göttingen,"[47] for example,

42 LUL, BPL 3028, Johannes Jacobus Kotzé to Abraham Kuenen, 20 November 1863.

43 On Geiger's and Weil's *Koranforschung*, see Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 50–75, and Ruchama Jerusha Johnston-Bloom, "Oriental Studies and Jewish Questions: German-Jewish Encounters with Mohammed, the Qur'an, and Islamic Modernities" (PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 2013), 85–125.

44 Emmanuelle Stefanidis, "The Qur'an Made Linear: A Study of the *Geschichte des Qorâns*' Chronological Reordering," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 10, no. 2 (2008): 1–22; Nicolai Sinai, "Orientalism, Authorship, and the Onset of Revelation: Abraham Geiger and Theodor Nöldeke on Muḥammad and the Qur'ān," in *"Im vollen Licht der Geschichte": Die Wissenschaft des Judentums und die Anfänge der kritischen Koranforschung*, ed. Dirk Hartwig et al. (Würzburg: Ergon, 2008), 144–54.

45 Dozy, *Islamisme*, 18, 31 n. 2, 75.

46 Judging by his letters to Kruseman (LUL, LTK 1505, 24 August 1864; 3, 6, and 19 September 1864; 17 October 1864; 13 November 1864) and De Goeje (LUL, BPL 2389, 11 October 1864), Dozy monitored with great attention how colleagues from near and abroad responded to this book.

47 M. J. de Goeje, "Bibliographisch album," *De Gids* 29 (1865): I, 531–48, at 531.

almost immediately appeared in Dutch translation, while John William Colenso, the bishop of Natal who in the mid-1860s was engaged in bitter controversy over his own contributions to Biblical scholarship, kept an English-language audience informed with a translation of Henricus Oort's brochure *De dienst der Baälim in Israël* (The worship of Baalim in Israel, 1864).[48] The most widely discussed response, in the Netherlands as well as abroad, was a long review by Karl Heinrich Graf, the German Old Testament scholar, who issued the devastating judgment that Dozy's research, "carried out with so much acuteness and learning," had a scholarly worth of "nothing, absolutely nothing."[49] Both the German original and the Dutch translation of this review were frequently quoted.[50]

At first sight, the debate over *De Israëlieten te Mekka* seemed to develop more or less along confessional lines. Thus, words of appreciation and admiration came primarily from the liberal side, that is to say, from authors who expected Biblical scholars to treat the Old and New Testaments in the same way that an ancient philologist would treat the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*: with historical questions, philological methods, and a sound amount of

48 H. Oort, *The Worship of Baalim in Israel: Based upon the Work of R. Dozy, "The Israelites at Mecca,"* trans. John William Colenso (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1865). On Colenso's interest in Dozy, see LUL, BPL 3028, Colenso to Abraham Kuenen, 3 February 1865; George W. Cox, *The Life of John William Colenso, D. D., Bishop of Natal*, vol. 1 (London: W. Ridgway, 1888), 223–25. In order to reach an international audience, the publisher also issued a German translation, which became a commercial disaster. In twelve years' time, only 251 out of 1,500 copies were sold (J. W. Enschedé, *A. C. Kruseman*, vol. 2 [Amsterdam: P. N. van Kampen & Zoon, 1902], 99–100). Nonetheless, the German edition contributed to the international reputation of Dozy's work, witness the fact that not only German, but also English-language reviews such as those in *The Westminster Review* 26 (1864): 484, and *The Saturday Review* 18 (1864): 372, based themselves on *Die Israeliten zu Mekka*.

49 K. H. Graf, review in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 19 (1865): 330–51, at 350. See also K. H. Graf to Eduard Reuss, 6 October 1864 and 6 May 1866, in *Eduard Reuss' Briefwechsel mit seinem Schüler und Freunde Karl Heinrich Graf*, ed. K. Budde and H. J. Holtzman (Giessen: J. Ricker'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1904), 538, 564.

50 E.g., A. Kuenen, "Simeonieten en Ismaëlieten: Eene bijdrage tot de critiek van Dozy's Israëlieten te Mekka," *Godgeleerde Bijdragen* 40 (1866): 449–515, at 449; X+Y [pseudonym of Meijer Roest Mzn.], "Boekbeschouwing," *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad* (1 September 1865); H. Pierson, *Baetyliëndienst* (Arnhem: D. A. Thieme, 1866), 45–47; Philip Elte, *Moderne theologie in Nederland* (Amsterdam: J. B. de Mesquita, 1871), 8–9. According to HaCohen, *Reclaiming the Jewish Bible*, 145 n. 34, the seven-part series of articles published under the pseudonym "X+Y" in the *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad* was authored by Joseph Hirsch Dünner, the future chief rabbi of the Dutch Israelite Main Synagogue. M. Roest Mzn., "Brieven van een provinciaal over de Amsterdamsche opperrabbinaats-questie," *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad* (10 April 1874), reveals, however, that the first three articles were written by Meijer Roest, assistant librarian of the Royal Academy of Sciences and editor of the *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad*. The remaining four articles came from Dünner's pen.

skepticism vis-à-vis everything resembling myth or legend. It was no accident that many of these sympathizers had been trained or were employed at Leiden's theological faculty. Even if these authors had not necessarily been accustomed to scholarly iconoclasm during their Leiden student years, they had all appropriated, in smaller or larger degrees, an ethos in which candid questions and bold hypotheses did not count as bad things per se. Apart from that, one suspects that the appreciation that these Leiden scholars and alumni expressed for Dozy and his work reflected their personal acquaintance with the Orientalist.[51]

Criticism, by contrast, came primarily from Calvinists in the Netherlands Reformed Church as well as from orthodox Jews in both the Dutch and German language realms. The Reformed pastor H. A. Leenmans, for example, translated Graf's critical review into Dutch in order to contribute, in his own words, to a battle against "a falsely named scholarship [*eene valschelijk genaamde wetenschap*]" that did not shrink from laying violent hands on God's holy Word.[52] The revivalist magazine *De Heraut* also recommended this review, because Graf's judgment nicely illustrated "how men of scholarship [*wetenschap*] in Germany treat the sort of products that are adored in this country with frantic applause"[53] Lambertus Tinholt, a Reformed pastor in Haarlemmermeer, even tried to produce a *reductio ad absurdum* of Dozy's critical method with a humorous parody that exposed Charles V as a fictional character and suggested a new dating for the entire Greek and Roman literary canon, which Erasmus was said to have fabricated on the base of Aztec sources—complete with turns of phrases that seemed to have walked right out of Dozy's book ("These assertions are strange, but I will demonstrate that they are not unfounded").[54] As HaCohen has pointed out, the praise

51 See esp. J. P. N. Land, "Een nieuwe lichtstraal op het Oude Verbond," *De Nederlandsche Spectator* (1864): 227–29; Matthes, "Nieuwe ontdekking"; H. Oort, *De dienst der Baälim in Israël: Naar aanleiding van het geschrift van dr. R. Dozy "De Israëlieten te Mekka"* (Leiden: P. Engels, 1864). Land, Matthes, and Oort had defended their doctoral dissertations at Leiden in 1854, 1859, and 1860, respectively. Another enthusiastic (anonymous) review appeared in the liberal periodical, *De Onderzoeker* 6 (1865): 129.

52 H. A. Leenmans, "Aan den lezer," in *De Israëlieten te Mekka van dr. R. Dozy, beoordeeld door dr. K. H. Graf*, trans. H. A. Leenmans (Utrecht: Keming en Zoon, 1866), iii–iv, at iv.

53 *De Heraut* (6 October 1865), as cited in Enschedé, *Kruseman*, vol. 2, 97–98.

54 L. Tinholt, "Eene Jakoetische voorlezing uit de 38ste eeuw onzer jaartelling," *Stemmen voor Waarheid en Vrede* 1 (1864): 411–44, at 416. *The Athenaeum*, too, chose for ridicule by presenting Dozy's book as a clever joke ("a rare hoax" and "brilliant travesty") and the serious responses it elicited as giving Dozy lots of fun: *The Athenaeum* (1865): II, 797–99, at 797. (I have been unable to identify the author of this piece.) Colenso objected to this treatment in J. W. Natal, "Israelites in Mecca," *The Athenaeum* (1866): I, 497–98. Cf. Colenso to Charles Lyell, 1 March 1866, in George W. Cox, *The Life of John William Colenso, D. D., Bishop of Natal*, vol. 2 (London: W. Ridgway, 1888), 22.

and blame of German-Jewish reviewers also showed a clear correlation to their position in the spectrum between orthodoxy and *Reformjudentum*.[55]

This confessional topography, however, offers only a partial explanation of the variety of responses that Dozy's book elicited. Despite their common liberal agenda, theologians such as Kuenen, Oort, J. P. N. Land, and J. C. Matthes judged *De Israëlieten te Mekka* very differently. This divergence was not only caused by philological differences of insight (How plausible was it to read the Hebrew *baalath-beer* as *baal-habeer*?). At least as decisive were different assessments of the virtues that scholars were supposed to display in their work. How important, for instance, was the boldness that Dozy had exhibited by proposing, in Kuenen's words, "a complete revolution in the field of Old Testament studies"?[56] And how did this frankness relate to the accuracy and reliability required by the philological ethos?

Dozy's virtues

Although Dozy's critics had many grounds for disagreeing with each other, they shared at least one conviction: Dozy's argument was "very ingenious."[57] Friends and foes alike praised Dozy's "shrewdness" (*scherpzinnigheid* in Dutch or *Scharfsinn* in German)—the first of three virtues that were frequently referred to in the debate.[58] No matter how they evaluated Dozy's revisionist dating of the Pentateuch or his etymology of "Abraham" and "Sarah," almost all participants in the debate agreed that the author had a "sharp eye" and that he excelled in "sagacity," "sound criticism," and "penetration."[59] Philologically oriented historians often presented this virtue of shrewdness as a necessary condition for critical source examination: it was considered indispensable for disentangling layers of meaning in historical texts and for unraveling textual dependencies.[60] Although shrewdness could, of course, overstep its bounds—some scholars warned against the

55 HaCohen, *Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible*, 145.

56 A. Kuenen, "De Baälsdienst onder Israël," *Godgeleerde Bijdragen* 38 (1864): 449–91, at 449.

57 John William Colenso, *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined*, vol. 5 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1865), 265. See also *The Saturday Review* 16 (1864): 372.

58 De Goeje, "Stap vooruit," 301; Kuenen, "Baälsdienst onder Israël," 480; Matthes, "Nieuwe ontdekking," 364. Along similar lines: *Godgeleerde Bijdragen* 38 (1864): 350–51, at 350, and *Historische Zeitschrift* 13 (1865): 270–72, at 272.

59 Matthes, "Nieuwe ontdekking," 351; N. de Khanikoff, review in *Journal Asiatique* 4 (1864): 433–49, at 433.

60 Ernst Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode: Mit Nachweis der wichtigsten Quellen und Hülfsmittel zum Studium der Geschichte* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1889), 296–97.

danger of excessive, "hair-splitting shrewdness,"[61] just as others worried that "criticism" could degenerate into "hyper-criticism"[62]—it was regarded as a key virtue, provided the right dose was maintained.

This applies to a lesser extent to a second quality that was ascribed to Dozy: the "talent for conjecture" (*gave van combinatie*) that allowed scholars to discern patterns in their source material and to make a story out of them.[63] Both Kuenen and Graf praised Dozy's "gift for conjecture" (*Combinationsgabe*) and "ability to conjure" (*Combinationsfertigkeit*)[64]—an ability that "organizes the data into fruit-bearing results," as the German historian Ernst Bernheim would explain in his *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode* (1889).[65] Unlike shrewdness, which was primarily regarded as important for source criticism, this talent for conjecture was regarded as needed especially for what Bernheim called "interpretation" (*Auffassung*): the formulation of hypotheses and the making of causal inferences. Not everyone, however, was equally charmed by this aspect of historical scholarship. Influenced by the philological ethos that made its impact felt also on the German *Altertumswissenschaften*,[66] some held that "interpretation" was not possible before "criticism" had done its work. Hypotheses, moreover, required a "creative intuition" that was difficult to codify by methodological means and therefore sat relatively uncomfortably with a view of scholarship that put a premium on methodological control.[67] Praise for Dozy's "talent for conjecture" therefore amounted to taking a stance in debates over the nature and priorities of *geisteswissenschaftliche* research.

The joy with which Hendrik Pierson, a Reformed pastor in Heinenoord, welcomed *De Israëlieten te Mekka* provides a telling example of this. In

61 Ernst Bernheim, *Geschichtsforschung und Geschichtsphilosophie* (Göttingen: Robert Peppmüller, 1880), 71.

62 See, e.g., C. Ullmann, review of *Das Sendschreiben der Korinther an den Apostel Paulus* by Wilh. Fr. Rinck, *Heidelberger Jahrbücher der Literatur* 16 (1823): 529–57, at 535; Christian Kapp, *Über den Ursprung der Menschen und Völker, nach der mosaischen Genesis* (Nuremberg: Johann Leonhard Schrag, 1829), 193; Karl August Credner, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, vol. 1 (Hall: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1836), 338, or, in the Netherlands, [R. C. Bakhuizen van den Brink], "Kritiek, hyperkritiek, onkritiek: Nalezingen op Labruyères Des ouvrages de l'esprit," *De Gids* 3 (1839): 476–83, 513–22.

63 [Hofstede de] G[root], "Oorsprong van de Mohamedaansche godsdienst," 373.

64 Kuenen, "Baälsdienst onder Israël," 480; Graf, review, 331.

65 Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, 430.

66 See Ulrich Muhlack, "Historie und Philologie," in Muhlack, *Staatensystem und Geschichtsschreibung: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zu Humanismus und Historismus, Absolutismus und Aufklärung*, ed. Notker Hammerstein and Gerrit Walther (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2006), 142–72.

67 Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, 430.

Pierson's assessment, the priority that Biblical scholars had long been assigning to "criticism" had led to an overabundance of negative results:

> [S]he made everything empty, barren, many a flower she had torn apart, many an illusion she had destroyed and even though we had to endorse that she eradicated foreign plants, which had been proven not to be at home in the garden, we did not receive anything in return and witnessed how everything was gradually turned into a wasteland.[68]

Consequently, "our soul thirsts for positive results," as Pierson wrote with an allusion to Psalm 42. Even if Dozy's hypotheses turned out not to be correct, it was a relief so see a senior scholar mustering the courage to draw firm lines through the ancient history of Israel.[69]

Accordingly, a third virtue attributed to Dozy was "frankness" (*vrijmoedigheid*) or "boldness" (*koenheid*). Dozy's "bold hypothesis," wrote Kuenen in 1870, six years after publication of *De Israëlieten te Mekka*, had provided a "salutary shock" to many in the fields of Biblical and Oriental studies and stimulated a greater amount of "frankness."[70] In Kuenen's vocabulary, "frankness" could mean two things. On the one hand, it was the courage required for launching a hypothesis in the absence of indisputable proofs or logically compelling inferences.[71] On the other, it was the bravery to defy the power of religious traditions[72]—a virtue that Kuenen appreciated not only in Dozy, but also in Colenso, who in spite of much opposition published one critical study of the Pentateuch after another.[73] Likewise, the Amsterdam philosopher and Orientalist Jan Pieter Nicolaas Land characterized Dozy as a "stout-hearted" (*stoute*) scholar, who like a brave general "ventures a campaign deeply into a country of which he possesses only very general maps."[74]

Land realized that not every reader would classify this daredevilry as a virtue conducive to historical understanding. He therefore added that Dozy's

68 H. Pierson, *De heilige steenen in Israël: Naar aanleiding van het boek van prof. R. Dozy: "De Israëlieten te Mekka"* (Rotterdam: P. C. Hoog, 1864), 6.

69 Ibid., 7.

70 A. Kuenen, "Critische bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van den Israëlietischen godsdienst," *Theologisch Tijdschrift* 4 (1870): 391–426, at 406.

71 A. Kuenen, *De godsdienst van Israël tot den ondergang van den Joodschen staat*, vol. 2 (Haarlem: A. C. Kruseman, 1870), 27, 173, 214, 272, 311, 428, 537.

72 Ibid., 521.

73 A. Kuenen, *John William Colenso* (Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink, 1884), 11–12.

74 Land, "Nieuwe lichtstraal," 229.

deficiencies were nothing but "*les défauts de ses qualités*": every achievement, after all, comes with a price.[75] This price, however, divided Dozy's critics, too. Each of the three virtues mentioned so far was contested, although on different grounds. In the Jewish *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad* (New Israelite weekly), the future Amsterdam chief rabbi Joseph Hirsch Dünner, for example, agreed that Dozy's criticism was ingenious. He added, however, that Dozy had not been critical enough, given that he had disregarded the "first requirements of true criticism," namely a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew language.[76] Apparently, criticism could be practiced in different degrees, so that the question was not whether Dozy was critical, but to what extent he was so. Secondly, more did not always count as better. Kuenen, for instance, warned that "frankness" could easily turn to "recklessness."[77] This shows that the Old Testament scholar was indebted to an Aristotelian understanding of virtue as a *juste milieu* between two vices—cowardice and recklessness in the case of frankness. In this line of thought, it was not sufficient to observe that Dozy displayed shrewdness, a talent for conjecture, and frankness or boldness. Decisive was rather the question whether he practiced these virtues to an extent that prevented them from degenerating into vices.

Dozy's vices

This brings us to the storm of criticism that *De Israëlieten te Mekka* elicited. Whereas scholarly praise was often formulated in terms of virtues, critics usually focused on vices. And whereas supporters frequently spoke in terms of "light" and "darkness"—about the dark origins of Islam, for instance, which Dozy's book supposedly helped clarify[78]—opponents preferably employed architectural metaphors. They called *De Israëlieten te Mekka* an

75 Ibid.

76 X+Y [pseudonym of Joseph Hirsch Dünner], "Boekbeschouwing," *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad* (29 December 1865). Similar complaints about modern historians who turned out not to be as "critical," "impartial," or "truth-loving" as they claimed to be were frequently issued among orthodox Protestants in fear of modern Biblical criticism and among Roman Catholics whose views of the pope, the church, or the saints were put to scrutiny by modern, critical historians. See, for instance, the Roman Catholic responses to the liberal Dutch historian Robert Fruin in [Herman] Schaepman, "Een nieuw verwijt uit een oude doos," *De Wachter* 2 (1872): II, 26–47, at 35; W. F. N. van Rootselaar, "De geschiedschrijver prof. dr. R. Fruin," *De Katholiek* 109 (1896): 26–62, at 35 and 48–50; ibid., "De geschiedschrijvers: Ranke en Fruin," *De Katholiek* 110 (1896): 180–96, at 196.

77 Kuenen, "Critische bijdragen," 406.

78 De Goeje, "Stap vooruit," 298; Matthes, "Nieuwe ontdekking," 349–51; Oort, *Dienst der Baälim*, 2, 55; LUL, BPL 2487, William McGuckin de Slane to Reinhart Dozy, 3 February 1865.

assemblage of "groundless" or "unfounded" hypotheses, an edifice without proper foundations, or a vault resting on "such mutually supporting rib stones [...] that the most profitable lesson one can draw from the book is how dangerous such edifices are."[79] In Graf's wording:

> Everyone else would regard the results that are presented here with great confidence as indisputably proven historical facts as a web of light-hearted hypotheses, daring and adventurous inferences and conjectures, and be surprised at the rashness with which the most far-reaching conclusions are often drawn from unproven assumptions. [...] Everything floats in the air, nothing rests on a firm, scholarly smoothed ground, everywhere the lack of solid critical rules is manifested in a most strident manner.[80]

As this diatribe illustrates, "rashness" (*lichtvaardigheid*) or "levity" (*lichtzinnigheid*) was the first vice that was held responsible for the fragility of Dozy's edifice. According to Ewald, Dozy's lack of serious study was evidenced by the "vast number of continuously new and continuously more far-reaching errors" on which the author treated his readers.[81] Especially Dozy's etymological inferences elicited fierce criticism. As Meijer Roest declared in the *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad*: "These hypotheses rest on textual conjectures that teach us an Hebrew which would make an Isaiah's hair stand on end."[82] To be sure, the point was not that Dozy made factual errors, although some Jewish critics were eager to point out that Dozy's command of the Hebrew language did not surpass that of a "Jewish school boy."[83] The point was rather that the way for such errors was paved by what Ludwig Philippson called the "levity" of Dozy's working manners.[84]

In this context, Dozy was also found guilty of other vices. Critics seeking to express a greater sense of indignation spoke about intellectual "audacity."

79 Ewald, review, 1270; C. H. van Herwerden CHz., "Over de steenen- en boomendienst van Israël," *Waarheid in Liefde* (1865): I, 377–98, at 378 and 379; Moritz Steinschneider, review in *Hebraeische Bibliographie* 7 (1864): 103–6, at 105. See also Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer to Michaël Jan de Goeje (LUL, BPL 2389, 5 December 1865): "Dear Mister Doctor, I honestly admit to you that I consider these inferences—but entirely *between the two of us*!—learned Calembourgs [word plays], on which an historical edifice cannot be erected."

80 Graf, review, 350.

81 Ewald, review, 1270.

82 X+Y [pseudonym of Meijer Roest Mzn.], "Boekbeschouwing," *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad* (18 August 1865).

83 Elte, *Moderne theologie*, 30.

84 [Ludwig Philippson], "Literarischer Wochenbericht," *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* 32 (1868): 834.

According to the Dutch-Jewish critic Philip Elte, for example, it was an "insolence" (*aanmatiging*) and "impudence" (*brutaliteit*) to present far-reaching hypotheses without a proper awareness of complications and alternatives.[85] Others qualified Dozy's findings as "premature" (*voorbarig*), given that they ran ahead of more thorough and detailed study.[86] This accusation stemmed from the belief (briefly referred to above) that all relevant "facts" had to be established before a scholar could hazard an "interpretation." As the Leiden historian Robert Fruin recommended in 1865: "Do not begin with the building before the material has been gathered and prepared."[87]

Finally, Dozy was accused of "prejudice" and "dogmatism," because of his tendency to explain difficult passages so as to make them fit his purposes. Whoever translates *gilgal* with "round heap of stones," wrote the Reformed pastor C. H. van Herwerden, does not do so on etymological grounds, but out of "love for his theory."[88] Likewise, J. P. N. Land declared: "Captivated by the idea that Jahwist scribes had reworked the older history in their own manner, [Dozy] is often satisfied with particularly weak arguments as long as these contribute to portraying ancient Israel as thoroughly pagan."[89] Accordingly, Henricus Oort, the future Leiden professor of theology, concluded that Dozy had succumbed to a classic temptation:

> If one thinks one has found a track that yields surprising results, one is easily temped to follow that track, to put in the forefront whatever seems to prove its correctness, and to close the eye to everything that speaks against it. One quickly finds what one hopes to find; this leads many an acute man of learning astray.[90]

As a matter of fact, not only Dozy, but also his crowd of enthusiastic followers was accused of such dogmatism. As the *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad* declared in a biting comment on the debate:

> Professor *Dozy* writes "The Israelites in Mecca" and all liberal theologians, headed by Prof. *De Goeje*, look on amazed and struck dumb by those heavenly

85 Elte, *Moderne theologie*, 30.

86 Kuenen, "Baälsdienst onder Israël," 481.

87 R. Fruin, "De drie tijdvakken der Nederlandsche geschiedenis," *De Gids* 29 (1865): II, 245–71, at 245.

88 Van Herwerden, "Steenen- en boomendienst," 395.

89 Land, "Nieuwe lichtstraal," 229.

90 Oort, *Dienst der Baälim*, 5, approvingly quoted in Van Herwerden, "Steenen- en boomendienst," 397–98.

> revelations from *Sinai*, no at *Leiden*. They are inexhaustible in their cheers, they dance and shout with joy like the Egyptians when Apis honors them with a visit. *Kuenen* writes "The Religion of the Israelites" [in the same series, "The Most Important Religions," in which Dozy's *Het islamisme* had appeared] and the entire choir of liberal theologians sings Hallelujah, yea is seized with convulsion caused by joy. So it is hardly possible for our pastors not to vow on the oracles of the great masters who, for the benefit of their loyal, credulous disciples, are busily brewing brand new revelations.[91]

Dozy, for his part, complained about the vices of his critics. In correspondence with his publisher, he accused the Jewish scholar Moritz Steinschneider of "dishonesty" (*oneerlijkheid*) in summarizing his arguments[92] and Meijer Roest of systematically "distorting" his position and wrenching words from their context—abuses that he attributed to "helpless anger" (*magtelooze woede*) and "theological hatred."[93] In Dozy's view, Ewald also collected vices by the dozen by taking "the celebrity of any opinion not emanating from himself" as a "sufficient reason for condemning and contradicting it."[94] So, at first sight, it seems as if Dozy and his critics all proceeded from the assumption that scholarship would flourish as long as virtues would be practiced and vices avoided.

