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***Glory of Germania:
from the *Königlich Preussische Porzellanmanufaktur*
to the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893,
the Germania Club of Chicago and Beyond***

Often dubbed the “White City” due to the uniform color of its historic revival buildings, the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 was a dizzying spectacle. It marked Chicago’s remarkable comeback just 22 years after the disastrous fire of 1871 and gave the city the boost that put it on the map of popular consciousness. Celebrating the 400th anniversary of Columbus’s arrival in the New World in 1492, the fair spread out over 600 acres on the shores of Lake Michigan in what is today Jackson Park. Daniel Burnham (1846–1912), whose name is inextricably connected with the history of architecture in Chicago, assumed the overall architectural leadership for fair and was thus in charge of designing an intricate series of canals and lagoons, and the 200 new, yet temporary buildings, many of them made of staff consisting of plaster of Paris, hemp and some concrete. During the fair’s six-month run from May to October, over 27 million people came to see and enjoy the displays and exhibitions of some 46 different cultures. It must have been both an exhilarating and exhausting experience. The fair’s grandeur apparently exceeded that of all previous world fairs and had a lasting impact in both small and big ways. Shredded Wheat, incandescent bulbs powered by AC or the Ferris Wheel are still with us today, as well as the idea that cities were not only dark places of crime and corruption, but could also be places of beauty and harmony.¹

Given Imperial Germany’s jostling for power in the world after Bismarck’s unification of German lands in 1871, the still relatively young nation wanted to be well represented at the exposition, especially since it had boycotted the