Constellations of virtues

Crucial, however, was that unanimity about the relative importance of these virtues and vices did not exist. We already noticed that "frankness" was

91 "Beoordeling der recensie van het *Handboek voor de geschiedenis der Joden* door Sluijs en Hoofiën in het Leeskabinet," *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad* (28 July 1871). See also Elte, *Moderne theologie*, 9.

92 LUL, LTK 1505, Dozy to Kruseman, 13 November 1864. On Steinschneider's warm connection with Leiden, see Jan Just Witkam, "Moritz Steinschneider and the Leiden Manuscripts," in *Studies on Steinschneider: Moritz Steinschneider and the Emergence of the Science of Judaism in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, ed. Reimund Leicht and Gad Freudenthal (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 263–75.

93 LUL, LTK 1505, Dozy to Kruseman, 19 September 1864.

94 Ibid., Dozy to Kruseman, 6 September 1864, quoting R. W. MacKay, *The Tübingen School and Its Antecedents: A Review of the History and Present Condition of Modern Theology* (Covent Garden and Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1863), 345. Dozy seems to have borrowed these quotations from David Friedrich Strauss, given that Mackay's remarks about Ewald quoted in Dozy's letter to Kruseman are identical to those quoted in Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1864), 158 n. 2.

considered a virtue only as long as it was practiced to the correct extent. This explains why Graf could condemn excessive "stout-heartedness" as "adventurousness"[95] and why Kuenen did not complain about Dozy's method as such, but rather about its exaggeration: "So between Dozy and myself, only a difference as between *more* and *less* exists."[96] What mattered, therefore, was the correct dose of frankness. But what counted as such a proper dose? Whereas some believed that the Leiden Orientalist was guilty of "pretentious" and "insolent" conduct, others appreciated his "bold" and "daring" ideas.

This divergence, in turn, was related to the degree in which the critics saw Dozy's virtues as being kept in balance by other virtues. If shrewdness is not checked by accuracy, wrote Graf, an etymologist can "make anything out of everything." And if the "sense of detection" that comes with well-developed shrewdness is not to deteriorate into fantasy, it has to be restrained by methodical "rules and laws."[97] In a similar vein, Philippson sighed:

> For a long time, experience has taught that learning and shrewdness are not sufficient for practicing true criticism, but that it also takes a dose of common sense. One knows what kind of absurdities have been put forward these days by very learned and shrewd critics, because they were just learned and shrewd, but did not possess sufficient common sense to set a limit to their critical nonsense.[98]

In this view, then, historical research required constellations of virtues, that is, well-balanced combinations of, say, shrewdness and reliability, or frankness and skepticism vis-à-vis adventurousness. Scholars were, in other words, not supposed to practice single virtues at the expense of others. This has an important implication for the study of virtue language in nineteenth-century scholarship. If relations between virtues were as important as the passages just quoted suggest, then a key element of this virtue discourse is ignored as long as historical epistemologists focus just on individual virtues.

95 Graf, review, 332, 338.

96 Kuenen, "Simeonieten en Ismaëlieten," 513.

97 Graf, review, 345. Similarly: A. Kuenen, *Historisch-kritisch onderzoek naar het ontstaan en de verzameling van de boeken des Ouden Verbonds*, vol. 3 (Leiden: P. Engels, 1865), 220, and H. E. Stenfert Kroese, review of *De heilige steenen in Israël* by H. Pierson, *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* 105 (1865): 476–88, at 477.

98 [Philippson], review, 589. Cf. Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, 297: "One sees, successful maintenance of this method requires not only shrewdness, but also careful cautiousness."

There are two further reasons as to why questions like "Did Dozy possess a talent for conjecture?" and "What did accuracy mean in the 1860s?" are misleading in their simplicity. One is that several participants in the debate believed in scholarly divisions of labor and, consequently, in differentiated requirements for individual scholars. Pierson, for example, declared with an allusion to Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians that there are "diversities of spirits":

> [I]t is another that criticizes and another that makes conjectures. The special intellectual gifts of the shrewd critic [*den scherpzinnigen beoordelaar*] are not easy to reconcile with the ability to conjure [*het vermogen om te combineren*] that is the first requirement for forming hypotheses[99]

Following this line of reasoning, Dozy could allow himself one-sidedness in order to correct the one-sidedness of others. In a debate that tended to get bogged down in details, an overdose of frankness was, in Pierson's view, less inappropriate than in a debate that badly needed cautious testing of wild hypotheses.

Varying on this argument, other reviewers mentioned the stimulus provided by Dozy's intervention. The German-Jewish Orientalist Gustav Weil, for example, expected that, despite or precisely because of its forced inferences and unlikely hypotheses, *De Israëlieten te Mekka* would give a major impetus to new research, "which will further scholarship."[100] Matthes, too, stated that "this work stimulates one's thought and inspires new, serious research."[101] Pierson even wondered what was wrong with periodical eruptions of shrewdness and creativity like Dozy's. "As long as we do not value our fantasies as positive proofs and regard them tentatively as nothing more than experiments, I do not think there is any objection against making them public."[102] Although this might have been said out of politeness, the words just quoted express a view of scholarship in which not an individual's result, but the contribution that individuals make to an ongoing scholarly conversation counted as most important. In so far as Weil, Matthes, and Pierson endorsed this view, they assigned less weight to an individual's ability to achieve a balance of virtues than to a balance achieved over time, by the collective efforts of the scholarly community.[103]

99 Pierson, *Heilige steenen*, 9.

100 [Weil], review, 602.

101 Matthes, "Nieuwe ontdekking," 369.

102 Pierson, *Heilige steenen*, 9.

103 For a similar attitude among late-nineteenth-century British scientists, see Matthew Stanley, *Practical Mystic: Religion, Science, and A. S. Eddington* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 46–49.

In sum, then, the debate prompted by Dozy's book reveals no less than four reasons as to why virtues in nineteenth-century scholarly discourse cannot be studied in isolation from each other. The extent to which Oriental and Biblical scholars in the 1860s welcomed accuracy, shrewdness, and frankness depended on (1) the extent to which these virtues were practiced, (2) the extent to which they were kept in balance by other virtues, (3) the extent to which they were balanced by other scholars' virtues, and (4) the extent to which it was expected that they would be balanced by future scholars' work.

A divided house

The fact that all these variables figured in the debate prompted by *De Israëlieten te Mekka* does not, of course, imply that all participants assigned equal importance to them. We have observed that Dozy's critics did not agree on the criteria for measuring (1), that they differed on the relative importance of (2), and that, for authors such as Ewald and Philippson, (3) and (4) hardly played a role at all. In other words, Dozy's critics employed different standards of inquiry and, consequently, arrived at different judgments about the scholarly value of Dozy's book. While Land evaluated it as a scholarly contribution *par excellence*,[104] Ewald and Philippson concluded that *De Israëlieten te Mekka* had nothing whatsoever to do with "true scholarship."[105] The French Orientalist Gustave Dugat therefore hit the nail on the head: "This book is, according to some, the best and, according to others, the worst of all [Dozy] has written."[106]

As HaCohen has shown, confessional divisions contribute much to explaining this divergence of views.[107] By and large, orthodox Jews were more skeptical of modern Biblical criticism than their liberal fellow-believers, just as Calvinist voices in the controversy over *De Israëlieten te Mekka* were, with some exceptions, more dismissive of Dozy's methodology than liberal ones. However, not all difference with regard to variables (1) to (4) can so easily be explained under reference to religious positions on a spectrum between orthodoxy and liberalism. Constellations of virtues also depended on methodological beliefs, two of which need to be signaled out here in

104 Land, "Nieuwe lichtstraal," 229.
105 [Philippson], review, 589, 590; Ewald, review, 1271–72.
106 Gustave Dugat, *Histoire des orientalistes de l'Europe du XIIe au XIXe siècle*, vol. 2 (Paris: Maisonneuve et Cie, 1870), 61.
107 HaCohen, *Reclaiming the Hebrew Bible*, 140–51.

order to explain the mixed response that Dozy drew even among scholars with broadly similar theological views.

One matter in dispute was the question whether Biblical or Oriental scholarship still lived up to its *wissenschaftliche* vocation if it left the realm of philological detail in order to engage in work of synthesis. As Sabine Mangold and others have shown, among German Orientalists in the mid-nineteenth-century the prestige of philological precision as advocated by Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer and his numerous pupils was such that their philological ethos came close to being identified with *Wissenschaft* as such.[108] This left little room for the more ambitious view expounded by Kuenen, among others, that narrative synthesis was the end of all scholarship—even though it might take a lifetime, or even generations, to prepare a proper, critical "foundation" for it.[109] The more, indeed, Dozy's critics identified philological precision with scholarship as such, the shaper was their verdict about "the witty, cheerful Dozy," as the Swedish Orientalist Carlo Landberg put it condescendingly in 1886.[110]

In the years following the publication of *De Israëlieten te Mekka*, a second methodological fault line emerged among Orientalists in Europe. While Dozy belonged to a generation that considered classical texts as their most important objects of study, during the 1880s this approach increasingly met with opposition from ethnographically oriented modes of study that paired texts to other kinds of source material and used these texts, not as worthwhile in themselves, but as means for addressing nonphilological questions. Dismissive of the *philologische Kleinarbeit* embodied by Fleischer and, especially, his students, a younger generation of Orientalists, which included such future heavyweights as Ignác Goldziher and Martin Hartmann, deliberately focused on historical and anthropological questions, which required more than the philological methods that had dominated Orientalism in the mid-nineteenth century.[111] Unsurprisingly, such protests against the philological ethos of the Fleischer school emerged not only in

108 Mangold, *Eine "weltbürgerliche Wissenschaft"*, 91–95; Marchand, *German Orientalism*, 74–84; Hans-Georg Ebert and Thoralf Hanstein, eds., *Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer, Leben und Wirkung: ein Leipziger Orientalist des 19. Jahrhunderts mit internationaler Ausstrahlung* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013).

109 A. Kuenen, "Critical Method—I," *The Modern Review* 1 (1880): 461–88, at 466.

110 Comte de Landberg, *Critica arabica*, vol. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1886), 18.

111 Mangold, *Eine "weltbürgerliche Wissenschaft"*, 254; Ursula Wokoeck, *German Orientalism: The Study of the Middle East from 1800 to 1945* (London: Routledge, 2009), 170–84; Ottfried Fraisse, *Ignác Goldzihers monotheistische Wissenschaft: Zur Historisierung des Islams* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).

Europe. Ottoman scholars, too, complained about European professors who pretended to be specialists in Arabic without ever having taken the trouble of leaving their study or library. From Beirut, for example, Ibrahim al-Yaziji judged about Dozy:

> In spite of all research proficiency, in spite of the high ambitions, in spite of all patience in observing and writing, the man lacked the best means for understanding the Arabic language, the classical and the modern alike, because, to our knowledge, he has never traveled to one of the Arabic-speaking countries, such as Egypt or Syria, and conversed orally with only few Arabs, but learned the language solely from books, with help of people among his fellow-countrymen whom are called Orientalists.[112]

Near the time of Dozy's death, similar criticisms came to be heard at Leiden. In 1880, De Goeje's most talented pupil, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, did not devote his doctoral dissertation to old Arabic texts, but to the still-existing "Meccan festival." Moreover, among the sources Snouck consulted for this study were such unconventional ones as travelogues of recent Western visitors to Mecca.[113] A few years later, in 1884, Snouck would even undertake an expedition to Mecca in order to see the center of Islam with his own eyes. With such "fieldwork," usually on behalf and/or with financial means provided by the Dutch colonial administration, Snouck embarked on a new type of research. Some polite words about his *Doktorgroßvater* notwithstanding, Snouck's scholarship of the 1880s displayed very little affinity with Dozy's work in the 1860s. Not only Dozy's "speculation," but also his philological "groundwork" was called into question.[114]

112 Cited after H. L. Fleischer, "Eine Stimme aus dem Morgenlande über Dozy's Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes," in Fleischer, *Kleinere Schriften*, vol. 3, 615–41, at 619–20.

113 Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Het Mekkaansche feest* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1880), 9–10.

114 As P. S. van Koningsveld has shown in "Snouck Hurgronje zoals hij was: een bijdrage tot de waardering van de Nederlandse oriëntalistiek," *De Gids* 143 (1980): 763–84, at 765–70, Snouck's criticism of Dozy became more and more negative over the years. In Leiden, this dissociation from Dozy was sharply felt, witness the fact that in 1883, right after Dozy's death, De Goeje made a lengthy attempt at explaining Dozy's "faux pas" of 1864. The following year, Dozy's biographer, the Dutch-Jewish scholar Levi de Hartog, judged it wise to pass over *De Israëlieten te Mekka* in silence. Nonetheless, as late as 1894, the Leiden church historian J. G. R. Acquoy—the man we met in the opening paragraph as pastor in Zaltbommel at the time of Marx's visit—referred to Dozy's book as a "splendid example of historical combination." See De Goeje, "Levensbericht van Reinhart Dozy," 37–39; L. de Hartog, *Reinhart Pieter Anne Dozy* (Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink, 1884); J. G. R. Acquoy, *Handleiding tot de kerkgeschiedvorsching en kerkgeschiedschrijving* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1894), 86–87, as well as Snouck's final (devastating) verdict in C. Snouck

If methodological fault lines, apart from confessional dividing lines, help explain the different views that Dozy's critics adopted vis-à-vis variables (1) to (4) identified in the previous section, can the same be said about their academic affiliations, or the lack thereof? Nineteenth-century Orientalism was, after all, a field in which academics found themselves accompanied by what Lawrence Conrad calls "a broad range of explorers, adventurers, and travelers: missionaries, theologians, and preachers; eccentrics, frauds, and crackpots; social reformers, political advocates, soldiers, spies, and diplomatic representatives of various European regimes."[115] Although not all of these intervened in the debate over *De Israëlieten te Mekka*, the company of Dozy's critics indeed included quite a few nonacademic scholars, such as rabbis, pastors, and journalists. It would be mistaken, however, to assume that those with university positions distinguished themselves *en bloc* from those without. One reason is that pastors could be future professors, or eager to present themselves as such, as illustrated by Henricus Oort (who obtained a chair after twelve years of pastoral service).[116] Another is that academic affiliation as such did not make a serious conversation partner: the Göttingen professor Heinrich Ewald was depicted in the blackest possible terms by several of his colleagues ("a self-deifying man [*Selbstvergötterer*] who is more or less ripe for the madhouse," Fleischer judged in 1865).[117]

Robert Irwin therefore rightly concludes that "there was hardly an Orientalist type or a common Orientalist discourse" in Europe, especially once the heydays of the Fleischer school were over.[118] In religious, methodological, as well as institutional respects, diversity seemed the norm. Perhaps this makes it all the more significant that none of Dozy's critics judged *De Israëlieten te Mekka* by the standard of a single virtue, but weighed the author's virtues and vices, even while putting forward different catalogs of virtues. So, if

Hurgronje, "Michaël Jan de Goeje," in *Jaarboek van de Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen gevestigd te Amsterdam 1909* (Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, 1910), 107–46, at 117.

115 Lawrence I. Conrad, "The Dervish's Disciple: On the Personality and Intellectual Milieu of the Young Ignaz Goldziher," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 122, no. 2 (1990), 225–66, at 265.

116 C. E. Hooijkaas, "Levensbericht van Henricus Oort, 27 december 1836–13 december 1927," in *Handelingen en mededeelingen van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde te Leiden, over het jaar 1928–1929* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1929), 77–126, at 85.

117 LUL, BPL 2389, Fleischer to De Goeje, 17 March 1865. For similar criticism, see ibid., Dozy to De Goeje, 11 October 1864; ibid., LTK 1505, Dozy to Kruseman, 6 September 1864. On Ewald's dubious reputation, see also Lothar Perlitt, "Heinrich Ewald: Der Gelehrte in der Politik," in *Theologie in Göttingen: Eine Vorlesungsreihe*, ed. Bernd Moeller (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 157–212, at 181–94.

118 Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing*, 197.

even Orientalists of the most varied stripes agreed that constellations of virtues mattered more than accuracy or shrewdness as such, shouldn't this insight be taken to heart by historical epistemologists working on virtues and vices in nineteenth-century scholarly discourse?

Conclusion

My primary purpose in examining the reception history of *De Israëlieten te Mekka* has not been to develop new insight into mid-nineteenth-century Orientalism. Instead, I have examined the controversy surrounding Dozy's book in order to raise a methodological issue regarding the study of what Lorraine Daston calls "the history of categories that structure our thought."[119] Although it is widely recognized that these categories include virtues and vices, historical epistemologists and intellectual historians more generally have studied these virtues and vices almost exclusively on an individual base, without sufficiently recognizing that the meaning and significance of such virtues and vices in actual scholarly practice depended to no small degree on their relations to other, competing, complementary, and/or overlapping virtues and vices. More specifically, the 1864 controversy analyzed in this chapter suggests that what qualified as virtues in the context of mid-nineteenth-century Biblical and Oriental studies depended on (1) the extent to which shrewdness, frankness, and so forth were practiced, (2) the extent to which these virtues were kept in balance by other virtues, (3) the extent to which they were balanced by other scholars' virtues, and (4) the extent to which it was expected that they would be balanced by the work of future scholars. Even though some Orientalists, such as Ewald, rejected variables (3) and (4), the fact that they deemed it irrelevant to judge Dozy's work in the light of other scholars' contributions reveals that they had taken a stance on these issues with implications for what they recognized as proper, "virtuous" scholarly conduct.

Secondly, the controversy examined in this chapter reveals that Orientalists and Biblical scholars in the 1860s subscribed to different catalogs of virtues and, consequently, failed to reach agreement on standards of "virtuous" scholarly conduct. I have argued that this disagreement did not merely exist between "professionals" and "amateurs," or between scholars inside and outside of the academy, but within the worlds of Biblical and Oriental studies themselves. This divergence increased, moreover, when

119 See note 11 above.

in the 1880s a younger generation of Orientalists began to rebel against the philological inheritance of the Fleischer school. This implies that constellations of virtues, as I have called them, were fragile in at least two respects. Not only were scholars supposed to keep a delicate balance between a number of different virtues, but also the equilibrium itself was unstable, given that the assumptions defining what constituted a constellation of virtues were subject to change.

In order to give such constellations of virtues the attention they deserve, historical epistemology as currently practiced needs more than just expansion of its focus on individual virtues. It also needs to supplement the study of *ideals* of virtue such as articulated in programmatic texts (inaugural addresses) and codifying manuals (educational textbooks) with detailed examination of how virtues and vices *actually* functioned in the context of scholarly debates, controversies, and polemics. For the relative significance of "impartiality" or "shrewdness" was nowhere as apparent as when catalogs of virtues and vices clashed. What noble ideals of virtue were worth in day-to-day scholarly practice became nowhere as clear as when they were challenged by competing ideals.[120] So, if historical epistemologists or intellectual historians more generally want to understand how and to what extent virtues and vices "structured" scholarly research and "patterned" scholarly discourse, these virtues and vices are best studied in such concrete historical settings as a journal's book review section or a scholarly debate on the origins of Islam.

120 On scholarly controversies as historical sources, see Klaus Große Kracht, "Kritik, Kontroverse, Debatte: Historiographiegeschichte als Streitgeschichte," in *Neue Zugänge zur Geschichte der Geschichtswissenschaft*, ed. Jan Eckel and Thomas Etzemüller (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), 255–83.

Part III

Cultural Repertoires

7. German Thoroughness in Baltimore: Epistemic Virtues and National Stereotypes

Abstract: Nineteenth-century scholars often talked about "French lucidity," "German profoundness," and "American enterprise." Given their broad circulation, these commonplaces are useful material for comparative histories of the sciences and the humanities. These commonplaces could do what discipline-specific idioms could not: enabling transdisciplinary conversations about the marks of a good scholar. More importantly, the trope of "German thoroughness," the use of which this chapter examines for the case of Johns Hopkins University (1876–1906), shows how important it is to recognize the rhetorical power of nationalist rhetoric and stereotypical images. No matter how high-minded the discourse of scholarly virtue could be in upholding ideals of truth and integrity, the transmission of this discourse was facilitated by such allegedly low genres as commonplaces and stereotypes.

Keywords: epistemic virtues, scholarly virtues, national stereotypes, commonplaces, thoroughness, Johns Hopkins University

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed a burgeoning interest in "epistemic virtues" as a prism for historical study of the sciences and the humanities. Inspired by virtue epistemologists such as Linda Zagzebski and Jason Baehr,[1] historians of science and the humanities alike have begun to explore how virtues like

1 Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jason Baehr, *The Inquiring Mind: On Intellectual Virtues and Virtue Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Paul, Herman. *Virtues and Vices in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities: Explorations of a Discourse*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025.
DOI 10.5117/9789048562985_CH07

"objectivity" emerged,[2] what meanings they acquired,[3] how scholars tried to cultivate virtue in their students,[4] how commemorative events contributed to that goal,[5] how virtues like "precision" encouraged technological innovation (precision measurement instruments),[6] and why standards of virtue were often contested, even within single disciplines.[7] Although most of the literature is still confined to single fields or local cases, the potential of comparing scholars across the academic spectrum from an epistemic virtues point of view has already been recognized.[8] Even though not all scholars prioritized the same epistemic virtues, and although some of them reflected more openly on standards of virtue than others, the fact that virtuous scholarly conduct mattered in all branches of scholarship, perhaps especially in times when "virtue" was a generally accepted moral category, allows epistemic virtues to serve as a prism for a comparative history of the sciences and the humanities such as advocated by Rens Bod, Lorraine Daston, and Glenn W. Most.[9]

2 Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007); Daston, "Objectivity and Impartiality: Epistemic Virtues in the Humanities," in *The Making of the Humanities*, vol. 3, ed. Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 27–42.

3 Kathryn Murphy and Anita Traninger, eds., *The Emergence of Impartiality* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Camille Creyghton et al., "Virtue Language in Historical Scholarship: The Cases of Georg Waitz, Gabriel Monod and Henri Pirenne," *History of European Ideas* 42, no. 7 (2016): 924–36; Chaokang Tai, "Left Radicalism and the Milky Way: Connecting the Scientific and Socialist Virtues of Anton Pannekoek," *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences* 47, no. 2 (2017): 200–254; Matthew Stanley, "Religious and Scientific Virtues: Maxwell, Eddington, and Persistence," in *Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities*, ed. Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul (Cham: Springer, 2017), 49–61.

4 Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, "Private Übungen und verkörpertes Wissen: Zur Unterrichtspraxis der Geschichtswissenschaft im neunzehnten Jahrhundert," in *Akademische Wissenskulturen: Praktiken des Lehrens und Forschens vom Mittelalter bis zur Moderne*, ed. Martin Kintzinger and Sita Steckel (Basel: Schwabe, 2015), 143–61.

5 Falko Schnicke, "Rituale der Verkörperung: Seminarfeste und Jubiläen der Geschichtswissenschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 63, no. 4 (2015): 337–58; Jo Tollebeek, "Commemorative Practices in the Humanities around 1900," *Advances in Historical Studies* 4, no. 3 (2015): 216–31.

6 M. Norton Wise, ed., *The Values of Precision* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

7 Herman Paul, "The Virtues and Vices of Albert Naudé: Toward a History of Scholarly Personae," *History of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2016): 327–38; Herman Paul, "Virtue Language in Nineteenth-Century Orientalism: A Case Study in Historical Epistemology," *Modern Intellectual History* 14, no. 3 (2017): 689–715 [chapter 6 in this volume]; Léjon Saarloos, "Virtues of Courage and Virtues of Restraint: Tyndall, Tait, and the Use of the Imagination in Late Victorian Science," in Van Dongen and Paul, *Epistemic Virtues*, 109–28.

8 Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul, "Introduction: Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities," in Van Dongen and Paul, *Epistemic Virtues*, 1–10.

9 Rens Bod, "A Comparative Framework for Studying the Histories of the Humanities and Science," *Isis* 106, no. 2 (2015): 367–77; Lorraine Daston and Glenn W. Most, "History of Science and History of Philologies," *Isis* 106, no. 2 (2015): 378–90.

Yet as soon as historians embark on such a project, they face a potential complication. When they examine what, say, nineteenth-century German humanities scholars regarded as the defining marks of a good scholar, the source material at their disposal (professorial correspondence, manifestoes, inaugural addresses, book reviews, and confidential reports known as *Gutachten*) frequently mentions "impartiality," "loyalty," and "carefulness." Although these are attitudes or dispositions conventionally classified as virtues, the question arises as to what extent these are *epistemic* virtues. While epistemic relevance seems evident in the cases of "impartiality" and "carefulness," "loyalty" (*Treue*) is not a virtue easy recognized as furthering epistemic goals. Even if the adjective "epistemic" is historicized, so as to make it refer to what nineteenth-century scholars saw as beneficial to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding, the political connotations of "loyalty" are hard to miss: the term was loaded with conservative, nationalist meaning.[10]

Things get even more complicated when virtues with obvious epistemic importance, such as "thoroughness" (*Gründlichkeit*), turn out to be colored by nationalist ideology. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—an age of cultural and scientific nationalism[11]—scholars frequently used the language of virtue not only to articulate disciplinary norms and values, but also, at the same time, to reinforce national stereotypes.[12] In evaluating each other's work as well as in surveying their fields, they habitually appealed to clichéd images of "German thoroughness," "French lucidity," "Italian intuition," "English practicability," and "American enterprise," thereby consolidating a repertoire on which the German mathematician Felix Klein, among others, drew in notoriously associating "a strong naïve space-intuition" with the "Teutonic race" and a "critical, purely logical sense" with "the Latin and Hebrew races."[13]

To what extent are such nationalist images, omnipresent among scholars in the "age of nationalism," an obstacle for a comparative history of epistemic virtues? Drawing on the case of Johns Hopkins University during the first three decades of its existence (1876–1906), this chapter argues, perhaps counterintuitively, that nationalist stereotypes deserve close attention

10 Nikolaus Buschmann, "Die Erfindung der deutsche Treue: Von der semantischen Innovation zur Gefolgschaftsideologie," in *Treue: Politische Loyalität und militärische Gefolgschaft in der Moderne*, ed. Nikolaus Buschmann and Karl Borromäus Murr (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 75–109.

11 See, e.g., Mitchell G. Ash and Jan Surman, eds., *The Nationalization of Scientific Knowledge in the Habsburg Empire, 1848–1918* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

12 A helpful study of stereotypical attributions of national character is Joep Leerssen, "The Rhetoric of National Character: A Programmatic Survey," *Poetics Today* 21, no. 2 (2000): 267–92.

13 Felix Klein, *Lectures on Mathematics* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1894), 46.

from historians of epistemic virtues. For unlike discipline-specific idioms, nationalized virtues like "German thoroughness" were broadly recognized across the academic spectrum. At Johns Hopkins, German thoroughness even served as a shared reference point for scholars as diverse as the chemist Ira Remsen, the physician William Osler, the mathematician James Joseph Sylvester, the historian Herbert Baxter Adams, and the classical scholar Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve. As a *topos* or commonplace in Ernst Robert Curtius's classic sense of the word, circulating widely within and beyond the academic community, German thoroughness could do what discipline-specific language could not: enabling transdisciplinary conversations about the marks of a good scholar.[14]

This chapter uses the case of Johns Hopkins as an example to argue that historians of epistemic virtues do not have to shrink away from nationalist stereotypes such as often found in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century source material. To the contrary, they might want to explore how stereotypical images contributed to the spread and adoption of language of virtue across disciplinary divides. The purpose of this chapter, then, is *not* to shed new light on the early history of Johns Hopkins University or to sketch the contours of a discipline-transcending history of epistemic virtues.[15] Instead, the chapter seeks to make a methodological contribution to an emerging body of scholarship on the history of epistemic virtues. Precisely to the extent that nationalized virtues drew on broadly circulating stereotypes, with which scholars across the academic spectrum were familiar, they offer a glimpse on processes of cultural transmission and appropriation that help explain how and why epistemic virtues could find their way across disciplinary boundaries.

Ideals of thoroughness

"For fifty years our American professors and students have been in ardent pursuit of German ideals of scholarship," wrote the *American Educational Review* in 1914. "[T]hey have tortured themselves to attain German

14 Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern: A. Francke, 1948). A similar argument, pointing out the importance of proverbs as cultural transmitters, is made by Steven Shapin, "Proverbial Economies: How an Understanding of Some Linguistic and Social Features of Common Sense Can Throw Light on More Prestigious Bodies of Knowledge, Science for Example," *Social Studies of Science* 31, no. 5 (2001): 731–69.

15 For the foundation and early years of Johns Hopkins, see Hugh Hawkins, *Pioneer: A History of the Johns Hopkins University, 1874–1889* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960).

thoroughness, *Gründlichkeit*; they have taken all the arts and sciences and done them over in the likeness of a German image."[16] Written just weeks after the outbreak of the war that would dramatically change American attitudes toward Germany,[17] these lines summarize a view that historians of science in recent decades have subjected to considerable criticism. In response to what one scholar aptly called "the rosy-hued world of the historiography of American education,"[18] historians have challenged the myth of "the German example" by pointing out, among other things, how badly American students understood the German higher education system and how selectively they appropriated the academic models they encountered in Göttingen or Berlin.[19] Although late-nineteenth-century American university reformers like Charles W. Eliot (Harvard), Daniel C. Gilman (Johns Hopkins), and Andrew D. White (Cornell) had all been formed by years of study in Germany, and although they preferred to fill professorial positions with scholars trained in the land of poets and thinkers, "Germany" was often more a symbol of cultural authority than a real model for imitation.[20]

Nonetheless, mythic as the German universities and their professorial inhabitants may have been, precisely as such they exercised considerable

16 N. N., "Current Editorial Comment on Education," *The American Educational Review* 36 (1914–15): 40–42, at 40.

17 Peter Krüger, "Germany and the United States, 1914–1933: The Mutual Perception of Their Political Systems," in *Transatlantic Images and Perceptions: Germany and America since 1776*, ed. David E. Barclay and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 171–90; Gerd Dose, "'The Soul of America': Bemerkungen zum angloamerikanischem Deutschlandbild vor und zu Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges," in *Images of Germany*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Diller et al. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1986), 21–56. On changing appreciations of German thoroughness, see Charlotte A. Lerg, "Prestige—Transatlantisch: Die Diplomatie der amerikanischen Universitäten 1890–1920" (Habilitationsschrift, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, 2017), 451–60.

18 Carl Diehl, *Americans and German Scholarship, 1770–1870* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), 73.

19 See esp. James Turner and Paul Bernard, "The 'German Model' and the Graduate School: The University of Michigan and the Origin Myth of the American University," *History of Higher Education Annual* 13 (1993): 69–98.

20 Daniel Fallon, "German Influences on American Education," in *The German–American Encounter: Conflict and Cooperation between Two Cultures, 1800–2000*, ed. Frank Trommler and Elliott Shore (New York: Berghahn, 2001), 77–87. See also Kathryn M. Olesko, "German Models, American Ways: The 'New Movement' among American Physics Teachers, 1905–1909," in *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*, ed. Henry Geitz, Jürgen Heideking, and Jurgen Herbst (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 129–53, and Owen Hannaway, "The German Model of Chemical Education in America: Ira Remsen at Johns Hopkins University (1876–1913)," *Ambix* 23, no. 3 (1976): 145–64; Jurgen Herbst, *The German Historical School in American Scholarship: A Study in the Transfer of Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965).

power in the late-nineteenth-century United States. As cultural historians have come to recognize, American images of Germany, even if not accurate or true, were nonetheless effective in mobilizing emotions and invoking authority.[21] In the academic realm, such claims to authority were made in several contexts. The one that has received most scholarly attention so far is that of university reform. It was the so-called "German model" that lent authority to graduate schools, seminars, and laboratories of the sort in which G. Stanley Hall, the future first president of Clark University, envisioned professors to pass on "the sacred torch of pure science to their chosen disciples."[22] Given that seminars and laboratories allowed for research-oriented forms of education, the German model in the second place referred to educational practices aimed at the training of future scholars. At Johns Hopkins, the historian Herbert Baxter Adams was one among others who established a German-style seminar, which he proudly described as a laboratory "where books are treated like mineralogical specimens, passed about from hand to hand, examined, and tested."[23]

Most important for our purposes, however, is that the adjective "German" was also used in relation to virtues believed to be conducive to scholarly inquiry. Although the quality of thoroughness could be, and sometimes was, attributed to texts or theories, "German thoroughness" and "German perseverance" primarily referred to personal character traits ("deep and enduring acquired excellences of a person").[24] Thus, when medical students in the United States were encouraged to imitate the thoroughness of their German colleagues or when Thomas Edison was lauded as "more than German in his thoroughness," this referred to character traits translating into working habits.[25] The virtues labeled as German were not Kuhnian theory virtues, but personal dispositions invoked in response to the question,

21 Frank Trommler, "Negotiating German 'Kultur' and 'Wissenschaft' in American Intellectual Life, 1870–1918," in *New Perspectives on German–American Educational History*, ed. Jürgen Overhoff and Anne Overbeck (Bad Heilbrunn: Julius Klinkhardt, 2017), 83–103; Emily J. Levine, "Baltimore Teaches, Göttingen Learns: Cooperation, Competition, and the Research University," *The American Historical Review* 121, no. 3 (2016): 780–823; Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, *Images of Germany in American Literature* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2007), 1–15.

22 [G. Stanley Hall], "Editorial," *The Pedagogical Seminary* 1 (1891): iii–viii, iii (with correction of a misprint). Similarly: Henry A. Rowland, "The Physical Laboratory in Modern Education," *Science* 7 (1886): 573–75.

23 Herbert B. Adams, *Methods of Historical Study* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1884), 103.

24 Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind*, 137.

25 Godfrey R. Pisek, "Post-Graduate Study in the United States," *Vermont Medical Monthly* 13 (1907): 187–88, 188; N. N., "Thomas Alva Edison," *The Engineering Magazine* 50 (1915): 199.

"What constitutes a good professor? What kind of men are the universities looking for?"[26]

If we zoom in on Johns Hopkins, a university described by *The American Educational Review* as "peculiarly devoted to the best that is in German education,"[27] and examine how its faculty during the first three decades of its existence articulated their views on research and teaching, we find ample references to such supposedly German character traits. President Daniel C. Gilman's inaugural address of 1876 offers a case in point:

> The thoroughness of the German mind, its desire for perfection in every detail, and its philosophical aptitudes are well illustrated by the controversies now in vogue in the land of universities. In following, as we are prone to do in educational matters, the example of Germany, we must beware lest we accept what is their cast off; lest we introduce faults as well as virtues, defects with excellence.[28]

Thoroughness was a key virtue for other Johns Hopkins faculty members, too. The physician William Osler, one of the founding professors of Johns Hopkins Hospital, told an audience in Minneapolis in 1892 that "the *Quality of Thoroughness*" was "an element of such importance that I had thought of making it the only subject of my remarks."[29] Explicitly labeled as a "Teutonic" virtue, thoroughness for Osler was "the pearl of great price, worth all the worry and trouble of the search."[30] Likewise, the mathematician James Joseph Sylvester explained the academic community in Baltimore in 1877 that "thoroughness of exposition" was the main reason for "our Teutonic brethren" leading the world of science.[31] In a similar vein, the chemist Ira

26 [Ira Remsen], "Inaugural Address," in *Johns Hopkins University Celebration of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the University and Inauguration of Ira Remsen, LL.D. as President of the University* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1902), 72–95, 87.

27 N. N., "Current Editorial Comment," 40.

28 [Daniel C. Gilman], "Inaugural Address by Daniel C. Gilman, President of the Johns Hopkins University," in *Addresses at the Inauguration of Daniel C. Gilman, as President of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, February 22, 1876* (Baltimore, MD: John Murphy & Co., 1876), 15–64, at 28–29.

29 William Osler, *Teacher and Student: An Address Delivered on the Occasion of the Opening of the New Building of the College of Medicine and Surgery of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, October 4th, 1892* (Baltimore, MD: John Murphy & Co., 1892), 17.

30 William Osler, "Some Aspects of American Medical Bibliography: Address at the Meeting of the Association of Medical Librarians, Saratoga, June 10, 1902," *Bulletin of the Association of Medical Librarians* 1 (1902): 19–32, at 32; William Osler, *The Student Life: A Farewell Address to Canadian and American Medical Students* (Oxford: Horace Hart, [1905]), 9.

31 [J. J. Sylvester], *Address Delivered by J. J. Sylvester* [...] *at Johns Hopkins University, on Commemoration Day, February 22, 1877* (Baltimore, MD: Cushings & Bailey, [1877]), 11.

Remsen attributed the inferiority of American science compared to Germany to a lack "in thoroughness in the matter of study." While still a professor at Williams College, Remsen had argued for "the moral necessity of the development of habits of thoroughness" in order to bring American science on equal footing with its German counterpart.[32] This was a message Remsen kept repeating for over a quarter of a century: "Whatever other qualities scholarship may have, they count for little without thoroughness. If I were asked what American scholarship owes to Germany I should unhesitatingly answer that it is more than anything else this quality of thoroughness."[33]

German-style thoroughness elicited not only admiration, though. It also was perceived as potentially "tedious," given that it stimulated scrupulously detailed analysis more than straightforward conclusions.[34] Several Johns Hopkins professors therefore warned that the virtue would degenerate into a vice if practiced excessively or too exclusively. It could slow down the pace of writing, as Osler confessed to a cousin: "Want of thoroughness drag[s] me back at every step."[35] And as Osler cautioned elsewhere:

> It is possible to become so absorbed in the problem of the "enclitic δε," or the structure of the flagella of the Trichomonas, or of the toes of the prehistoric horse, that the student loses the sense of proportion in his work.[36]

Even Remsen, perhaps the staunchest advocate of German thoroughness in Baltimore, admitted that scholars spending years on piperic acid or Tacitus's use of the preposition *ad* had fallen prey to excessive thoroughness.[37]

These perceived risks led some Johns Hopkins faculty to adopt more critical stances toward German thoroughness, to the point of using "German" as a warning sign against unhealthy overdoses. Classical scholar Basil

32 I. Remsen, "Thoroughness," *Williams Review* 3 (1872): 33–34. Jessika Drmacich (Williams College Library) kindly provided me with a copy of this article.

33 Ira Remsen, "German Influence in American Academic Development," in *Official Souvenir and Programme: 20th Triennial Saengerfest of the Nord-Oestlicher Saengerbund of America* (Baltimore, MD: Saengerfest Association of Baltimore, [1903]), 91–93, at 91. Gayle Martison (Wisconsin Historical Society) kindly sent me a copy of this piece.

34 Friedrich Abee as quoted in *The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: Fifth Annual Report of the President and of the Treasurer* (New York: Carnegie Foundation, 1910), 38.

35 William Osler to Jennette Osler, c. January 1873, as quoted in Michael Bliss, *William Osler: A Life in Medicine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 72.

36 Osler, *The Student Life*, 9.

37 Ira Remsen, "The Science vs. the Art of Chemistry," *The Popular Science Monthly* 10 (1876): 691–96, at 693.

Lanneau Gildersleeve, for instance, was fond of highlighting the formative influences he had received from German classical scholarship in what he called "the epoch of my Teutomania, the time when I read German, wrote German, listened to German, and even talked German."[38] Yet this historicizing prose conveyed that better insight had dawned upon him. As early as 1878 he warned American academics not to adopt "every new device in teaching that is sanctioned by German authority."[39] Specifically, he cautioned against the German habit of confusing thoroughness with complexity or abstruseness:

> [T]he German brain, with its immense vaporizing power, makes out of the simplest dew drop a mist that swamps the universe, and the Dread Earnestness of Fun is a spectre that haunts all their historical works. They have made a Preacher of Righteousness out of Aristophanes, a manner of John the Baptist out of the joyous old Baldhead, and have evolved the deepest political maxims out of his most trivial jests.[40]

In patriotic vein, Gildersleeve emphasized that "University and college should be American, meet the needs of our civilization, and bear the stamp of our national character."[41] Varying on the classic trope of the American melting pot, he presented America as "a cosmopolitan blend of the best in all the varied nationalities, the thoroughness and grasp of the German, the sound sense of the English, the delicate literary touch of the French."[42] So for Gildersleeve, German thoroughness had its place, provided it was corrected by English and French counterinfluences—much in the same way that Osler sought to combine German thoroughness with "Anglican" adaptiveness and "Gallic" lucidity, thereby contributing to a "distinctively

38 Basil L. Gildersleeve, "Formative Influences," *The Forum* (1891): 607–17, at 615. Other autobiographical pieces depicting his German sojourns in sepia light include "Oscillations and Nutations of Philological Studies," *The Johns Hopkins University Circulars* 20 (1901): 45–50, and "A Novice of 1850," *The Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine* 1 (1912): 3–9.

39 B. L. Gildersleeve, "Classics and Colleges," *The Princeton Review* (1878): 67–95, at 95.

40 Gildersleeve in an undated lecture on Aristophanes, as quoted in Robert L. Fowler, "The Gildersleeve Archive," in *Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve: An American Classicist*, ed. Ward W. Briggs, Jr., and Herbert W. Benario (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 62–105, at 79.

41 B. L. Gildersleeve, "University Work in America and Classical Philology," *The Princeton Review* (1879): 511–36, at 512.

42 "Presidential Address, by Professor Basil L. Gildersleeve, of Johns Hopkins University," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 40 (1909): xxxviii–xxxix, at xxxix.

eclectic" American form of medicine.[43] While not all faculty members were uncritical of German thoroughness, many of the first Johns Hopkins professors explicitly referred to this nationalized virtue in explaining how their views on research and teaching related to those advocated in terms of German thoroughness.

This in turn explains why German thoroughness was seldom invoked alone, without reference to other, overlapping or contrastive virtues and vices. German thoroughness was perceived as related to "German perseverance," just as lack of thoroughness, for Remsen, suggested "lack of patience."[44] At other occasions, with different battle lines, Remsen could present honesty instead of thoroughness as "the fundamental characteristic of the scientific method."[45] Likewise, in 1885, Gilman saw no harm in praising curiosity—"the love of seeking, questioning, hunting, finding"—as the scholar's most defining quality.[46] Also, among Osler's favorite virtues, equanimity eventually came to stand out.[47] So, what was at stake for the Baltimore professors was not a single virtue, but a cluster of virtues. Though prominent and much-discussed, German thoroughness never held a monopoly position in the moral and symbolic economies of science favored at Johns Hopkins.

Educational aspirations

Interestingly, the advantages and disadvantages of German thoroughness as summarized so far were not typically discussed in textbooks, monographs, or research articles, but in what Leah Ceccarelli calls "motivational texts": occasional papers, festive addresses, and commemorative speeches aimed at advancing a particular conception of science.[48] When Johns Hopkins faculty reflected on German thoroughness, they usually did so on occasions that allowed them to address students or junior colleagues

43 Osler, "Some Aspects of American Medical Bibliography," 32.

44 Richard T. Ely, *An Introduction to Political Economy* (New York: Chautauqua Press, 1889), 112; Ira Remsen, "American Students in Europe," *The Williams Vidette* (1873): 135–37, at 137. A copy of Remsen's article was kindly sent to me by Jessika Drmacich (Williams College Library).

45 Ira Remsen, "Scientific Investigation and Progress," *Science* 19 (1904): 1–11, at 9.

46 [Daniel C. Gilman], "Address by Daniel C. Gilman, President of the Johns Hopkins University," in *Addresses at the Inauguration of Bryn Mawr College, by President Rhoads and President D. C. Gilman, of the Johns Hopkins University* (Philadelphia, PA: Sherman & Co., 1886), 21–32, at 31.

47 William Osler, *Aequanimitas: With Other Addresses to Medical Students, Nurses and Practitioners of Medicine* (London: H. K. Lewis, 1904).

48 Leah Ceccarelli, *Shaping Science with Rhetoric: The Cases of Dobzhansky, Schrödinger, and Wilson* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 4.

in edifying style, summoning them in solemn words to serve the cause of science to the best of their abilities. Negatively, this means that the speakers themselves were not necessary as thorough in their research as they expected their students to be. In comparison to his fellow chemists Arthur Michael (Tufts) and Moses Gomberg (Michigan), for instance, Remsen was more of an educator than a groundbreaking researcher.[49] Nor were they always as indebted to German examples as they claimed to be. Gildersleeve and Osler, most notably, drew considerably more on British sources than their Germanophile language suggested.[50] Positively, however, the genre reminds us that advocacy and criticism of German thoroughness was often fueled by educational aspirations. If we take seriously the genre of motivational texts,[51] we have to recognize that reflections on German thoroughness were agenda-driven. They aimed at more in-depth research, more research-oriented education, and a more prominent role for the United States in the world of science.

This helps explain why students of the first Johns Hopkins professors associated their teachers' thoroughness primarily with their educational ethos. Gildersleeve was posthumously characterized as an admirer of "the thoroughness and the extent of German scholarship."[52] Supposedly, he liked to tell his students: "[E]very mistake that can be avoided by patient labor is a sin."[53] Likewise, Remsen's associate, Harmon Northrop Morse, was said not to "spare himself or his pupils in his effort to obtain the greatest possible perfection in methods and in results."[54] The Semitic scholar Paul Haupt, who like Remsen despised "lack of conscientiousness and thoroughness," was remembered for exposing his students to "constant drill in all the

49 John W. Servos, "History of Chemistry," *Osiris* 1 (1985): 132–46, at 137; D. S. Tarbell, Ann T. Tarbell, and R. M. Joyce, "The Students of Ira Remsen and Roger Adams," *Isis* 71, no. 4 (1980): 620–26, at 620. See also Dean Stanley Tarbell and Ann Tracy Tarbell, "The Johns Hopkins University, Ira Remsen and Organic Chemistry, 1876–1913," in Tarbell and Tarbell, *Essays on the History of Organic Chemistry in the United States, 1875–1955* (Nashville, TN: Folio, 1986), 25–39.

50 Fowler, "The Gildersleeve Archive," 90–91; Charles Coury, "Sir William Osler and French Medicine," *Medical History* 11, no. 1 (1967): 1–14; Claus A. Pierach, "Was Osler *Verdeutsched*?" *Archives of Internal Medicine* 156, no. 14 (1996): 1502–4. On the British origins of the clinical clerkships that Osler introduced at Johns Hopkins, see Bliss, *William Osler*, 179–80, and Thomas N. Bonner, "German Influences on American Clinical Medicine, 1870–1914," in Geitz, Heideking, and Herbst, *German Influences*, 275–87, at 276.

51 Following Carolyn R. Miller, "Genre as Social Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70, no. 2 (1984): 151–67.

52 Gonzalez Lodge, "Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve: October 23, 1831–January 9, 1924," *The Classical Weekly* 17 (1924): 113–14, at 113.

53 John A. Scott, "Professor Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve," *Classical Philology* 19 (1924): 66.

54 "Dr. Howell's Address," *The Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine* 9 (1921): 325–30, at 326.

minutiae of philology."[55] More concretely, the School of Engineering at Johns Hopkins preferred small-scale class instruction because "tact, initiative, thoroughness, etc., can be developed best in the undergraduate by intimate contact with high grade instructors."[56] Likewise, at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Osler was known for devoting ample time to examining patients in order to train his students "in methods of thoroughness."[57] Following this model, one of Osler's students declared:

> All great clinicians study their patients with the most detailed thoroughness, missing not the smallest departure from normal function, appreciating always what is the normal. No successful investigator can have any other method than infinite thoroughness in his work. Thoroughness in every detail cannot begin too early in one's career.[58]

This educational message was supported by different means. A rather atypical one was Osler's collection of aphorisms, *Counsels and Ideals*.[59] More widespread was the emblematic use of portraits and other memorabilia. Adams, "a product of Teutonic thoroughness," knew how to exploit this symbolic capital when he decorated his seminar room with a portrait of his Heidelberg teacher Johann Kaspar Bluntschli—known in the United States as an icon of "German comprehensiveness and German thoroughness"—whose personal papers and library Adams had also managed to attract.[60] Most

55 Paul Haupt, *Die sumerischen Familiengesetze in Keilschrift, Transcription und Übersetzung, nebst ausführlichem Commentar und zahlreichen Excursen: Eine assyriologische Studie* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1879), 10; W. F. Albright, "Professor Haupt as Scholar and Teacher," in *Oriental Studies Published in Commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary (1883–1923) of Paul Haupt as Director of the Oriental Seminary of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1926), xxi–xxxii, at xxxi.

56 A. G. Christie, "A National Policy on Engineering Education," *The Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine* 10 (1922): 101–9, at 106.

57 Thomas Barnes Futcher, "Sir William Osler, Bart., M.D., F.R.S., F.R.C.P., Regius Professor of Medicine, University of Oxford," *The Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine* 9 (1920): 2–28, at 14.

58 [Henry A. Christian], "Report of the Physician-in-Chief," in *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report on the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital for the Year 1938* (Boston, MA: Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, 1939), 96–123, at 112. See also Henry A. Christian, "Osler: Recollections of an Undergraduate Medical Student at Johns Hopkins," *Archives of Internal Medicine* 84, no. 1 (1949): 77–83; Kenneth M. Ludmerer, *Let Me Heal: The Opportunity to Preserve Excellence in American Medicine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 74–80.

59 *Counsels and Ideals from the Writings of William Osler*, ed. C. N. B. Camac (Oxford: Henry Frowde, 1905).

60 Louis Martin Sears, *Trends in Historical Interpretation: An Address Delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Purdue University* […] *December 3, 1928* (n.p., n.d.), 4; Charles Kendall Adams,

important, however, was a near endless stream of anecdotes about the thoroughness of Johns Hopkins faculty. Morse, for instance, was said to cultivate his garden as thoroughly as he conducted his experiments, whereas William Stewart Halsted, Johns Hopkins's first professor of surgery, was said to be as thorough as he was slow ("His surgery was poetry").[61] Also, all chemists in Baltimore knew the story of the young Remsen being poked fun at by his colleagues at Williams College for looking like a German scholar, given that he had dared to publish a research article in the *American Journal of Science*.[62] Trivial as such anecdotes may seem, they served as iconic illustrations of what German-style thoroughness was believed to look like.[63]

A German persona

If this suggests that German thoroughness was a commonplace among Johns Hopkins faculty and students, then the follow-up question is to what extent this nationalized virtue actually served as a reference point for scholars in different disciplinary quarters. Did it bridge disciplinary divides, thereby connecting scholars across the academic spectrum? Arguably, the *topos* was known to all Johns Hopkins faculty primarily because it was firmly implanted in the American cultural imagination.[64] As "a national

The Relations of Political Science to National Prosperity: An Address Delivered at the Opening of the School of Political Science of the University of Michigan, October 3, 1881 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1881), 10.

61 "Dr. Howell's Address," 329; Bertram M. Bernheim, *The Story of the Johns Hopkins: Four Great Doctors and the Medical School They Created* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1948), 21. See also Samuel James Crowe, *Halsted of Johns Hopkins: The Man and His Men* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1957), 57.

62 Ira Remsen, "The Development of Chemical Research in America," *The Journal of the American Chemical Society* 37 (1915): 1–7, at 5. Similar anecdotes can be found in E. T. Allen, "Impressions of Ira Remsen," *The Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine* 16 (1928): 215–26, at 219; William Albert Noyes and James Flack Norris, "Ira Remsen, 1846–1927," *National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America: Biographical Memoirs* 14 (1932): 207–40, at 213; Frederick H. Getman, *The Life of Ira Remsen* (Easton, PA: Journal of Chemical Education, 1940), 42.

63 On scholarly anecdotes as *exempla*, see Gadi Algazi, "Food for Thought: Hieronymus Wolf Grapples with the Scholarly Habitus," in *Egodocuments and History: Autobiographical Writing in Its Social Context since the Middle Ages*, ed. Rudolf Dekker (Hilversum: Verloren, 2002), 21–43; Steven Shapin, "The Philosopher and the Chicken: On the Dietetics of Disembodied Knowledge," in *Science Incarnate: Historical Embodiments of Natural Knowledge*, ed. Christopher Lawrence and Steven Shapin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 21–50.

64 Horst Kruse, *Schlüsselmotive der amerikanischen Literatur* (Düsseldorf: August Bagel, 1979), 43–94.

German trait," thoroughness was said to characterize "all lines of Teutonic endeavor; science, art, literature, drama, navigation, war, architecture, and music."[65] Precisely to the extent that German thoroughness was "proverbial" or "customary," it lent itself for communication beyond disciplinary confines: everyone could recognize it.[66]

This was especially true in Baltimore, where about a quarter of the population was of German descent.[67] In this context, the symbolic capital of German thoroughness was such that even non-German schools advertised themselves as "widely known for [their] thoroughness."[68] Also, it seems hardly coincidental that Remsen offered his most eloquent praise for German thoroughness on the occasion of a German-American music festival in Baltimore.[69] Emphasizing German thoroughness was a means to strengthen the bonds between Johns Hopkins and the local German community, on whose financial support the university partly depended.[70]

In evoking the trope of German thoroughness, Johns Hopkins faculty thus employed a recognizable cultural resource. They all drew on the stereotypical image of a German scholar: a man deeply absorbed in his studies, possessed by a "passion to push on to the frontier of human knowledge,"[71] and privileging depth over width, accuracy over scope, and truth over elegancy.[72] German thoroughness thus metonymically called to mind a *Gelehrtentypus* or scholarly persona,[73] much in the same way that, for the British historian William Warde Fowler, a portrait of a German philologist sufficed to evoke

65 N. N., "A Lesson from German Thoroughness," *The Etude* 27 (1909): 729.

66 F. F., review of *A Text-Book of Human Physiology* by L. Landois, *The American Journal of the Medical Sciences* 99 (1890): 171–72, at 172; Henry T. Finck, "Music," *The Nation* 102 (1916): 203–4, at 203.

67 Dieter Cunz, *The Maryland Germans: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1948), 340.

68 *The News-Letter* [Johns Hopkins University] 18, no. 6 (1913): 7. See also *Das neue Baltimore: Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Deutsch-Amerikaner im Geschäftsleben, 1905* ([Baltimore, MD: C. W. Schneidereith & Söhne, 1905]), 68, 176.

69 Remsen, "German Influence," 91.

70 Addressing the local German community during the 1905 Schiller festivities, Remsen explicitly acknowledged its financial support: Albert Pfister, *Nach Amerika im Dienste Friedrich Schillers* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1906), 44.

71 [G. Stanley Hall], "Educational Reforms," *The Pedagogical Seminary* 1 (1891): 1–12, at 8.

72 Richard T. Ely, *Studies in the Evolution of Industrial Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1906), 459.

73 Lorraine Daston and Otto H. Sibum, "Introduction: Scientific Personae and Their Histories," *Science in Context* 16, nos. 1–2 (2003): 1–8; Herman Paul, "The Virtues of a Good Historian in Early Imperial Germany: Georg Waitz's Contested Example," *Modern Intellectual History* 15, no. 3 (2018): 681–709.

the image of an entire cohort of aspiring German scholars, spending all their time and energy to learning foreign languages, collecting bits and pieces of knowledge, scrutinizing new hypotheses ("If a valuable hint is dropped outside Germany, an army of industrious Teutons instantly appropriates and developes [sic] it") and writing difficult treatises in unreadable German.[74]

The contours of this German persona were not the same for all Johns Hopkins faculty. Whereas Remsen saw a laboratory scientist at work, Adams envisioned a historian bent over manuscripts or archival records. Also, while many primarily perceived the German scholar as a researcher, the physician William Henry Welch draw attention to the scholar as a teacher by emphasizing the "thoroughness of laboratory training" offered by German professors.[75] Those and other differences notwithstanding, there was broad agreement on what Gildersleeve called the German "professorial type."[76] In the eyes of Johns Hopkins faculty, it was a man of specialized study, strongly committed to fundamental research ("In Germany, the true scientific spirit is so deeply imbedded in the educated mind, that a subject which has a practical side is apt to be looked upon in a disrespected manner"),[77] and considerably more talented in supervising the promising students whom they admitted to their laboratory or seminar than in offering public lectures ("Long lists of books read off in a droning voice without a ray of appreciation to light up the doleful catalogue").[78]

This implies that German thoroughness as envisioned at Johns Hopkins was a highly gendered virtue, loaded with masculine overtones. Especially through its adjective, German thoroughness expressed an ideal that went beyond the thoroughness that female students at Johns Hopkins's nursing school were expected to display. While theirs was a diligence paired to accuracy that would turn American women into caring mothers and responsible citizens,[79] German-style thoroughness had more

74 W. Warde Fowler, "German Thoroughness (Prof. R. Wünsch)," in Fowler, *Essays in Brief for War-Time* (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1916), 72–77, at 74.

75 William H. Welch, "The Endowment of Research," *Science* 24 (1906): 6–12, at 6; Welch, "Introductory Address," *Transactions of the Association of American Physicians* 16 (1901): xvi–xxii, at xvi; Simon Flexner and James Thomas Flexner, *William Henry Welch and the Heroic Age of American Medicine* (New York: Viking Press, 1941), 91.

76 Basil L. Gildersleeve, "Professorial Types," *The Hopkinsian* 1 (1893): 11–18.

77 Remsen, "Science vs. Art," 692–93.

78 B. L. Gildersleeve, "Classical Studies in America," *The Atlantic Monthly* 78 (1896): 728–37, at 730.

79 Isabel Hampton Robb, "The Quality of Thoroughness in Nurses' Work: An Address to the Graduating Class at the Johns Hopkins Hospital Training School for Nurses, May 28, 1903," *Bulletin of the Johns Hopkins Hospital* 14 (1903): 225–29. Patricia D'Antonio elaborates on the gendered

muscular connotations. It invoked the heroic image of a scholar pushing the frontiers of science by applying rigorous "methods of investigation [...] to the enlargement of the field of knowledge."[80] This obviously drew on frontier imagery such as popularized by Frederick Jackson Turner in the 1890s,[81] but also on military codes of conduct such as embodied by General Ulysses S. Grant, whose thoroughness and perseverance were almost proverbial, especially in late-nineteenth-century moral advice literature.[82] Also, when Remsen depicted thoroughness as a necessary feature of "a full-grown scientific man," indispensable for anyone wishing to become "a power" in his field, he did not try to hide the masculine connotations of what this same genre called "manly thoroughness."[83] German thoroughness, in short, was deeply steeped in cultures of scientific masculinity.[84]

Masculine strength, finally, was important for achieving yet another ideal: advancing America's position in the world of science. When Remsen, Gildersleeve, and other Johns Hopkins faculty tried to turn their students into hero-scientists, they did so in the hope of breeding a generation of American scientists who would be able "to hold up [their] heads as equals of the Europeans in learning."[85] Local folklore about "Göttingen at Baltimore,"[86] with its implicit suggestion that seminar, laboratory, and hospital ward teaching were all imported from Germany, thus invoked an image of international scientific competition in which Americans faced the challenge of beating

subtext of this talk in *American Nursing: A History of Knowledge, Authority, and the Meaning of Work* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 39.

80 [Remsen], "Inaugural Address," 88.

81 Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin at Its Forty-First Annual Meeting, Held December 14, 1893* (Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Company, 1894), 79–112.

82 E.g., Charles Loring Brace, *Short Sermons to News Boys: With a History of the Formation of the News Boys' Lodging-House* (New York: Charles Scribner & Co., 1866), 130. On the mythic reputation of General Grant, see Joan Waugh, *U. S. Grant: American Hero, American Myth* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

83 Remsen, "Thoroughness," 33; Edward A. Horton, *Noble Lives and Noble Deeds: Forty Lessons, by Various Writers, Illustrating Christian Character* (Boston: Unitarian Sunday-School Society, 1893), 33.

84 On which see Erika Lorraine Milam and Robert A. Nye, "An Introduction to Scientific Masculinities," *Osiris* 30 (2015): 1–14; Falko Schnicke, *Die männliche Disziplin: Zur Vergeschlechtlichung der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft 1780–1900* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015); Heather Ellis, *Masculinity and Science in Britain, 1831–1918* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

85 Remsen, "Thoroughness," 34.

86 Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 377.

their German colleagues. As Johns Hopkins's first physics professor, Henry A. Rowland, asked rhetorically: "Shall our country be contented to stand by, while other countries lead in the race?"[87]

Beyond Baltimore

In the case of Johns Hopkins, then, the merging of epistemic virtues and national stereotypes into commonplaces like German thoroughness turns out to offer unique opportunities for comparing scholars otherwise separated by methods and subject matter. As the foregoing has shown, the *topos* of German thoroughness invoked the highly stylized image of a German scholar that took on different shapes in different contexts, but remained sufficiently recognizable to be able to travel across disciplinary divides. This, finally, raises the issue as to how unique the case of Johns Hopkins was. How common was it to associate epistemic virtues with national stereotypes?

First of all, nationalized character traits were not only discussed at Johns Hopkins. Nor were they always rendered as virtues. In the 1910s, Germanized vices played a key role in the French "new Sorbonne" debate—a clash between right- and left-wing intellectuals about French higher education reform.[88] When reform-minded Sorbonne professors like Charles Seignobos introduced German-style seminar teaching in order to promote Republican virtues of rationalism, egalitarianism, and scientific objectivity, conservative critics such as Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde replied by condemning the "sterile thoroughness" characteristic of "the cult of German science" that they perceived as "Germanifying" French higher education.[89] Varying on this trope, the French physicist and mathematician Pierre Duhem argued during World War I that German virtues such as meticulousness, industry, and thoroughness were dangerous, to the point of vicious, if not balanced by a characteristically French *esprit de finesse*.[90]

87 H. A. Rowland, "A Plea for Pure Science," *Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science* 32 (1883): 105–26, at 109.

88 Sarah Shurts, *Resentment and the Right: French Intellectual Identity Reimagined, 1898–2000* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2017), 93–135.

89 Agathon [pseudonym of Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde], *L'Esprit de la nouvelle Sorbonne: la crise de la culture classique, la crise du français* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1911), 13, 253; Pierre Lasserre, *La doctrine officielle de l'université: Critique du haut enseignement de l'état: Défense et théorie des humanités classiques* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1912), 478.

90 Pierre Duhem, *La science allemande* (Paris: A. Hermann & fils, 1915), 29–32, 36–37, 140–41.

Apart from this, French and German scholars were not alone in being associated with national character traits. Well before the United States began to replace Germany as a scientific *Leitkultur*, the German physiologist Emil du Bois-Reymond loudly complained about "Americanization"—a rhetorically effective term that Gildersleeve interpreted as a "cry of alarm" about American academics who prioritized "the immediate and practical" over "the remote and theoretical."[91] Especially when, in the interwar period, Johns Hopkins came to serve as a model of the American research university that foundations like the Rockefeller Foundation began to transplant to other countries, "American" became a morally charged adjective. In contexts where "American" served as symbolic shorthand for a set of vices, including especially an "uninterrupted, exclusive, and relentless striving after gain, riches, and influence,"[92] teaching French or British doctors "American methods" naturally evoked defensive responses that idealized the virtues of local medical practice.[93]

Nor were motivational texts and "cries of alarm" the only genres in which nationalized virtues figured prominently. In the decades around 1900, book reviewers, necrology writers, and biographers across Europe and North America made frequent use of nationalized virtues, mainly to describe the specific qualities of individual scholars. Du Bois-Reymond, for instance, was portrayed as a mixture of "Celtic fervour with Teutonic thoroughness"—or alternatively as a "happy blend of German thoroughness with French keenness"—while Thomas Edison was described as "French in his brilliance, more than German in his thoroughness, [and] […] totally American in the application of his genius to practical ends."[94] Similar language found its way into survey texts like John Theodore Merz's history of nineteenth-century science, which presented "measurement, calculation, and classification" as distinctively French qualities, "completeness and

91 Gildersleeve, "Classics and Colleges," 74, 76, under reference to Emil du Bois-Reymond, "Civilization and Science," *The Popular Science Monthly* 13 (1878): 257–75, 385–96, 529–39.

92 Paul Dehn, *Weltwirtschaftliche Neubildungen* (Berlin: Allgemeiner Verein für deutsche Literatur, 1904), as quoted in Otto Basler, "Amerikanismus: Geschichte des Schlagwortes," *Deutsche Rundschau* 224 (1930): 142–46, at 144.

93 Lion Murard and Patrick Zylberman, "Seeds for French Health Care: Did the Rockefeller Foundation Plant the Seeds between the Two World Wars?" *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 31, no. 3 (2000): 463–75, at 466; Christopher Lawrence, *Rockefeller Money, the Laboratory, and Medicine in Edinburgh, 1919–1930* (Rochester, NY: Rochester University Press, 2005), 30–31, 54–55.

94 John G. McKendrick, "Human Electricity," *The Fortnightly Review* 51 (1892): 634–41, at 636; A. D. W[aller], "Emil du Bois-Reymond, 1818–1896," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London* 75 (1905): 124–27, at 125; "Thomas Alva Edison," 199.

thoroughness of research" as German virtues, and "strong individualism" as a typically English character trait.[95]

German thoroughness, in short, was only one of many nationalized virtues that nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century scholars habitually invoked. They were used in attempts at answering Remsen's question, "What constitutes a good professor?", but also, more broadly, in portraying colleagues, mapping fields of study, and assessing the scholarly achievements of other countries.

Conclusion

Doubtless, German thoroughness was as clichéd an image as nineteenth-century stereotypes maintaining that "the English all have spleen, the Germans all eat sauerkraut, [and] the Spanish all smell of garlic and dance the bolero."[96] Yet precisely as a stereotypical image, German thoroughness was an attractive device for scholars articulating their visions of research and teaching in an age of scientific nationalism. Precisely as a commonplace known to colleagues in other disciplines, to prospective students, and to benefactors from inside and outside the German community in Baltimore, German thoroughness enabled scholars to communicate their views to broader audiences. Precisely as a *topos*, in short, the nationalized virtue established links of communication that protein cells or Lachmannian stemmatics could never provide.[97]

For historians of the sciences and the humanities interested in tracing epistemic virtue across disciplinary boundaries, these findings have three wider implications. First, they suggest that similarities between scholars in different disciplines are not always a matter of transfer between fields, but can also emerge out of shared repertoires. Second, these repertoires not only include scholarly theories, models, methods, and discipline-transcending

95 John Theodore Merz, *A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1896), 298, 213, 286. See also Pierre Duhem's juxtaposition of the French and English "minds" in *La théorie physique: Son objet et sa structure* (Paris: Chevalier & Rivière, 1906), 99–149.

96 Paul Lindau, "Deutsche Gründlichkeit und französische Windbeutelei: Offener Brief an den Literarhistoriker Herrn Dr. Julian Schmidt Wohlgeboren," in Lindau, *Literarische Rücksichtslosigkeiten: Feuilletonistische und polemische Aufsätze* (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1871), 145–57, at 148.

97 See, however, Lorraine Daston, "Type Specimens and Scientific Memory," *Critical Inquiry* 31, no. 1 (2004): 153–82.

identification figures such as Isaac Newton, but also broadly shared cultural images, phrases, and commonplaces, varying from the absent-minded professor with its centuries-long history in the Western imagination to nationalized virtues of the kind discussed in this chapter.[98] Finally, although historians are professionally responsible for correcting stereotypical images of the past, they should not forget that stereotypes also made their impact felt in history. If scholars in the past drew on clichéd images of national character to share their understandings of epistemic virtue with others, then historians of the sciences and the humanities should be attentive to the discursive power that such commonplaces could exert.

98 Gadi Algazi, "Gelehrte Zerstreutheit und gelernte Vergesslichkeit: Bemerkungen zu ihrer Rolle in der Herausbildung des Gelehrtenhabitus," in *Der Fehltritt: Vergehen und Versehen in der Vormoderne*, ed. Peter von Moos (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001), 235–50.

8. The Icarus Flight of Speculation: Philosophers' Vices as Perceived by Nineteenth-Century Historians and Physicists

With Sjang ten Hagen

Abstract: Why did nineteenth-century historians and physicists habitually warn against vices that they believed philosophers in particular to embody: speculation, absence of common sense, and excessive systematizing? This chapter interprets this "vice-charging" as a rhetorical practice aimed at delineating empirical research from *Naturphilosophie* and *Geschichtsphilosophie* as practiced in the heyday of German Idealism. For empiricist scholars committed to virtues like precision, thoroughness, and conscientiousness, the straw man of "the philosopher" represented everything they rejected. Consequently, in their historical narratives, historians and physicists consistently depicted philosophy either as a relic from the past or as a phase that they had virtuously left behind.

Keywords: epistemic vices, scholarly vices, boundary work, history of philosophy, history of physics, history of historiography

Introduction

Philosophical empiricism, argues Bas van Fraassen in *The Empirical Stance*, emerged "in a series of revolts, across Europe and America, against all forms of metaphysics."[1] Although this rebellion against metaphysics took on different forms, and was fought in different idioms, what was most distinctive,

1 Bas C. van Fraassen, *The Empirical Stance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 3.

Paul, Herman. *Virtues and Vices in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities: Explorations of a Discourse*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025.
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according to Van Fraassen, was not its philosophical beliefs but its cultivation of a certain "stance" or "attitude towards science."[2] Expanding on Van Fraassen's analysis, we might say that this was true not only of philosophical empiricism. Empiricists across the academic spectrum, in fields as varied as chemistry and art history, defined the virtues or attitudes necessary for good "empirical" performance in opposition to the perceived vices of metaphysicians, or philosophers more generally. In genres varying from book reviews and methodology manuals to academic lectures and obituaries, nineteenth-century German scholars in particular defined the ethos of "science" (*Wissenschaft*) *ex negativo* by warning students and colleagues against vices that philosophers in particular were believed to embody: speculation, absence of common sense, lack of attention to empirical data, and excessive systematizing.

Why did these purportedly philosophical vices play such a significant role in the self-image of empirically oriented disciplines like history and physics? In exploring this question, this chapter seeks to contribute to two emerging conversations. The first is a conversation between the history of philosophy and the history of fields that are conventionally studied under the rubrics "history of science" and "history of the humanities." Recent years have seen a sharp increase in historical interest in how academic disciplines interacted with one another on wider scales and through a greater variety of means than conventional mono-disciplinary history writing tended to convey. Thematic foci on scientific "personae" and the virtues typical of them have proven fruitful in exploring such connections.[3] Both personae and virtues often "traveled" across disciplinary divides, while also prompting discipline-specific debates on the marks of a good scholar (whether a historian or a physicist). Accordingly, if this chapter examines why nineteenth-century historians and physicists defined their preferred virtues in opposition to philosophers' vices, it does so primarily to draw attention to patterns of interaction between three fields that are typically studied in isolation from each other: philosophy, history, and physics. Even if the figure of the vicious philosopher as evoked by historians and physicists sometimes amounted to a rhetorical straw man, the polemics illustrate that

2 Ibid., 47.

3 Lorraine Daston and H. Otto Sibum, "Introduction: Scientific Personae and Their Histories," *Science in Context* 16, nos. 1–2 (2003): 1–8; Herman Paul, "The Virtues and Vices of Albert Naudé: Toward a History of Scholarly Personae," *History of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2016): 327–38; Herman Paul, "The Virtues of a Good Historian in Early Imperial Germany: Georg Waitz's Contested Example," *Modern Intellectual History* 15, no. 3 (2018): 681–709.

the persona of the philosopher was a matter of concern well beyond the community of professional philosophers.[4]

The second emerging conversation concerns a historical analysis of scholarly vices, which has the potential, or at least the ambition, to add historical depth and nuance to contemporary philosophical reflection on scholarly virtues and vices. While virtue ethics and virtue epistemology have become flourishing areas of scholarship, most philosophical studies of virtues deemed conducive to good academic performance show limited awareness of the fact that scholars have already been talking for centuries about character traits that must be cultivated or suppressed in the pursuit of scholarly aims.[5] In this context, historical epistemology as defined by Lorraine Daston—"the history of categories that structure our thought, pattern our arguments and proofs, and certify our standards for explanation"—may serve as a much-needed conversation starter between virtue ethics and virtue epistemology on the one hand and the histories of science and humanities on the other.[6] More specifically, in exploring the rhetorical practice of what Ian Kidd calls "vice-charging," this chapter contributes to what Kidd, elaborating on Daston's proposal, dubs a "historical vice epistemology."[7] Situated at the intersection of history and "vice epistemology" as practiced by Heather Battaly, Quassim Cassam, and others, this project of historicizing scholarly vices aims to trace not only where vices like speculation, prejudice, and dogmatism came from but also what layers of meaning they acquired or lost over time and how

4 Condren, Conal, Stephen Gaukroger, and Ian Hunter, eds., *The Philosopher in Early Modern Europe: The Nature of a Contested Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

5 See Sari Kivistö, *The Vices of Learning: Morality and Knowledge at Early Modern Universities* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Lejón Saarloos, "Virtue and Vice in Academic Memory: Lord Acton and Charles Oman," *History of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2016): 339–54; Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul, eds., *Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities* (Cham: Springer, 2017); Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, "Virtues of History: Exercises, Seminars, and the Emergence of the German Historical Discipline, 1830–1900," *History of Universities* 34, no. 1 (2021): 27–40; Sjang L. ten Hagen, "History and Physics Entangled: Disciplinary Intersections in the Long Nineteenth Century" (PhD thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2021); Christiaan Engberts, *Scholarly Virtues in Nineteenth-Century Sciences and Humanities: Loyalty and Independence Entangled* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022); Herman Paul, *Historians' Virtues: From Antiquity to the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

6 Lorraine Daston, "Historical Epistemology," in *Questions of Evidence: Proof, Practice, and Persuasion across the Disciplines*, ed. James Chandler, Arnold I. Davidson, and Harry Harootunian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 282–89.

7 Ian James Kidd, "Charging Others with Epistemic Vice," *The Monist* 99, no. 2 (2016): 181–97; Ian James Kidd, "A Case for an Historical Vice Epistemology," *Humana Mente* 14, no. 39 (2021): 69–86.

they functioned, both in scholars' discourse (for example, in methodology manuals) and in their day-to-day practice (for example, as performance criteria in book reviews).[8]

Focusing on history and physics (two strongly empirically oriented disciplines) in nineteenth-century Germany (by then the world's leading scientific country), we start the chapter by surveying which vices scholars from both disciplines attributed to philosophers. We subsequently interpret this vice-charging as a rhetorical practice aimed at delineating empirical scholarly research from *Naturphilosophie* and *Geschichtsphilosophie* as practiced in the heyday of German Idealism (which implies that "the philosopher" was, in fact, a rather specific kind of philosopher). This in turn can be interpreted as a typical case of "boundary work"—a strategy of contrasting one's own scholarly standards with the perceived deficiencies of a real or imagined "other"—between two newly emerging disciplines (history and physics) and the field in which both of them originated (philosophy).[9] Although this distancing was stronger at some moments than at others, we argue that it was central to the self-positioning of both disciplines, as witnessed by the fact that their historical narratives consistently depicted philosophy as belonging to a vicious past that historians and physicists had virtuously left behind. By way of conclusion, we reflect on what historical analysis of such discursive patterns—scholars *talking* about vices, as distinguished from scholars actually *displaying* vices—may contribute to historical vice epistemology as advocated by Kidd.

8 Heather Battaly, "Varieties of Epistemic Vice," in *The Ethics of Belief*, ed. Jonathan Matheson and Rico Vitz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 51–76; Heather Battaly, "Closed-Mindedness and Dogmatism," *Episteme* 15, no. 3 (2018): 261–82; Heather Battaly, "Closed-Mindedness as an Intellectual Vice," in *Virtue Theoretic Epistemology: New Methods and Approaches*, ed. Christoph Kelp and John Greco (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 15–41; Quassim Cassam, *Vices of the Mind: From the Intellectual to the Political* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Quassim Cassam, "Philosophical Virtues," *Metaphilosophy* 54, nos. 2–3 (2023): 195–207; Alessandra Tanesini, *The Mismeasure of the Self: A Study in Vice Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Ian James Kidd, Heather Battaly, and Quassim Cassam, eds., *Vice Epistemology* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

9 Thomas F. Gieryn, "Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists," *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 6 (1983): 781–95. Gieryn's concept of boundary work is increasingly being applied, not only to scientists patrolling the borders between science and nonscience, but also to scholars demarcating the boundaries between academic disciplines. See, e.g., Julian Hamann, "Boundary Work between Two Cultures: Demarcating the Modern *Geisteswissenschaften*," *History of Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2018): 27–38; Christiaan Engberts and Herman Paul, "Scholarly Vices: Boundary Work in Nineteenth-Century Orientalism," in Van Dongen and Paul, *Epistemic Virtues*, 79–90.

Vice-charging

What were the most common vices that nineteenth-century German historians and physicists attributed to philosophers? In answering this question, we limit ourselves to vices that were specifically attributed to the generic figure of "the philosopher." Our survey, in other words, is based on sources that talk about typical qualities of "the philosopher" or reflect on vices that are explicitly framed as "philosophical" vices. Such generic discussions of "the philosopher," we should add, were rather common at the time. German historians habitually invoked figures like "the politician" and "the artist" in discussing qualities that historians should either possess (political insight, literary skill) or keep at bay (political bias, fantasy).[10] "The philosopher" likewise functioned as an ideal-typical construct—not devoid of stereotypical features, yet also shaped by still-fresh memories of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and other influential Idealists—with which both historians and physicists engaged in defining their professional ethos. The analysis that follows is based on this type of source: texts that explicitly frame speculation or lack of common sense as a philosopher's vice.

Speculation was, indeed, the most common vice attributed to philosophers. As Sabrina Ebbersmeyer and Gayle Rogers have shown, speculation had had a rather eventful history in modern philosophy.[11] It had been exalted, by Hegel in particular, to the highest stage of human thinking but had also been condemned by Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx, and others for ignoring the empirical realities of human life. These different valuations in turn drew on a longer history in which speculation had been construed as either a legitimate metaphysical mode of knowing or as a flight into abstraction, hovering far above the practicalities of life.[12] Almost without exception, nineteenth-century historians and physicists took the critics' side: they framed speculation as the absolute "other" of the empiricist ethos that they themselves tried to cultivate. Moreover, they did so in explicit response to a perceived excess of speculative thinking among Idealist philosophers in early-nineteenth-century Germany.

10 Herman Paul, "'I Am Not a Politician': Professional Boundary Work in Wilhelmine Germany," *Journal of Modern European History* 18, no. 3 (2020): 237–42.

11 S. Ebbersmeyer, "Spekulation," in *Historisch Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 9, ed. Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 1355–72, at 1361; Gayle Rogers, *Speculation: A Cultural History from Aristotle to AI* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021), 17–21, referring to Boethius and his legacy.

12 Rogers, *Speculation*, 17–21; Ebbersmeyer, "Spekulation," 1361.

Hermann von Helmholtz, for instance, claimed that philosophers of Hegelian persuasion had studied nature only "quickly and speculatively," without much attention to empirical data.[13] These thinking habits made philosophers appear as counterparts to the "conscientious researchers of the facts" that Helmholtz wanted natural scientists to be.[14] Their "tedious work" required patience, conscientiousness, and cautiousness rather than the hubris of what Helmholtz called, with a telling reference to Greek mythology, the "unduly audacious Icarus flight of speculation."[15] Likewise, Helmholtz's friend and colleague Emil du Bois-Reymond complained about a long-standing "inclination toward philosophical speculation among the Germans," which he saw embodied by Idealist philosophy in general and by its *Naturphilosophie* in particular.[16] In a speech delivered in 1877, he expressed the hope that the recent successes of the natural sciences would help scholars "get rid of the speculation that continues to reemerge in Germany."[17] Like Helmholtz, Du Bois-Reymond associated speculation with "hubris"—Icarus's fatal trait of character.[18] By way of remedy, he proposed a series of empiricist virtues, including "diligence" and "manly seriousness."[19]

Suspicion of speculation was not limited to natural scientists. As Helmholtz noted in 1862, warnings and protests against this vice could be heard "in all branches of *Wissenschaft*," including the *Geisteswissenschaften* ("human sciences").[20] The discipline of history is a case in point. The field's main methodology book, by medieval historian Ernst

13 Hermann Helmholtz, *Ueber das Verhältniss der Naturwissenschaften zur Gesammtheit der Wissenschaften* (Heidelberg: Georg Mohr, 1862), 9.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Emil du Bois-Reymond, *Culturgeschichte und Naturwissenschaft: Vortrag gehalten am 24. März 1877 im Verein für wissenschaftliche Vorlesungen zu Köln* (Leipzig: Veit und Comp, 1878), 45. Both Helmholtz and Du Bois-Reymond presented themselves as spokesmen for the field of physics but also contributed to the development of psychology and physiology. On the fluid boundaries between these three emerging disciplines in nineteenth-century Germany, see Richard Staley, "Sensory Studies, or When Physics Was Psychophysics: Ernst Mach and Physics between Physiology and Psychology, 1860–71," *History of Science* 59, no. 1 (2021): 93–118; Alexandra Hui, *The Psychophysical Ear: Musical Experiments, Experimental Sounds, 1840–1910* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013).

17 Du Bois-Reymond, *Culturgeschichte und Naturwissenschaft*, 29.

18 Ibid., 35.

19 Emil du Bois-Reymond, *Gedächtnissrede auf Johannes Müller* (Berlin: F. Dümmler, 1860), 33; Emil du Bois-Reymond, "9 März: Gesammtsitzung der Akademie," in *Monatsberichte der Königlichen Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin aus dem Jahre 1876* (Berlin: G. Vogt, 1877), 190–94, at 190.

20 Helmholtz, *Ueber das Verhältniss*, 9.

Bernheim, unequivocally summoned historians to "tear themselves loose" from the vice of "philosophical speculation."[21] While "speculative history" continued to be practiced by philosophers and "aesthetes" (*Schöngeister*), real historians should know better: in Bernheim's view, they should "discipline" their fantasy and allow no assumptions or intuitions to color their work unless methodical research had proven them right.[22] Book reviewers in the *Historische Zeitschrift* adopted a similar tone, for instance, in accusing an author of being "still deeply immersed in speculation"—a quote in which the word "still" conveys the expectation that such unscientific behavior had become a thing of the past.[23] Like Helmholtz and Du Bois-Reymond, the historian Johann Gustav Droysen sought to strengthen this anti-speculative ethos by telling his students that he saw an "increasing separation between the exact and speculative disciplines" in all of German academia.[24] While philosophers and theologians continued to speculate, "exact" fields like history and physics no longer allowed for it.

Another vice attributed to philosophers was an *excessive inclination toward system building*, resulting in "system coercion" or friction between the logic of the system and the particularities of the real world. Historians were particularly fond of accusing philosophers of "forceful constructions" and "frightening systems."[25] Friedrich Christoph Schlosser, most notably, condescendingly referred to "our German creators of philosophic systems, who [...] spent years in their study [*Cabinet*] fabricating their speculations."[26] Apparently, for Schlosser, system building and speculation were related vices. From an empiricist point of view, after all, systems could only be constructed by speculative means. Echoing Schlosser, Carl von Noorden stated that while historians tried to find out what had really happened, philosophers were interested only in "the implementation of a philosophical

21 Ernst Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode: Mit Nachweis der wichtigsten Quellen und Hülfsmittel zum Studium der Geschichte* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1889), 140.

22 Ibid., 40, 89, 465.

23 Th[eodor?] B[ernardi?], review of *Vergleichende Erdkunde* by Ernst Kapp, *Historische Zeitschrift* 21, no. 2 (1869): 401–3, at 401.

24 Joh[ann] Gust[av] Droysen, *Grundriss der* Historik, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Veit und Comp, 1882), 33.

25 B[ernardi?], review of *Vergleichende Erdkunde*, 402; F. C. Schlosser, *Geschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts und des neunzehnten bis zum Sturz des französischen Kaiserreichs: Mit besonderer Rücksicht auf geistige Bildung*, vol. 7, 4th ed. (Heidelberg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1859), 29.

26 F. C. Schlosser, *Geschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts und des neunzehnten bis zum Sturz des französischen Kaiserreichs: Mit besonderer Rücksicht auf geistige Bildung*, vol. 3. (Heidelberg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1843), 76.

system."[27] Writing in the pages of the *Historische Zeitschrift*, Emil Feuerlein seemed right in observing that historians accustomed to "nonphilosophical" modes of thinking were "frightened off" by philosophers who seemed to create "systems as systems," or systems for the sake of system building.[28]

Although physicists were, on average, less averse to system building than historians, they, too, recognized excessive systematizing as a vice to which philosophers were especially prone. Acting as a spokesman for the German natural sciences, physics included, the physician Rudolf Virchow said that "no insight into the real natural course of events" has ever emerged "from the study rooms of the philosophers"—a phrase in which *Studirzimmern* had strong connotations of "armchair study," conducted without laboratories or instruments.[29] Fortunately, the emancipation of the natural sciences from *Naturphilosophie* had brought an end to such a lazy system of thinking; as Virchow put it, "To the degree that philosophical systems have been relegated to the background, sober observation and sound common sense have taken their rightful place."[30]

Lack of *common sense* as highlighted by Virchow was a third vice that both historians and physicists attributed to philosophers. More precisely, it was the absence of a virtue: *gesunde Menschenverstand*. While nineteenth-century German philosophers did not typically recognize common sense as a virtue—Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Friedrich Nietzsche had nothing but scorn for it—advocates of empirical research, both in history and in physics, reverted to an older, mostly eighteenth-century discourse in which common sense had typically been presented as a correction to unduly abstract, metaphysical modes of philosophical thinking.[31] According to Du Bois-Reymond, philosophers had lost "the language of common sense and plain reasoning."[32] This echoed a distinction that physics textbook author Ernst Gottfried Fischer had already made in 1827, in contrasting the "far-reaching grandiosities" of German philosophers with "the common, undiverted sense"

27 [Carl von Noorden], "Zur Beurtheilung Friedrich Christoph Schlosser's," *Historische Zeitschrift* 8, no. 1 (1862): 117–40, at 138.

28 Emil Feuerlein, "Ueber die culturgeschichtliche Bedeutung Hegel's," *Historische Zeitschrift* 24, no. 2 (1870): 314–68, at 317.

29 Rudolf Virchow, *Die Gründung der Berliner Universität und der Uebergang aus dem philosophischen in das naturwissenschaftliche Zeitalter* (Berlin: Julius Becker, 1893), 24.

30 Ibid., 19.

31 A. von der Lühe, "Sensus communis III: Neuzeit," in *Historisch Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 9, ed. Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 639–61, at 652–53, 643–47.

32 Emil du Bois-Reymond, *Über die Grenzen des Naturerkennens: Die sieben Welträtsel*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Veit und Comp, 1891), 70.

that he had claimed was necessary for acquiring "thorough knowledge of nature."[33] In Schlosser's vocabulary, *gesunde Menschenverstand* even had populist connotations insofar as the historian identified with "the German people" (*das deutsche Volk*) and did not hesitate to censure kings, princes, and generals for abuses of power and lack of interest in their subjects. So, when Schlosser called speculative philosophy a "sin against common sense," this offers further evidence, not only of interference between vices, but also of common sense being claimed as a virtue by authors who believed that empirical *Wissenschaft* required a keen interest in the ordinary realities of human life.[34]

While speculation, system coercion, and lack of common sense were the most important vices that both historians and physicists attributed to philosophers, they were not the only ones. Less prominent but still significant were charges of unbridled fantasy and lack of attention to empirical data. Leopold von Ranke, for instance, did not object to philosophers' ambition to obtain a panoramic view of history but argued against the preconceived ideas with which philosophers approached this task. The historian, according to Ranke, will not "determine in advance" what the whole of history must look like, "as does the philosopher, but while he observes the particular, he will be shown the course that the development of the world in general has taken."[35] Also, Du Bois-Reymond accused philosophers of obstructing the search for truth by not sufficiently restraining their fantasy—a theme that resonated among historians, too.[36] Even if these vices did not belong to the standard repertoire of arguments, they indicated a clear dismissal of philosophers' perceived working manner.

This brief survey illustrates three things. First, it shows that historians and physicists did not invent new vices in criticizing philosophers but drew on existing repertoires of bad scholarly habits. Speculation, most notably, had a centuries-old history, while a penchant for system building had been framed as a vice from at least the early eighteenth century.[37] Second,

33 Ernst Gottfried Fischer, *Lehrbuch der mechanischen Naturlehre*, vol. 1, 3rd ed. (Berlin: G. C. Nauck, 1827), xi–xiii.

34 F. C. Schlosser, *Geschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts und des neunzehnten bis zum Sturz des französischen Kaiserreichs: Mit besonderer Rücksicht auf geistige Bildung*, vol. 7, 4th ed. (Heidelberg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1859), 28–29.

35 Leopold von Ranke, "[Philosophie und Geschichte]" (1830), in Ranke, *Weltgeschichte*, vol. 9, pt. 2, ed. Alfred Dove and Georg Winter (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1888), vii–xi, at x.

36 Du Bois-Reymond, *Culturgeschichte und Naturwissenschaft*, 5; Heinrich Ulmann, "Über wissenschaftliche Geschichtsdarstellung," *Historische Zeitschrift* 54 (1885): 42–54, at 48–49; Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, 437–42.

37 Ch. Strub, "System," in *Historisch Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 10, ed. Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998), 823–56, at 832.

if historians and physicists attributed these vices to "the philosopher," their primary aim was not to criticize individual thinkers but to construct negative examples that could be held up to students and colleagues. Their audiences, in other words, consisted not of philosophers but of students in newly emerging, empirical branches of *Wissenschaft*. This may explain, third, why the images of "the philosopher" that they invoked were rather generic, or even outright stereotypical. Ironically, in invoking such stereotypes, historians and physicists ignored their own empiricist credo of carefulness, precision, and attention to detail. This raises the question: Why was it important to create such anti-models of scholarly virtue or straw men onto which all vices that students had to be warned against could be projected?

Demarcating boundaries

A clue as to why nineteenth-century German historians and physicists responded so allergically to philosophers' perceived vices is that their examples almost without exception came from a specific philosophical tradition: German Idealism as it had reigned supreme, especially at Hegel's own university in Berlin in the 1810s and 1820s. Physicists dissociated themselves from "philosophers," not because they mistrusted each and every philosopher in the world, but because they rejected the Idealist program of "nature philosophy" (*Naturphilosophie*), of which both Hegel and Friedrich von Schelling were seen as key representatives.[38] These nature philosophers, in turn, had had little patience with the attitudes of the physicists of their generation. Rejecting their "spiritless and unthinking empiricism," as Schelling put it in 1832, they preferred "speculative physics" instead.[39] Speculation had enabled these philosophers to construct universal

38 Kenneth Caneva, "Physics and Naturphilosophie: A Reconnaissance," *History of Science* 35, no. 1 (1997): 35–106; Denise Phillips, *Acolytes of Nature: Defining Natural Science in Germany, 1770–1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

39 Fr. W. J. v[on] Schelling, *Ueber Faraday's neueste Entdeckung: Zur öffentlichen Sitzung der K. Akademie der Wissenschaften, am 28. März 1832* (Munich: A. Weber, 1832), 12, as paraphrased in Caneva, "Physics and Naturphilosophie," 42. Although philosophers' perceptions of historians and physicists fall outside the scope of this chapter, a paper could be written about the dismissive attitude that Hegel and his followers adopted toward figures like Ranke ("merely an ordinary historian," as Hegel is reported to have said). Theodor Wiedemann, "Sechzehn Jahre in der Werkstatt Leopold von Ranke's: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte seiner letzten Lebensjahre (Schluß)," *Deutsche Revue* 18, no. 4 (1893): 253–65, at 258. See also, more broadly, Ian Hunter, "The Contested Persona of the Historian: On the Origins of a Permanent Conflict," in *How to Be a Historian:*

systems that they had seen as necessary for grasping nature in its entirety. Already in the 1800s, however, critical voices wondered whether this was the proper task of physics. Shouldn't physicists conduct experiments to examine the workings of nature in detail instead of developing scientifically unwarranted theories of everything?

Such empiricist critiques of speculation were voiced explicitly in the *Annalen der Physik und Chemie* (Annals of physics and chemistry), Germany's leading physics journal at the time. An 1824 article, for instance, dismissed *Naturphilosophie* as an "unthorough, superficial" branch of learning, guilty of bringing "the dreams of the imagination into *Wissenschaft*."[40] Likewise, physics textbooks from this period depicted nature philosophy as a product of "unbridled speculation" and "fantasy."[41] Some physicists even went so far as to characterize nature philosophy as a disgrace to German culture as a whole. In 1806, just years after the French Revolutionary Wars, physicist Paul Erman exclaimed that "twenty lost battles will not bring us as much disgrace as this deceiving and lying in our *Wissenschaft*."[42] Erman's diary reveals that this criticism was targeted especially at Schelling's "bizarre blending of metaphysics and physics."[43] Proper physics, according to Erman and his colleagues, should abandon all "speculative opinions" and engage in proper experimenting.[44] Within decades, this credo was adopted by virtually all German physicists: empiricist, experimental, and instrument-based physics became the norm.[45]

Similarly, historians' anti-philosophical rhetoric was not directed against Plato or Aristotle but against Idealist philosophers of history like Hegel. Shortly after his appointment at Hegel's university in Berlin, Ranke wrote to his brother: "What contains more truth, what brings us closer to knowledge of the essence of things: the pursuit of speculative thoughts or the grasping of the conditions of humanity?" This was not a difficult choice for the source-oriented historian that Ranke wanted to be: "I am in favor

Scholarly Personae in Historical Studies, 1800–2000, ed. Herman Paul (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 15–35.

40 Ludwig Choulant, "Versuch über Ludwig Wilhelm Gilbert's Leben und Wirken," *Annalen der Physik und Chemie* 76, no. 4 (1824): 453–71, at 468–69.

41 Christa Jungnickel and Russell McCormmach, *Intellectual Mastery of Nature: Theoretical Physics from Ohm to Einstein*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 26.

42 Cited in Wilhelm Erman, *Paul Erman: Ein Berliner Gelehrtenleben 1764–1851* (Berlin: Verlag für der Geschichte Berlins, 1927), 140.

43 Cited in ibid., 141.

44 Jungnickel and McCormmach, *Intellectual Mastery of Nature*, vol. 1, 27.

45 M. Norton Wise, *Aesthetics, Industry, and Science: Hermann von Helmholtz and the Berlin Physical Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 195–243.

of the latter option, because it is less prone to error."[46] Some eight months later, in a letter to Heinrich Ritter, Ranke went so far as to dismiss Hegel's philosophy of history as a "sophistic and intrinsically void philosophy that is only effective through the spell of strange formulas."[47] Following Ranke, Bernheim argued that philosophers of history in the Hegelian tradition had lost themselves in "unrestrained speculation" because they had disregarded "the sure foundations" of concrete historical events and rejected the methodical "control" of empirical research.[48] This had not only caused philosophers to lose the ground under their feet but also created, in Bernheim's view, an almost unbridgeable "gap between empirical history and philosophy of history."[49] The more historians came to regard it as their task not to identify patterns or regularities in the whole of human history but to assess the truth or falsity of historical statements in light of original historical sources, the more they became empiricists who preferred to immerse themselves in the details of medieval charters rather than to venture bold hypotheses about the unity of history.[50]

Both in history and physics, this "empirical turn" had implications for the persona of the researcher, which we understand as denoting the set of virtues, skills, and attitudes that scholars at a given time and place regard as important for doing their work.[51] As Ian Hunter points out, "The conflict between Rankean empirical history and Hegelian philosophical history" was a conflict between two "mutually hostile intellectual cultures" that represented "completely different ways of modelling the intellectual comportment or persona of the historian."[52] Much the same can be said about the conflict between the physicists and the *Naturphilosophen,* which largely revolved around the ethos appropriate for scientific study. Just as Ranke and his followers dissociated themselves from Hegel to the extent that they valued philological virtues like accuracy, precision, and attentiveness to details, physicists emphasized qualities of precision and exactitude, thereby

46 Leopold von Ranke, *Das Briefwerk*, ed. Walther Peter Fuchs (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1949), 104–5.

47 Ibid., 120.

48 Ernst Bernheim, *Geschichtsforschung und Geschichtsphilosophie* (Göttingen: Robert Peppmüller, 1880), 2–3.

49 Ibid., 13, 32.

50 Daniel Fulda, "History between Archival Research and Aspirations to Leadership in Society: 19th-Century Germans as Practitioners in History," in *Doing Humanities in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, ed. Efraim Podoksik (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 59–82.

51 Paul, "Virtues and Vices of Albert Naudé"; Paul, *How to Be a Historian*.

52 Hunter, "Contested Persona," 15.

conveying that they committed themselves to a more scientific persona than the early-nineteenth-century *Naturphilosoph*.[53]

In the nineteenth-century German university system, these quarrels had an important institutional dimension. Until well into the nineteenth century, historians, physicists, and philosophers all worked in one and the same *philosophische Fakultät*. In this philosophical faculty, the emerging empirical *Wissenschaften*, with their inbuilt tendency toward specialization, were long seen as inferior to philosophy with its promise to provide, if not a grand synthesis, then at least an all-encompassing map of human knowledge. The difference was more than a symbolic one, as courses in history and physics typically attracted fewer students than those in philosophy, which translated into lower salaries for professors in empirical fields of inquiry.[54] If this already proved fertile ground for anti-philosophical sentiments, the emergence of academic disciplines with institutional infrastructures (journals, professorships) for distinct fields of study was even more significant.[55] In the case of physics, this emancipation from philosophy was symbolized by its incorporation into newly created faculties of science. Because historians remained within the *philosophische Fakultät*, they had even more reason to distance themselves from their parent discipline. Their vice-charging can therefore also be interpreted as a form of boundary work. The habit of historians and physicists to contrast their own virtues with philosophers' vices was a rhetorically convenient way of creating and maintaining disciplinary boundaries.

Models and antimodels

By the mid-nineteenth century, these boundaries had become sufficiently established for historians and physicists to declare that they had won the battle against Idealist philosophy. In their historical narratives—book-length

53 Paul, "Virtues of a Good Historian"; Eskildsen, "Virtues of History"; M. Norton Wise, ed., *The Values of Precision* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); see also Markus Krajewski, "Genauigkeit: Zur Ausbildung einer epistemischen Tugend im 'langen 19. Jahrhundert,'" *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 39, no. 3 (2016): 211–29.

54 Christa Jungnickel and Russell McCormmach, *The Second Physicist: On the History of Theoretical Physics in Germany*, vol. 1 (Cham: Springer, 2017), 60.

55 Rudolf Stichweh, "The Sociology of Scientific Disciplines: On the Genesis and Stability of the Disciplinary Structure of Modern Science," *Science in Context* 5, no. 1 (1992): 3–15; R. Steven Turner, "The Great Transition and the Social Patterns of German Science," *Minerva* 25, nos. 1–2 (1987): 56–76.

disciplinary histories, but also obituaries and commemorative addresses—they began to depict philosophy as a thing of the past. Philosophers appeared no longer as contemporaries but as representatives of a prescientific age, in which empiricist *Wissenschaft* was still in its infancy. As was customary in this genre of Whiggish disciplinary history writing, the transition from vicious philosophy to virtuous science was illustrated by biographies of men who had stood either on the right or the wrong side of history.[56] Richly endowed with virtues and vices, respectively, these individuals served as models and anti-models, or as positive and negative examples of how to be an empirical scholar.

Emil du Bois-Reymond, for instance, presented Paul Erman as a model for emulation. Against the dark background of the "regrettable aberration of the German mind" that had been *Naturphilosophie*, Erman appeared in bright colors as someone whose "skeptical idiosyncrasy" had made him a staunch critic of nature philosophy.[57] Likewise, speaking about Erman's colleague Heinrich Gustav Magnus, Hermann von Helmholtz recounted how successfully the Berlin physicist had battled against the "misuse of speculation" that had been so common at his university.[58] Anti-models included not only Hegel but also older thinkers like René Descartes. According to Johann Christian Poggendorff, Descartes had been a typical philosopher:

> Gifted with great acuteness of mind and a rich imagination, he committed himself almost exclusively to the speculative direction; but an exaggerated confidence in the perfection of his metaphysical ideas, by which he believed he could explain everything, usually led him astray and into error.

Poggendorff thus concluded that Descartes, "as a physicist, cannot be presented as a model."[59]

56 On which see Loren Graham, Wolf Lepenies, and Peter Weingart, eds., *Functions and Uses of Disciplinary Histories* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1983); Rachel Laudan, "Histories of the Sciences and Their Uses: A Review to 1913," *History of Science* 31, no. 1 (1993): 1–34; Sjang ten Hagen, "History as a Tool for Natural Science: How Ernst Mach Applied Historical Methods to Physics," *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences* 52, no. 1 (2022): 40–79.

57 Emil du Bois-Reymond, "Gedächtnissrede auf Paul Erman," in *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin aus dem Jahre 1853* (Berlin: F. Dümmler, 1854), 1–27, at 1, 9.

58 Hermann Helmholtz, "Gedächtnisrede auf Gustav Magnus," in *Abhandlungen der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin aus dem Jahre 1871* (Berlin: G. Vogt, 1872), 1–17, at 13.

59 J. C. Poggendorff, *Geschichte der Physik: Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität zu Berlin* (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1879).

Historians also construed their discipline's past as a liberation from speculative approaches. Leopold von Ranke was assigned a pivotal role in this revolt against metaphysics, largely because of the "historical exercises" or informal research seminars that he had established to socialize his students into an ethos of painstaking source criticism.[60] The source criticism that Ranke had popularized among historians, said an obituary writer in 1886, had formed "a healthy and necessary backlash [*Rückschlag*] against the speculative acts of violence that German philosophy was accustomed to perpetrate on the factual course of world history."[61] Ranke's own students did much to keep this origin story alive. They depicted the Berlin *Altmeister* as "the great empiricist who broke the reign of speculation" by practicing a type of history that stood "in marked contrast to the historical-philosophical speculation of his time."[62] Alfred Dove likewise highlighted Ranke's dedication to empirical research by stating that "the prevailing doctrine of Hegel had nothing to offer to him; it only reinforced his empiricism."[63] What these examples show is that Ranke was revered as the founding father of an empirical, critical historiography that had taken the place formerly occupied by speculative *Geschichtsphilosophie*.

But what if physicists or historians, though firmly committed to an empiricist ethos, had made the youthful faux pas of attending the lecture course of an Idealist philosopher or perhaps even engaged in philosophizing themselves? Could they then still be held up as models for emulation? Or did this require hiding, glossing over, or apologizing for the sins of their youth? Du Bois-Reymond is, again, an illustrative example, as he had been a devout student of *Naturphilosoph* Henrik Steffens in the late 1830s.[64] Youthful naivete, said Du Bois-Reymond in 1877, had made him wander right into "the lecture halls of the world-constructing nature philosophers," along with many other "imaginative youngsters."[65] This confession, however, was followed by an almost Pauline conversion story. In his memoir, Du Bois-Reymond claimed

60 Eskildsen, "Virtues of History."

61 [Franz Mehring], "Leopold Ranke," *Volks-Zeitung* (25 May 1886).

62 G. v[on] Below, "Die neue historische Methode," *Historische Zeitschrift* 81, no. 1 (1898): 193–273, at 229; Robert Pöhlmann, "Ranke's Weltgeschichte," *Historische Zeitschrift* 51, no. 1 (1883): 31–53, at 32.

63 Alfred Dove, *Ausgewählte Schriftchen vornehmlich historischen Inhalts* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1898), 163.

64 Gabriel Finkelstein, *Emil du Bois-Reymond: Neuroscience, Self, and Society in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 17.

65 Emil du Bois-Reymond, *Der physiologische Unterricht sonst und jetzt: Rede bei Eröffnung des neuen Physiologischen Instituts der königl. Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin* (Berlin: August Hirschwald, 1878), 8.

that he had realized his mistake in a flash when entering the laboratory of Berlin's chemistry professor Eilhard Mitscherlich in 1837. From the very moment he saw the "beautiful" samples and apparatus at Mitscherlich's desk, Du Bois-Reymond told his readers, "I realized what my vocation was."[66] This autobiographical story, however, omitted some salient details. What Du Bois-Reymond did not tell his readers was that he had continued to study nature philosophy alongside physics and chemistry long after his introduction to laboratory experimentation. His grades in philosophy had even been higher than those in natural-scientific subjects.[67] Clearly, then, Du Bois-Reymond rewrote his personal past in light of his later negative perceptions of philosophy. In order to stylize himself as a diligent empiricist, he downplayed his philosophical activities.

A related example is a commemorative address on Wilhelm von Giesebrecht, a former pupil of Ranke's, which Sigmund Riezler delivered in 1891 at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in Munich. Riezler told his audience how Giesebrecht had begun his studies in Berlin in 1833, one and a half years after Hegel's death. Reportedly, he had been so impressed by Hegelian philosophy "that he proclaimed, with youthful vigor, Hegel alongside Goethe as his 'demigod,'" until his older cousin Wilke from Halle had warned him in a letter not to put his faith in Hegelian philosophy: "Beware lest any man spoils you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."[68] Although Wilke had quoted this apostolic admonition (Colossians 2:8) in the hope of bringing Giesebrecht back into the fold of the church, Riezler applied it to the issue of historians' relation to philosophy. In his account of Giesebrecht's life, the student's "zealotry [*Schwärmerei*] for the philosophers in vogue" had been a youthful exuberance, "just a quickly passing phase in his personal development."[69] As soon as Giesebrecht had joined Ranke's historical exercises and learned to mistrust the grand sweep of Hegel's historical narratives, he adopted "the reliable method of critical historical research" so thoroughly that his future books did not show the remotest affinity "either with Hegel or with any other philosophical system."[70]

66 Emil du Bois-Reymond, "[Entgegnung]," *Berliner Klinische Wochenschrift* 30, no. 8 (1893): 199.

67 Finkelstein, *Emil du Bois-Reymond*, 27.

68 Sigmund Riezler, *Gedächtnisrede auf Wilhelm von Giesebrecht gehalten in der öffentlichen Sitzung der k. b. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München zur Vorfeier ihres 132. Stiftungstages am 21. März 1891* (Munich: Verlag der k. b. Akademie, 1891), 11.

69 Ibid., 12.

70 Ibid., 13, 12.

Riezler's address amounted to a conversion story, too: the idle philosopher had turned into a reliable historian.[71] Accordingly, the story can be interpreted as the historian's equivalent of Du Bois-Reymond's transformation from a youthful philosopher into a devoted experimentalist. Both stories conveyed that in order to become a member of the discipline of history or physics, one had to overcome the vices of speculative philosophy.

Old vices in new contexts

One may wonder, finally, why historians and physicists continued to warn against philosophers' vices if the Idealist system builders who once embodied these vices had long disappeared from the philosophical scene. That physicist Gustav Theodor Fechner used the death of Schelling in 1854 as an occasion for heaping sharp criticism on "the audacious, panoramic view of Schelling and Hegel" is understandable enough.[72] It is less obvious, however, why Bernheim, born almost two decades after Hegel's death, still deemed it necessary to argue that Hegelian philosophical history "is incompatible with concrete science in its constructive principles."[73] If philosophy was relegated to the past, especially in the genre of disciplinary histories, why did historians and physicists persist in dissociating themselves from philosophers' vices?

One answer is that the later decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a surge of interest in scientific methodology, in the wake of which even practicing scientists occasionally found themselves addressing epistemological issues about the nature and limits of scientific knowledge.[74] As early as 1857, Helmholtz observed a rehabilitation of philosophy among his colleagues in the natural sciences, which he believed had been made possible by the waning influence of Idealism. Now that "the philosophical dump [*Bausch*] and related caterwauling [*Katzenjammer*] of Hegel and Schelling's nature philosophical systems seems over," he wrote, "people are starting to take interest in philosophy again."[75] Importantly, the kind of

71 See Franz X. von Wegele, *Geschichte der deutschen Historiographie seit dem Auftreten des Humanismus* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1885), 1035, for a similar story about Johannes Voigt.

72 Gustav Theodor Fechner, *Ueber die physikalische und philosophische Atomenlehre* (Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1855), 117.

73 Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, 473.

74 Henry M. Cowles, *The Scientific Method: An Evolution of Thinking from Darwin to Dewey* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020).

75 Cited in Leo Koenigsberger, *Hermann von Helmholtz*, vol. 1 (Braunschweig: Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn, 1902), 283.

philosophy that Helmholtz was talking about was "a far more unpretentious business in comparison to the speculative construction of God and the world"; it was not metaphysics but "the critique of the sources of knowledge and the theory of [the] method of scientific thinking" that Helmholtz was talking about—neo-Kantian epistemology in particular.[76] Similarly, in an influential book on the foundations of Newtonian mechanics, Ernst Mach argued for a "genuinely philosophical" approach to physics that had to be "anti-metaphysical" and devoid of the "excesses of the speculative method."[77] In short, when physicists continued to frame speculation as a vice, incompatible with empiricist virtues of restraint, diligence, and carefulness, one reason they did so was to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate forms of philosophical interest.[78]

While Bernheim's book *Geschichtsforschung und Geschichtsphilosophie* (Historical research and philosophy of history, 1880) demonstrates a similar interest in epistemological questions, it also illustrates a second reason scholars persisted in dissociating themselves from philosophers' vices. According to Bernheim, old enemies were reemerging in new guises. Although Hegelian philosophy was dead, positivists like Auguste Comte "disregarded the individual" just as much as Idealist philosophers of history had done.[79] Henry Thomas Buckle likewise appeared in Bernheim's book as a scholar whose "profoundly unhistorical mind" tended toward "dangerous one-sidedness," causing his work to be "entirely incompatible with scientific historical research."[80] Bernheim thus presented Buckle, like Comte, as an Idealist philosopher redivivus.

Something similar happened in the so-called *Lamprechtstreit*, prompted by the Leipzig historian Karl Lamprecht, who infuriated many a colleague by suggesting that "old" political history based on solid archival research

76 Cited in David Cahan, *Helmholtz: A Life in Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 533. On Helmholtz's role in promoting neo-Kantianism in German-speaking Europe, see Frederick Beiser, *The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism, 1796–1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 196–205.

77 Ernst Mach, *Die Mechanik in ihrer Entwicklung: Historisch-kritisch dargestellt* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1883), v, vii.

78 H. W. Dove, "Einige Bemerkungen über die meteorologischen Aufsätze des Hrn. Vettin," *Annalen der Physik und Chemie* 178, no. 4 (1857): 607–13, at 613; C. Eckhard, "Der gegenwärtige experimentelle Thatbestand der Lehre von der Hydrodiffusion durch thierische Membranen," *Annalen der Physik und Chemie* 204, no. 1 (1886): 61–100, at 62; Kurd Lufswitz, "Der Verfall der 'kinetischen Atomistik' im siebzehnten Jahrhundert," *Annalen der Physik und Chemie* 229, no. 3 (1874): 373–86, at 376.

79 Bernheim, *Geschichtsforschung und Geschichtsphilosophie*, 57.

80 Ibid., 100, 65.

should make way for a "new" mode of cultural history, aimed at identifying the psychological makeups of past civilizations.[81] After decades of polemicizing against Idealist philosophy of history, Rankean historians knew immediately what was at stake: Lamprecht was reviving the old evil of "metaphysical speculation."[82] Consequently, comparisons with Hegel were frequently made. Lamprecht's system, argued Georg von Below, "is not unlike Hegel's."[83] Didn't Lamprecht see, asked another commentator, how badly philosophical abstraction befitted historical writing? "We only need to recall the historical books written under the spell of Hegel's system."[84] In the pages of the *Historische Zeitschrift*, Robert Pöhlmann approvingly quoted Berthold Delbrück as saying that Lamprecht's historical writing made it look "as if we were still living in times when the great epics of speculative philosophy captivated the minds."[85] What all these references to Hegel conveyed was that Lamprecht's work was a step back rather than a step forward.[86] As the philosopher Heinrich Rickert, speaking about Lamprecht, summarized the *communis opinio*: "One would believe that, scholarly speaking, such speculation [...] had long had its day."[87]

Physicists, too, saw Idealist vices making unexpected comebacks. One of their main targets of criticism was energetics (*Energetik*) as advocated by Wilhelm Ostwald: an attempt at unifying physics by interpreting all natural phenomena as manifestations of energy. Ostwald set the tone for the debate by claiming that this project drew on the most promising aspects of philosophical Idealism, while avoiding its faults.[88] His critics, however, were quick to point out that energetics was nothing but a reincarnation of Hegel's and Schelling's nature philosophy. Consequently, the fight against *Energetik* was fought with time-honored weapons. Max Planck, most notably,

81 Roger Chickering, *Karl Lamprecht: A German Academic Life (1856–1915)* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993), 108–283.

82 N. N., "Notizen und Nachrichten," *Historische Zeitschrift* 79, no. 2 (1897): 344–84, at 347.

83 Below, "Neue historische Methode," 257 n. 2.

84 N. N., review of *Die neue historische Methode* by Georg von Below, and *Die historische Methode des Herrn von Below* by Karl Lamprecht, *Literarisches Centralblatt* (25 February 1899): 262–64, at 264.

85 Pöhlmann, "Ranke's Weltgeschichte," 46–47, quoting Berthold Delbrück, *Die indogermanischen Verwandtschaftsnamen: Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Alterthumskunde* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1889), 593.

86 Below, "Neue historische Methode," 225.

87 Heinrich Rickert, *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung: Eine logische Einleitung in die historischen Wissenschaften*, vol. 1 (Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1896), 612 n. 1.

88 Paul Ziche, "The 'New Philosophy of Nature' around 1900: Metaphysical Tradition and Scientistic Innovation," in *Wilhelm Ostwald at the Crossroads between Chemistry, Philosophy and Media Culture*, ed. Britta Görs, Nikolaos Psarros, and Paul Ziche (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2005), 29–46, at 32.

argued that energetics was a "metaphysical," nonempirical endeavor that should not be confused with real physics. He feared, however, that aspiring physicists would be misled: Ostwald was encouraging students to immerse themselves in "dilettantish speculations" rather than in "thorough study of existing masterpieces" of the discipline.[89]

Both historians and physicists thus kept warning against speculation, system building, and lack of common sense, partly to explain that renewed interest in epistemological questions did not imply a relapse into nonempirical modes of thinking, and partly because they worried about old vices reemerging in new contexts.

Conclusion

What, if anything, can this analysis of vice-charging by nineteenth-century historians and physicists contribute to the two conversations mentioned in the introduction: a dialogue between historians of philosophy and historians of other disciplines, on the one hand, and a rapprochement between historical and philosophical perspectives on scholarly vices, on the other? This chapter has joined the first conversation by showing that the persona of the philosopher mattered not only to philosophers but also to scholars in adjacent fields (even if the latter often discussed philosophers' habits in rather stereotypical terms). Also, the chapter has argued that such negative images of "the philosopher" served as means of defining *ex negativo* the empiricist ethos of two newly emerging fields. Historians' and physicists' polemicizing against philosophers is therefore best interpreted as a means for negotiating the boundaries between established and emerging academic disciplines. This in turn implies that history, physics, and philosophy should not be studied in isolation from one another: their interaction was more profound than conventional mono-disciplinary history writing has allowed us to see.

The second conversation, with vice epistemologists and other philosophers interested in scholarly vices, seems a more challenging one. In the spirit of Lorraine Daston's historical epistemology and Ian Kidd's historical vice epistemology, this chapter has examined scholarly vices in a historicizing mode. It has argued that vices like speculation took on new meanings in new contexts, while showing that historians and physicists' perceived need to charge philosophers with vicious habits changed over the course of the

89 Max Planck, "Gegen die neueren Energetik," *Annalen der Physik und Chemie* 293 (1896): 72–78, at 77, 78.

nineteenth century. All this confirms that "it is not always the same kind of ethos, or the same kind of self, that is involved: both have histories."[90] Historical study of scholarly vices, in other words, may add historical depth and nuance to philosophers' accounts of scholarly vices. The complicating factor, however, is that historical findings of the kind presented in this chapter may not match too well with the research foci of vice epistemologists. Especially insofar as this chapter has focused on the *language of vice*, philosophers may object that this tells little about vices *as such*.

If virtue and vice epistemologists did nothing but conceptual analysis, this reservation would be warranted. In reality, however, the field shows a strong interest in applying philosophical insight into educational contexts—teaching intellectual virtues has become a subject of study on its own—while also offering concrete suggestions on how to remedy epistemic injustices in real-life situations.[91] Insofar as this means that the field seeks to "contribute to the ameliorative task of improving both our epistemic characters and the epistemic dynamics of our communities," language of virtue and vice as used by nineteenth-century historians and physicists suddenly becomes relevant, not for any *conceptual clarity* that it offers about the nature of speculation, but because it demonstrates that scholars *cared* about virtues and vices, that they made great efforts to *specify* which virtues were most important in their research areas, and that they tried to *socialize* their students into these virtues, both by talking about duties and dangers and by presenting (positive or negative) models of virtue and vice.[92] No matter how polemical and self-justificatory this discourse could be, it demonstrates that there has been a tradition—indeed, a centuries-long tradition—of interpreting scholarly work and the demands it made on researchers in terms of virtuous character traits.[93] This suggests that, in the realm of scholarship at least, vice epistemologists do not need to *apply* abstract notions of virtue and vice to a field unfamiliar with this terminology. Instead, philosophers might want to *retrieve* and *articulate* in more robust philosophical terms what Helmholtz, Ranke, and others knew already by the nineteenth century: namely, that *Wissenschaft* requires the cultivation of virtuous habits of mind and dissociation from vices detrimental to scholarly work.

90 Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 40.

91 Jason Baehr, *Intellectual Virtues and Education: Essays in Applied Virtue Epistemology* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Jason Baehr, *Deep in Thought: A Practical Guide to Teaching for Intellectual Virtues* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Cassam, *Vices of the Mind*; Tanesini, *Mismeasure of the Self*.

92 Kidd, "Charging Others," 181.

93 Paul, *Historians' Virtues*.

9. *Labor ipse voluptas*: Virtues of Work in Nineteenth-Century Germany

Abstract: Why were Leopold von Ranke's contemporaries so highly impressed by the productivity and appetite for work that Germany's most famous historian had displayed, even in old age? How widely shared were the virtues of work attributed to Ranke? Did his admirers interpret his demanding work rhythm as a model for imitation or, alternatively, as an achievement unattainable by ordinary mortals? Drawing on a rich array of memoires and obituaries, this chapter argues that the virtues of work attributed to Ranke were central to the self-image of Germany's middle-class society. Ranke's motto, *labor ipse voluptas* ("the joy lies in the work itself"), expressed an appreciation of hard work that was found not merely among academics but throughout the German *Bildungsbürgertum*.

Keywords: epistemic virtues, scholarly virtues, middle-class virtues, industriousness, work ethic

Introduction

Hardly had Leopold von Ranke died in May 1886 when one of his former assistants, Theodor Wiedemann, received a letter from a fellow historian inquiring about Ranke's work habits. "Please give me a description of the method of work," he wrote. "Did v. Ranke dictate all his work? How many hours a day could he work?"[1] Wiedemann's answer came in the form of a long series of articles—fifteen installments, published over the course of two years—which offered an intimate portrait of Ranke's daily habits. They described the furniture in Ranke's apartment, the housecoat he preferred

1 Quoted in Theodor Wiedemann, "Sechzehn Jahre in der Werkstatt Leopold von Ranke's: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte seiner letzten Lebensjahre [I]," *Deutsche Revue* 16, no. 4 (1891): 164–79, at 165 n. 1. As Wiedemann quoted this letter in English, the inquiry might have come from an American admirer of Ranke.

Paul, Herman. *Virtues and Vices in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities: Explorations of a Discourse*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025.
DOI 10.5117/9789048562985_CH09

to wear, the kinds of meat he liked best, the biscuits he used to devour with his evening tea, and the brand of mineral water that his doctor had advised him to drink.[2] With equal attention to detail, Wiedemann recounted how Ranke as a man in his eighties had usually structured his day. The fact that he was almost blind at the time made him dependent on assistants, to whom he dictated his letters and chapters and who even helped him carry out his research by reading aloud from books and collections of records.[3] While the morning shift, from half past nine until two o'clock, was usually done by a recent graduate, Wiedemann himself did the evening shift, which could last until well after midnight ("occasionally until half past one in the morning"), only interrupted by a fifteen-minute tea break around ten o'clock. Clearly, this was the working schedule of a man blessed with an "extraordinary capacity for work."[4]

Although Wiedemann's articles were singularly detailed, compared to other tributes prompted by Ranke's death (many dozens of lengthy articles, including personal memoirs and obituaries with firsthand recollections about Germany's most illustrious historian), their focus on his work ethic was far from unique.[5] If authors did not explicitly mention Ranke's time management skills ("his time was scrupulously regulated"),[6] they at least marveled at his "never-ceasing creative power" or "astonishing capacity for work," both of which seemed miraculously unimpaired by his limited eyesight and other age-related problems.[7] Sophie Weisse, the daughter of a former student of Ranke's who had visited the historian just weeks before his death, was one among many who noticed the striking contrast between Ranke's almost emaciated body and his "apparently inexhaustible and indomitable intellect." She recounted how the silver-haired scholar had laughed away her amazement at his appetite for work ("I no longer have anything else to do"). Lest her readers think that Ranke had been busy with small projects, Weisse added that this answer "came from the lips of a man of ninety, engaged with all his might on a gigantic task," namely the writing

2 Theodor Wiedemann, "Sechzehn Jahre in der Werkstatt Leopold von Ranke's: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte seiner letzten Lebensjahre [II]," *Deutsche Revue* 16, no. 4 (1891): 322–39, at 330.

3 On Ranke's near-blindness, see Heinz Duchhardt, *Blinde Historiker: Erfahrung und Bewältigung von Augenleiden im frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2021), 27–58.

4 Wiedemann, "Sechzehn Jahre [II]," 328, 330.

5 See the list of obituaries (1886–87) in Günter Johannes Henz, *Leopold von Ranke in Geschichtsdenken und Forschung*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2014), 647–52.

6 Alfred Stern, "Ranke: Ein Nachruf," *Die Nation* 3 (1886): 510–13, at 513.

7 Georg Winter, "Ranke und die Entstehung seiner Weltgeschichte," *Die Gegenwart* 35 (1889): 84–88, at 85; H. Simonsfeld, "Leopold v. Ranke [II]," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung* (27 March 1889): 1–4, at 3.

of a multivolume world history.[8] No matter how diverse the chorus of voices commemorating Ranke was, almost everyone shared Wiedemann's and Weisse's fascination for what the otherwise critical Marxist historian Franz Mehring admiringly described as "a capacity and an appetite for work as are granted to only a few elected mortals."[9]

While memoirs like Wiedemann's have received some scholarly attention, most notably from Heinz Duchhardt, who recently devoted an entire book to Ranke's *amanuensis*, historians have typically read these texts with an eye to what they say about Ranke and the manufacturing of his *Weltgeschichte*.[10] This chapter, by contrast, will treat them more broadly as evidence of an obsession with hard work that was characteristic of but certainly not limited to German historians at the time. Drawing on personal, "anecdotal" memoirs, such as those written by Ranke's former assistants and visitors from abroad, this chapter will consider why Ranke's work ethic elicited so much comment and admiration.[11] What does this reveal about the qualities that historians were supposed to possess and, more generally, notions concerning the virtues of work in nineteenth-century Germany (and beyond)?

Human interest stories

It is worth noting that Wiedemann was not the first secretary who, after the death of his employer, offered the curious public a glimpse of the daily habits of a famous German scholar.[12] Intentionally or not, Wiedemann followed the model of Reinhold Bernhard Jachmann and Ehregott Andreas Christoph Wasianski, two former assistants of Immanuel Kant, both of whom

8 Sophie Weisse, "Leopold von Ranke: Reminiscences of Berlin, 1884–1885," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 140 (1886): 251–58, at 251, 257. I discuss this article at greater length in Herman Paul, "Bloemen voor Leopold von Ranke: Naar een cultuurgeschiedenis van de geschiedwetenschap," in *Alles is cultuur: Vensters op moderne cultuurgeschiedenis*, ed. Remieg Aerts, Klaas van Berkel, and Babette Hellemans (Hilversum: Verloren, 2018), 164–77.

9 [Franz Mehring], "Leopold Ranke," *Volks-Zeitung* (25 May 1886).

10 Heinz Duchhardt, *Rankes Sekretär: Theodor Wiedemann und die Bücher-Werkstatt des Altmeisters* (Berlin: Vergangenheitsverlag, 2021); Günter Johannes Henz, *Leopold von Ranke in Geschichtsdenken und Forschung*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2014), 40–47.

11 Because of this focus on Ranke's work ethic, this chapter will not discuss reminiscences like Herman Wichmann's, which only dealt with Ranke's social life. See Herman Wichmann, "Meine Beziehungen zu Leopold v. Ranke," in Wichmann, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Ries & Erler, 1887), 167–86, and "Leopold v. Ranke unter Freunden," ibid., 187–206. Paula Quint (Nederlands Muziek Instituut) kindly provided me with a scanned version of these articles.

12 I am indebted to my research assistant, Caroline Schep, for identifying some of the sources discussed in this section.

had published an intimate portrait of the Königsberg philosopher almost immediately after his death in 1804. With scrupulous attention to detail, their books described the dishes served on Kant's table, the philosopher's habit of smoking one pipe of tobacco a day, the open windows that Kant believed stimulated his health, and the blankets on his bed, in which the philosopher often wrapped himself, as if in a cocoon.[13] Unsurprisingly, Kant's strictly maintained time schedules received ample attention, too. Wasianski related how Kant's old servant, Martin Lampe, always entered the bedroom precisely at five minutes before five o'clock to wake his master with a loud "Es ist Zeit!," after which Kant's day would unfold with almost military precision.[14]

Following this model, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's testamentary executor, Friedrich von Müller, did not believe his sketch of Goethe's life and character to be complete without an account of his working rhythm. "Time was most precious to him; he knew better than anyone how to use, really to exploit it."[15] Not only did Goethe plan his day meticulously, while using every spare minute; he was also often lost in thought, even interrupting a conversation with a royal visitor to write down a sudden idea for his *Faust* (or so the story went).[16] Alexander von Humboldt, likewise, was posthumously commemorated in a series of publications that paired anecdotes and gossip with recollections and fragments of letters. One such publication quoted Humboldt as saying that he used to work, even at an advanced age, until two or three o'clock in the morning, after which he slept no more than four hours. This nightly labor was unavoidable, or so the author claimed, given the amount of correspondence that Humboldt had to handle. With some two thousand outgoing letters per year, Germany's most celebrated scientist was said to spend a fortune of about five to six hundred thalers annually on postage.[17] Another source added that, shortly before his death, Humboldt had an announcement published in the *Vossische Zeitung* asking the public

13 E. A. C. Wasianski, *Immanuel Kant in seine letzten Lebensjahren: Ein Beytrag zur Kenntnis seines Charakters und häuslichen Lebens aus dem täglichen Umgange mit ihm* (Königsberg: Friedrich Nicolovius, 1804), 20, 39, 29–30, 32; Reinhold Bernhard Jachmann, *Immanuel Kant geschildert in Briefen an einen Freund* (Königsberg: Friedrich Nicolovius, 1804), 161–78.

14 Wasianski, *Immanuel Kant*, 38, 40. See also Ludwig Ernst Borowski, *Darstellung des Lebens und Charakters Immanuel Kant's* (Königsberg: Friedrich Nicolovius, 1804), 101–3.

15 Friedrich von Müller, *Goethe in seiner practischen Wirksamkeit: Eine Vorlesung in der Academie Gemeinnütziger Wissenschaften zu Erfurt am 12. September 1832* (Weimar: Wilhelm Hoffmann, [1832]), 33.

16 Ibid.

17 [Friedrich Althaus], *Briefwechsel und Gespräche Alexander von Humboldt's mit einem jungen Freunde: Aus dem Jahren 1848 bis 1856* (Berlin: Franz Duncker, 1861), 30, 135, 137.

"not to use my house as an intelligence office," as an endless stream of letters asking for advice distracted him too much from his studies.[18]

Although such human interest stories could in principle be written by anyone close to a scholar of some renown, Ranke was one of very few German historians who posthumously received such treatment. Apart from a small, local newspaper article on Heinrich von Sybel's working and eating habits,[19] the only comparable case is that of Theodor Mommsen, the great historian of antiquity, for whom several students published personal "reminiscences" after his death in 1903.[20] Arguably, therefore, a first answer to the question as to why Ranke's work habits received so much attention in the press is that he belonged, or was perceived as belonging, to a class of scholars whose fame was such that the general public could be excused for being interested in every detail of their personal lives. This explains not only why memoirs like Wiedemann's appeared in cultural monthlies, which were intended for broad middle-class audiences, but also why Wiedemann felt entitled to dwell on details: "When it comes to great men, one also likes to be instructed about the outward appearances of life, about food and drink."[21]

Time-honored repertoires

This first answer—Ranke was a famous German professor—is a little too general, though, to account for historians' specific interest in Ranke's "methods of work" (*Arbeitsmethode*).[22] Why did they want to know how many hours a day Ranke sat at his desk? Why were they so eager to circulate stories of the kind that Ranke only reluctantly granted his assistants an evening off on Christmas Eve, trying to persuade them year after year to

18 [Karl Müller], *Blätter der Erinnerung an Alexander von Humboldt* (Berlin: Hasselberg, 1860), 146.

19 "Aus Heinrich von Sybel's Heim," *Leipziger Tagesblatt* (15 August 1895).

20 [Fritz Jonas], *Erinnerungen an Theodor Mommsen zu seinem hundertjährigen Geburtstage* (Berlin: Trowtisch & Sohn, [1917]); Richard Schöne, *Erinnerungen an Theodor Mommsen zum 30. November 1917*, ed. Hermann Schöne (Münster: Presidium der 54. Versammlung deutscher Philologen und Schulmänner, 1923). As Hans Kloft has noticed in "Die Nachrufe auf Theodor Mommsen," in *Theodor Mommsen: Wissenschaft und Politik im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Alexander Demandt, Andreas Goltz, and Heinrich Schlange-Schöningen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 282–317, at 286–87, Mommsen's work ethic was a major theme in the obituaries provoked by his death. In the memorable words of one obituary writer, Mommsen had had the "production output of an entire Academy institute" (ibid., 284).

21 Wiedemann, "Sechzehn Jahre [II]," 330.

22 Wiedemann, "Sechzehn Jahre [I]," 165.

spend that festive evening in his study instead of next to a Christmas tree?[23] This anecdote points to a second explanatory variable. Anecdotes about excessively hard-working scholars have a history of their own. Throughout the ages, scholars have been remembered for prioritizing their work over their health, sacrificing sleep to prepare for their lectures, and neglecting family duties for the sake of finishing a book.[24] Many of these tropes, moreover, were repeated across the centuries, especially in memoirs and obituaries. Even if there are no direct precedents to the story of Ranke being surprised that his assistants preferred not to work on Christmas Eve, the anecdote reminds one of cases like that of Guillaume Budé, the French humanist who reportedly managed to work even on his wedding day.[25] Historians highlighting Ranke's work habits thus followed a well-established template: they interpreted the historian's life in terms of commonplaces that were often centuries old.

Wiedemann's fascination with Ranke's time schedule is a case in point. In early modern Europe, such schedules were a standard ingredient of scholarly biographies. According to Melchior Adam's *Vitae Germanorum philosophorum* (1615), Philip Melanchthon used to wake up shortly after midnight so that he could do a good deal of writing before breakfast. Martin Crusius, the German classicist, allowed himself to rise much later, at five o'clock, yet continued his studies until ten in the evening.[26] A century later, the French *érudit* Sébastian le Nain de Tillemont was said to rise at half past four (or at four o'clock in the season of Lent) to study and pray until lunch, after which he went out for a walk, worked again until seven, and went to bed around half past nine.[27] Although the reliability of such stories is difficult to assess, it is clear that they portrayed their protagonists as faithfully following advice of the sort issued by Heinrich Bullinger, among others. To ensure maximum efficient use of time, Bullinger had recommended "fixed hours" for prayer, study, and domestic duties, which were to be "observed strictly" so as not to lose precious

23 Georg Winter, "Erinnerungen an Leopold von Ranke," *Nord und Süd* 38 (1886): 204–25, at 217.

24 See Dirk van Miert, "Scholars Working Themselves to Death: Casaubon and Baronio Compared," in *Rethinking the Work Ethic in Premodern Europe*, ed. Gábor Almási and Giorgio Lizzul (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 185–205.

25 Gábor Almási, "The Work Ethic in Humanist Biographies: The Case of Willem Canter," *Hungarian Historical Review* 8, no. 3 (2019): 594–619, at 614–15.

26 Melchior Adam, *Vitae Germanorum superiori, et quod excurrit, seculo philosophicis et humanioribus literis clarorum*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: s.n., 1615), 200, 492. I would like to thank Dirk van Miert for bringing these passages to my attention.

27 [Michel Tronchay], *Vie de M. Lenain de Tillemont avec des réflexions sur divers sujets de morale, et quelques lettres de pieté* (Cologne: s.n., 1711), 24.

time.[28] Similarly, Italian humanists like Petrarch had drafted time schedules that allowed for six hours of sleep and two hours of non-work-related duties, thereby leaving sixteen hours per day for concentrated study.[29] So when Wiedemann told his readers that Ranke's days were structured around the working sessions with his assistants, he suggested that the historian fitted conventional images of scholarly life at least in one respect: his working rhythm was as unrelenting as it was demanding.

Clearly, Ranke's admirers did not impose these commonplaces on Ranke's biography as if the historian himself were not a factor involved. Ranke had lived out many a *topos*, especially in matters of work ethic. While away for research in Vienna in the 1820s, he had told a friend in detail about his daily schedule (he got up between six and seven, had breakfast with coffee, studied until the library opened at nine, read sources until noon, and so on).[30] Likewise, the motto that Ranke had chosen on the occasion of his ennoblement, *labor ipse voluptas* ("the joy lies in the work itself"), drew on ancient models. Whether or not the saying echoed Livy's *labor voluptasque* or Martial's *iuvat ipse labor*,[31] at least it showed that Ranke had been happy to align himself with early modern scholars such as Isaac Watts, who had suggested *labor ipse voluptas* as an appropriate motto for a life of learning.[32] Ranke's assistants were therefore not alone in situating their master in a venerable tradition: Ranke's self-fashioning as a hard-working scholar had drawn on existing repertoires, too.

Nostalgia—or not?

To what extent did such traditional motifs used in sepia-colored biographical articles convey a sense of Ranke belonging to an age that had come to an

28 Heinrich Bullinger, *Studiorum ratio*, ed. Peter Stotz, vol. 1 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1987), 18. Cf. Max Engammare, *L'ordre du temps: l'invention de la ponctualité au XVIe siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 2004), 86–89.

29 Francesco Petrarca, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, trans. Aldo S. Bernardo, vol. 3 (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 195 (*Rerum familiarium libri*, XXI.12).

30 Leopold Ranke to Heinrich Ritter, 28 October 1827, in Ranke, *Das Briefwerk*, ed. Walther Peter Fuchs (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1949), 119–23. See also Falko Schnicke, *Die männliche Disziplin: Zur Vergeschlechtlichung der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft 1780–1900* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015), 316–37.

31 Andreas D. Boldt, *Leopold von Ranke: A Biography* (London: Routledge, 2019), 175–76.

32 I. Watts, *The Improvement of the Mind: Or, a Supplement to the Art of Logick: Containing a Variety of Remarks and Rules for the Attainment and Communication of Useful Knowledge, in Religion, in the Sciences, and in Common Life* (London: James Brackstone, 1741), 13–14.

end? Is it true that Georg Winter, Wiedemann, and their colleagues were not merely commemorating an old man, born in the eighteenth century,[33] but also a type of scholarly life that was so old-fashioned as to evoke a sense of distance or nostalgia? By the late 1880s, German *Geschichtswissenschaft* had changed substantially compared to the 1820s, when Ranke had published his *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514* and received his professorial chair at Berlin.[34] Perhaps the most important development had been the creation of a research infrastructure consisting of journals like the *Historische Zeitschrift*, committees like the Historische Kommission at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences (founded at Ranke's initiative), and source-editing projects modeled on the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. Insofar as historians were not teaching or supervising students, research institutions like these kept them busy for years on end. While offering employment to a younger generation of scholars, not seldom under conditions that justified analogies between research and factory work, these institutions also made significant demands on senior historians, who had to serve as directors, supervisors, and editors of journals and projects. Given how often scholars in such contexts complained about a chronic lack of time or, more specifically, about their own writing projects suffering under the constant pressure of duties and deadlines,[35] one wonders how they looked at Ranke's quasi-solitary monographic work practice. To what extent were their perceptions of Ranke's work ethic imbued with a sense of nostalgia for a time when historians could still write one monograph after another, unhindered by administrative or editorial duties?

Following genre conventions, several obituaries declared that Ranke's death marked the end of an era (a diagnosis that was lent additional

33 So explicitly J. [sic] Jastrow, "Leopold von Ranke †," *Tägliche Rundschau* (28 May 1886): 489–91, at 490.

34 See the broad surveys of nineteenth-century German historiography in Matthias Middell, "Germany," in *Atlas of European Historiography: The Making of a Profession*, ed. Ilaria Porciani and Lutz Raphael (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 159–66; Daniel Fulda, "History between Archival Research and Aspirations to Leadership in Society: 19th-Century Germans as Practitioners in History," in *Doing Humanities in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, ed. Efraim Podoksik (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 59–82; and Herman Paul, "Historical Studies in Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Case of Hartwig Floto," in *The Palgrave Handbook of the History of the Human Sciences*, ed. David McCallum (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 207–26.

35 See, e.g., Ludwig Quidde to Ernst Bernheim, 29 September 1882 and 10 July 1883, Ludwig Quidde Collected Papers, box 1, Swarthmore College Peace Collection; Ernst Bernheim to Karl Lamprecht, 2 January 1885, in *"Über das eigentliche Arbeitsgebiet der Geschichte": Der Briefwechsel zwischen Karl Lamprecht und Ernst Bernheim sowie zwischen Karl Lamprecht und Henri Pirenne 1878–1915*, ed. Luise Schorn-Schütte and Mircea Ogrin (Cologne: Böhlau, 2017), 66–67, at 67.

credibility by the almost simultaneous death of Georg Waitz, one of Ranke's most influential pupils). Insofar as this caused younger scholars to conceive of themselves as epigones working in the shadow of past masters (another classical literary *topos*), there was a sense in which they looked back with nostalgia on Ranke's generation. Moreover, there had been critics of the "professionalization" and "specialization" of German historical studies before Ranke's death who presented Ranke's seemingly harmonious integration of solid research, political acuteness, and eloquent writing as a historiographical ideal that had become unattainable for a generation that was socialized primarily into an ethos of painstaking historical criticism. Not unlike Heinrich von Treitschke, who ridiculed all "well-educated seminar plants," Alfred Dove (one of Ranke's posthumous editors) mocked "the narrow philological school of seminars à la Waitz."[36] Similarly, the Munich historian Karl Theodor von Heigel admired Ranke, among others, as a "whole man" (*ganzer Mann*), whose well-rounded character, broad historical interests, and accessible writing style he perceived as healthy antidotes to the modern ills of specialization and one-sided accentuation of source critical problems.[37]

Notably, however, such nostalgic feelings hardly surfaced in memoirs like Winter's and Wiedemann's. With regard to Ranke's work ethic, none of the recollections consulted for this chapter depicted the historian's work habits as characteristic of a bygone era.[38] Not a single author suggested that Ranke's generation had worked under different circumstances, that a work ethic like Ranke's was no longer feasible, or that productivity like his presupposed a freedom to commit oneself to writing projects that had shrunk with the growth of professional duties. Instead, Ranke's admirers almost

36 Heinrich von Treitschke to Alfred Dove, 1 September 1873, in Dove, *Ausgewählte Briefe*, ed. Oswald Dammann (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1925), 38–39, at 39; Alfred Dove to Heinrich von Treitschke, 13 May 1873, ibid., 32–35, at 34. I discuss these examples at greater length in Herman Paul, "A Missing Link in the History of Historiography: Scholarly Personae in the World of Alfred Dove," *History of European Ideas* 45, no. 7 (2019): 1011–28.

37 Herman Paul, "The Whole Man: A Masculine Persona in German Historical Studies," in *Gender, Embodiment, and the History of the Scholarly Persona: Incarnations and Contestations*, ed. Kirsti Niskanen and Michael J. Barany (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 261–86.

38 Although Henry Simonsfeld, playing on the theme of Ranke's blindness, compared him to "a seer and singer from prehistoric times," the analogy allowed for a picturesque portrait more than that it expressed a sense of nostalgia: "With folded hands, sitting in an armchair, the contemplating, wrinkled head enfolded by thick silver curls, he seems to dictate a chapter of his world history, widely surveying the history of humankind and connecting the near and the far—very much as the rhapsodists of the Ancient world recited Homer's songs!" Simonsfeld, "Leopold v. Ranke [II]," 4.

without exception attributed the historian's extraordinary productivity to extraordinary character traits. In a commemorative address to the Bavarian Academy, Wilhelm von Giesebrecht, one of Ranke's oldest pupils, likely spoke for many when he said:

> Someone like him will not soon emerge again. How many and how different are the qualities united in a truly great historian: thoroughness in research, richness and readiness of knowledge, understanding of all the interests of humanity, a sharp gaze that can penetrate into the darkness of faraway centuries, abundance of fantasy and a most lively intuition, combined with a cultivated sense of literary form and inexhaustible appetite and capacity for work. All of this was so harmoniously combined in *Ranke* as happens only rarely in the course of history.[39]

Accordingly, for Giesebrecht and his colleagues, the most relevant variable in explaining Ranke's capacity for work was not his time or the circumstances under which his career had developed, but a personality that they did not hesitate to describe as "genial."

A man of genius

The nineteenth-century notion of genius played an important role in the assessments of Ranke's oeuvre and his gifts as a historian, both in the obituaries and in personal recollections.[40] These writings explicitly referred to "Ranke's genius,"[41] "his genius and his work,"[42] and his "genial creations,"[43] and they drew on notions of genius to account for his work ethic. They did so, however, in different ways. One of Ranke's American admirers, Herbert

39 Wilhelm v[on] Giesebrecht, *Gedächtnissrede auf Leopold von Ranke gehalten in der öffentlichen Sitzung der k. b. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München zur Feier ihres einhundert und achtundzwanzigsten Stiftungstages am 28. März 1887* (Munich: Verlag der k. b. Akademie, 1887), 31–32.

40 On notions of genius in Wilhelmine German culture, see Julia Barbara Köhne, "The Cult of Genius in Germany and Austria at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century," in *Genealogies of Genius*, ed. Joyce E. Chaplin and Darrin M. McMahon (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 115–35.

41 Georg Winter, "Leopold von Ranke's Max-Vorlesungen," *Nord und Süd* 48 (1889): 120–23, at 123; Winter, "Ranke und die Entstehung seiner Weltgeschichte," 87.

42 Weisse, "Leopold von Ranke," 258.

43 Georg Winter, "Leopold von Ranke †," *Protestantische Kirchenzeitung für das evangelische Deutschland* 33 (1886): 489–96, at 493. This article originally appeared in the *Nationalzeitung* (25 May 1886).

Baxter Adams, invoked Francis Galton's concept of "hereditary genius" in arguing that Ranke's work ethic had been a matter of inherited traits.[44] The opening sentence of his article—a piece full of personal anecdotes largely taken from other memoirs—set the tone by stating that "heredity is an important element in the making of great men."[45] Applying this premise to Ranke's work habits, Adams urged his readers to see Ranke's appetite for work not as an individual trait, but as characteristic of a family that had included several generations of studious pastors:

> Men have not yet ceased to marvel at the phenomenon of Leopold von Ranke beginning a history of the world in his eighty-fifth year and continuing the same with unabated mental vigor until past the age of ninety; but that phenomenon has a physical basis laid by generations of long-lived, earnest, intellectual men.[46]

Expanding his explanatory scope, Adams even saw national character traits which (in his assessment) had developed over centuries at work in Ranke's *Arbeitszimmer*:

> Nothing is so wonderful in the life of Ranke as his persistent, indomitable activity, or what the Germans call "rastlose Thätigkeit"; and yet this tireless energy was but an intensified, highly specialized form of that systematic, almost religious devotion to work and duty which has characterized German pastors since the days of the Reformation.[47]

Interestingly, this emphasis on heredity and environment left little room for the idea that Ranke's work habits could be imitated by others. Adams's interest in Ranke's time schedule ("He worked night and day, Sundays

44 Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into Its Laws and Consequences* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1869). On the American reception of Ranke, see Georg G. Iggers, "The Image of Ranke in American and German Historical Thought," *History and Theory* 2, no. 1 (1962): 17–40, and Dorothy Ross, "On the Misunderstanding of Ranke and the Origins of the Historical Profession in America," in *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline*, ed. Georg G. Iggers and James M. Powell (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 154–69.

45 [Herbert Baxter Adams], "Leopold von Ranke," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 22 (1886): 542–58, at 542.

46 Ibid., 543–44.

47 Ibid., 544. On the use of national stereotypes by Adams and other Johns Hopkins University faculty members at the time, see Herman Paul, "German Thoroughness in Baltimore: Epistemic Virtues and National Stereotypes," *History of Humanities* 3, no. 2 (2018): 327–50 [chapter 7 in this volume].

and holidays included") did not stem from a desire to find a universally applicable key to scholarly productivity.[48] It reflected, rather, a fascination with great men and the conditions enabling "a phenomenon of historical genius" like Ranke's.[49]

Although Wiedemann and Winter, uninfluenced by Galton, approached Ranke's genius from different angles, they too denied that his work habits could serve as a model for others. If "the manifestations of a genius's innate capacity for productivity" emerged from "autonomous freedom and self-determination," as Wiedemann maintained in idealist terms, they could not be forced into "a static scheme" or reduced to a method.[50] Ranke's genius, in other words, transcended "the ordinary and quotidian," to the point that even Wiedemann, after sixteen years of secretarial assistance, claimed not to grasp the secret of the historian's greatness.[51] His account of Ranke's work habits should therefore not be read as an attempt to unveil that secret. On the contrary, by describing the minutiae of Ranke's everyday life, Wiedemann highlighted the barriers that the aged historian had managed to overcome. Stories about assistants reading source transcriptions (not the most efficient way of doing research) and the chaos in Ranke's personal library (which drove many an assistant to despair) helped create a picture of Ranke writing history even under the most unfavorable circumstances.[52] Similarly, when Winter argued that "knowledge of Ranke's working method in the last and most fruitful epoch of his life contributes to appreciating the greatness of his unique talent to its full extent,"[53] he substantiated this claim by contrasting Ranke's "rich mental activity" with the "extraordinary aggravating external circumstances" of near-blindness and dependency on assistants.[54] The "great obstacles" that Ranke had managed to conquer thus only underscored his genius.[55]

48 [Adams], "Leopold von Ranke," 555.

49 Ibid., 542. Adams's emphasis on hereditary factors was typical of how he approached "great men" in history. See, e.g., Herbert B. Adams, *The Study of History in American Colleges and Universities* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1887), 61, 126; *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1888), 15, 37; *The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks: Comprising Selections from His Journals and Correspondence*, vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1893), 1, 7, 32, 374.

50 Theodor Wiedemann, "Sechzehn Jahre in der Werkstatt Leopold von Ranke's: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte seiner letzten Lebensjahre [III]," *Deutsche Revue* 17, no. 1 (1892): 95–102, at 100.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Winter, "Erinnerungen," 208.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., 223.

All this points to a third explanation for the fascination that Ranke's work habits elicited. The more difficult the circumstances were under which Ranke had to write, the more remarkable was his achievement of annually bringing out a new tome of his *Weltgeschichte*.[56] Many a memoir reinforced this message with emotional language, including verbs like *staunen* (to be astonished) and *bewunderen* (to admire),[57] or with physiognomic descriptions that contrasted Ranke's "feebly animated skeleton" with his "vigorous" mind.[58] Indeed, it seems as if for Ranke's admirers no anecdote was too trivial to strengthen the notion that Ranke's genius deserved "astonished admiration" (*staunende Bewunderung*).[59]

A religion of work

Why, finally, was this genius associated more with quantitative output—long hours in the study, fifty-four volumes of collected works—than with Ranke's qualitative contributions to historical source criticism or the historiography of Europe's nation-states? To a certain degree, this focus may have been genre-specific, as technical accounts of how Ranke had furthered historical scholarship were arguably more at home in learned periodicals than in magazines targeted at nonacademic readers. However, even in professional contexts, historians did not cease to marvel at Ranke's devotion to work. Giesebrecht mentioned Ranke's *Genie* and *Arbeitskraft* in one and the same breath, whereas Sybel, writing in the country's leading historical journal, claimed that his teacher had died a "hero […] in the field of labor, in the field of honor."[60]

Did this obsession with work perhaps reflect a culture in which *Wissenschaft* was increasingly equated with *Arbeit*? There are two reasons for

56 Falko Schnicke identifies a similar pattern of reasoning in his "Kranke Historiker: Körperwahrnehmungen und Wissenschaft im 19. Jahrhundert," *Historische Anthropologie* 25, no. 1 (2017): 11–31.

57 Winter, "Erinnerungen," 224; Wiedemann, "Sechzehn Jahre [III]," 100; Weisse, "Leopold von Ranke," 255, 256.

58 Frederic A. Bancroft, "A Reminiscence of Ranke," *American Historical Association Papers* 3, no. 1 (1888): 121–24, at 122. Similarly: "Weisse, Leopold von Ranke," 251, and P[aul] B[ailleu], "Leopold v. Ranke: Eine persönliche Erinnerung zum hundertsten Geburtstag (21. Dezember 1895)," *Neue Preußische Zeitung* (21 December 1895). On the masculine connotations of this mind–body dualism as applied to scholarly work, see Schnicke, *Männliche Disziplin*, esp. 185–99.

59 Georg Winter, "Leopold von Ranke †," 494.

60 Giesebrecht, *Gedächtnissrede*, 27; Heinrich v[on] Sybel, "Gedächtnisrede auf Leopold v. Ranke, gehalten in der kgl. preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin am 1. Juli 1886," *Historische Zeitschrift* 56 (1886): 463–81, at 481.

raising this question. First, historical research in the course of the nineteenth century was becoming increasingly more labor-intensive, partly because of new sources that were being discovered on an almost a daily basis and partly because of heightened expectations with regard to source coverage and source assessment. Second, historians' self-images adapted to these changing working conditions. The idea began to take hold that historians were engaged in what Johann Gustav Droysen called a work of endless proportions, in which the individual author appeared not as an omniscient author, but rather as a modest link in a centuries-long chain of laborers.[61] Although Wolfgang Hardtwig and Falko Schnicke have shown how real these developments were,[62] the sources featured in this chapter point in a different direction. While emphasizing Ranke's "tireless activity," the memoirs never distance themselves from notions of authorial genius. Although Giesebrecht, for instance, presented Ranke as a model of scholarly labor ("as he labored before our eyes, we ourselves were stimulated to work"),[63] he was not prepared to reduce Ranke's labor to mere industry or diligence. As we saw above, capacity for work was but one of the qualities that he deemed necessary for genial performance in matters historical. Ranke's "inexhaustible appetite and capacity for work" were therefore not an alternative to geniality; it was interpreted as evidence of it.

Perhaps more important, therefore, is a fourth and final explanatory variable: the great value that German middle-class society attached to virtues of work. As Michael Maurer and others have shown, *Arbeit* was a key value in the moral economy of Germany's educated middle classes.[64] For those fortunate enough to spend their days at a desk instead of in a factory or on a farm, work was not merely a means of making money, but also a "vocation" (*Beruf*).[65] This implied not only that the demands of work were more sacrosanct than other demands, but also that the meaning or purpose

61 Johann Gustav Droysen, "Historik: Die Vorlesungen von 1857: Rekonstruktion der ersten vollständigen Fassung aus den Handschriften," in Droysen, *Historik*, ed. Peter Leyh, vol. 1 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Fromann-Holzboog, 1977), 1–393, at 63.

62 Wolfgang Hardtwig, "Geschichtsreligion, Wissenschaft als Arbeit, Objektivität: Der Historismus in neuer Sicht," *Historische Zeitschrift* 252 (1991): 1–32, at 26–27; Schnicke, *Männliche Disziplin*, 271–88.

63 Giesebrecht, *Gedächtnissrede*, 14.

64 On the broader German discourse on "work" in an age of industrialization, see Joan Campbell, *Joy in Work, German Work: The National Debate, 1800–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

65 On this notion, richly imbued with Lutheran theological connotations, see also Anthony J. La Vopa, "Vocations, Careers, and Talent: Lutheran Pietism and Sponsored Mobility in Eighteenth-Century Germany," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28, no. 2 (1986): 255–86.

of a man's life (women's lives were a different matter) could be realized through work. This was either because work was religiously interpreted as a divine command or because it was seen as a means to what idealist philosophers used to call "self-actualization."[66] Because of this high value placed on work, Maurer argues that work had an inextricably religious subtext, to the point of sometimes serving as a *Religionsersatz* (work taking the place formerly reserved for religion).[67]

Given this quasi-religious significance of work, not only among writers and scholars but also among teachers and civil servants, it should come as no surprise that several of the scholarly habits referred to in previous sections had equivalents outside of the academic realm. Time schedules, for instance, were not merely the prerogative of scholars: merchants and medical doctors also used them to maximize their time efficiency.[68] Rising before dawn and working into the early hours, too, were habits known outside the circles of professors and students. There are stories about princes, lawyers, and civil servants who did not retire to bed before two in the morning.[69] Similarly, there are anecdotes about pastors who tried to save time by skipping meals or who managed to prepare a sermon during their morning toilet.[70] Also, there is no lack of biographical vignettes about civil servants who outperformed their peers in terms of the number of records they managed to process or about mayors who acquired a reputation for issuing huge numbers of legal verdicts.[71] What these examples show is that virtues of work (industry, diligence, loyalty, perseverance) were valued highly in and beyond German middle-class society, even to such an extent that Herbert Baxter Adams could interpret them as national character traits.[72]

In this context, the significance of Ranke's devotion to work—"a kind of religious mission," in Paul Bailleu's apt phrasing—far exceeded the realm of historical research.[73] Ranke's productivity served a source of pride, even to

66 Michael Maurer, *Die Biographie des Bürgers: Lebensformen und Denkweisen in der formativen Phase des deutschen Bürgertums (1680–1815)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 382–87.
67 Ibid., 433.
68 Ibid., 409–10.
69 Ibid., 406–7.
70 Ibid., 409–11.
71 Ibid., 390.
72 Dieter Hein, "Arbeit, Fleiß und Ordnung," in *Bürgerliche Werte um 1800: Entwurf, Vermittlung, Rezeption*, ed. Hans-Werner Hahn and Dieter Hein (Cologne: Böhlau, 2005), 239–51; Rudolf Schenda, "Die Verfleißigung der Deutschen: Materialien zur Indoktrination eines Tugend-Bündels," in *Volkskultur in der Moderne: Probleme und Perspektiven empirischer Kulturforschung*, ed. Utz Jeggle et al. (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1986), 88–108.
73 B[ailleu], "Leopold v. Ranke."

people who would never buy a copy of the *Geschichte der Päpste*. As Ranke's son Friduhelm, a high-ranking military officer, declared after his father's death, "All Germany was proud of the man who in extreme old age produced such a work."[74] In his Bavarian address, Giesebrecht likewise observed that Ranke's "name was on everyone's lips; the nation was proud that the era's most important historian was one of them."[75] What this shows is that Ranke was celebrated not primarily as a scholar who had excelled in his field of study, but as a German citizen who had demonstrated exemplarily what it meant to find joy in labor (*labor ipse voluptas*) and to devote one's talents, as his son wrote, to "that noblest ingredient of existence, work—absorbing, all-engrossing work."[76] In turn, this explains why both Weisse and Adams could end their memoirs with paraphrased lines from Goethe's poem, "Das Göttliche" (1783), according to which the "noble man" is "generous and good / tirelessly achieving / what is just and useful," thereby providing a "model" for the rest of society.[77] Insofar as Ranke was identified with this noble worker as hailed by Germany's greatest poet, he transcended the historical profession and became an almost superhuman embodiment of virtues valued in German society at large.[78]

Conclusion

Clearly, then, there is more than one answer to the question as to why Ranke's work ethic was such a central theme in memoirs written after his death. This chapter has identified four relevant explanatory variables: human interest in the daily habits of a famous professor; time-honored commonplaces about hard-working scholars that both Ranke and his admirers were eager to appropriate; nineteenth-century notions of genius that saw the historian's greatness manifested in a heroic overcoming of physical limitations; and a general middle-class culture which attached extraordinary

74 Friduhelm von Ranke, "Reminiscences of Leopold von Ranke," *Temple Bar* 1, no. 3 (1906): 193–215, at 214.

75 Giesebrecht, *Gedächtnissrede*, 28.

76 Friduhelm von Ranke, "Reminiscences," 193.

77 Weisse, "Leopold von Ranke," 258; [Adams], "Leopold von Ranke," 558; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Das Göttliche," in *Goethe's Schriften*, vol. 8 (Leipzig: Georg Joachim Göschen, 1789), 215–18, at 218.

78 On such larger-than-life features attributed to academic heroes, see Valilios N. Makrides, "Akademische Irrationalismen? Kulte um Personen in wissenschaftlich-akademischen Kreisen," in *Gelehrtenleben: Wissenschaftspraxis in der Neuzeit*, ed. Alf Lüdtke and Reiner Prass (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), 261–78, at 271.

value to virtues of work. In addition, the chapter has argued that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate convincingly that Wiedemann *cum suis* were nostalgic for a time in which historians enjoyed sufficient freedom to write books like Ranke's, much as it is implausible to read their memoirs as reflecting a nineteenth-century understanding of *Wissenschaft* as *Arbeit*. These reminiscences of Ranke are better interpreted as reflecting broad cultural value systems than as mirroring dynamics specific to the discipline of history.

From a *longue durée* historical perspective, finally, the sources featured in this chapter point to the persistence of early modern repertoires, specifically with regard to virtues of work and habits in which such virtues were believed to flourish. Although the standards of virtue that nineteenth-century historians were committed to differed from those propagated at a time when treatises on academic conduct warned primarily against pride, vainglory, and futile quarreling (*logomachia*),[79] admiration for hard work was something that Ranke's contemporaries shared with men of learning in sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century Europe. Even if they justified this admiration on different grounds, practices like keeping time schedules and working until after midnight were no more common in the nineteenth century as they had been in earlier times. Likewise, a heroization of personal sacrifice, premised on the assumption that devotion to the life of the mind is evidenced by suppression of bodily needs or transcendence of physical limitations, can be found in nineteenth-century memoirs and obituaries just as frequently as in biographies of early modern men of learning. Apparently, even in an age that witnessed major transformations in academic research and teaching, not to mention great changes in society at large, early modern commonplaces regarding the virtue of work still resonated among academic and nonacademic authors alike.

79 Sari Kivistö, *The Vices of Learning: Morality and Knowledge at Early Modern Universities* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

Acknowledgments

My interest in scholarly virtues and vices was triggered shortly after my appointment at Leiden University, in 2007, when I was asked to help organize some commemorative events marking the 150th anniversary (2010) of our institute. I volunteered to organize a workshop and edit a Dutch-language volume, together with Henk te Velde, on Robert Fruin, the first chairholder in Dutch ("fatherlandish") history. What struck me when I began examining Fruin's reputation as "the father of Dutch history" were the grounds on which nineteenth-century admirers justified this honorific title: they all referred to Fruin's objectivity, meticulousness, and critical acumen. Similarly, his critics—Willem Byvanck, in particular—took issue with his character vices more than with his published scholarship. This raised a series of questions: Why were historians at the time so preoccupied with scholars' virtues and vices? Where did this come from? How did it relate to historians' methods, to middle-class values, or to nineteenth-century notions of character? And how widespread was this interest in virtues, in terms of disciplines, periods, or regions?

Two personal grants from the Dutch Research Council (NWO) enabled me to explore these questions together with two dedicated groups of postdocs (Sjang ten Hagen, Kim Hajek, Alexander Stoeger) and PhD candidates (Edurne De Wilde, Christiaan Engberts, Katharina Manteufel, Anne Por, Léjon Saarloos, and Hidde Slotboom), accompanied by visiting scholars from Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Finland, Sweden, Brazil, and China. Working with all these talented young people was a privilege and, in many ways, a formative experience. Also, the projects helped turn my questions and intuitions into something like a real research line, complete with what funding agencies call "deliverables": panels, workshops, forum sections, special issues, and edited volumes, most of which focused on scholarly virtues and vices, but also dealing with related themes, such as scholarly personae. It is gratifying to see how much of this has meanwhile been picked up by others.

Halfway through the second project, I wondered how to draw my work on virtues and vices to a close. I thought there were four things I wanted to

Paul, Herman. *Virtues and Vices in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities: Explorations of a Discourse*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2025.
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show: (1) that scholars have thought for centuries, if not millennia, about virtues conducive to their work; (2) that these traditions took on different forms in different cultures, depending (among other things) on intellectual climates, political circumstances, and institutional contexts; (3) that talk of virtue and vice is best studied from a rhetorical perspective, as a discourse that drew on repertoires shared across disciplinary borders; and (4) that some knowledge of these historical legacies may help us assess the pros and cons of contemporary calls for virtue, most notably under the banner of "virtue ethics." After a while, I also realized that these four points required four different books, or sets of articles. This is why this volume, despite some brief forays into (1) and (2), focuses on (3). Its aim is to show how the language of virtue and vice served as an idiom for scholars across disciplinary boundaries—and that a rhetorical approach as spelled out in the introduction is best suited for tracing its spread and uses. This is to say that the current volume does not stand on its own, even though it can, of course, be read as a stand-alone book. Readers interested in (1), (2), or (4) are kindly referred to other publications that have emerged out of my two research projects.

Speaking about these projects, it is my pleasure to thank the Dutch Research Council for its generous funding over the years. I am very much indebted to the team members mentioned above: I have learned more from them than I think they realize. Several of the pieces brought together in this volume were prompted by invitations, for which I thank Gábor Almási, Islam Dayeh, Giorgio Lizzul, Pascale Rabault-Feuerhahn, Larissa Schulte Nordholt, Umar Ryad, and Steven Vanden Broecke. I enjoyed the smooth collaboration with Caroline Schep, coauthor of chapter 5, and Sjang ten Hagen, coauthor of chapter 8. For their comments on draft versions of one or more chapters, I would like to thank Jeroen van Dongen, Paul Michael Kurtz, Charlotte A. Lerg, Dirk van Miert, Falko Schnicke, Henning Trüper, and Arnoud Visser. Marieke Nolten offered valuable research assistance with the case of Jakob Minor (discussed in the introduction), while also saving me much time by standardizing the footnotes and preparing the index. I am grateful to Klaas van Berkel and Jeroen van Dongen for accepting this title into the Studies in the History of Knowledge series. As always, the staff at Amsterdam University Press, including especially Julie Benschop-Plokker, was a pleasure to work with.

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Index

What do scholars do when they talk about virtues (impartiality, accuracy) or vices (dogmatism, prejudice)? Against the common view that such high-minded talk is largely irrelevant to actual scholarly practice, this volume proposes to treat it as a practice in its own right.

Drawing on case studies from the nineteenth-century humanities (with occasional forays into physics, chemistry, and medicine), it shows that notions of virtue and vice were an evaluative discourse used across the academic spectrum.

Paul argues that this evaluative idiom is best studied from a rhetorical point of view, with due attention to the repertoires on which scholars drew, explicit or implicit appeals to authority, the multilayered meanings of virtue and vice terms, the different uses to which these concepts were put, and the societal contexts that lent plausibility to scholars' invocations of virtue and vice.

Based on more than a decade of research, this volume will be a key reference for scholars interested in virtues, vices, and the history of the humanities.

Herman Paul is Professor of the History of the Humanities at Leiden University. He is the author, most recently, of *Historians' Virtues: From Antiquity to the Twenty-First Century* (2022) and *Dogmatism: On the History of a Scholarly Vice* (with Alexander Stoeger, 2024). In 2024, he was elected a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW).

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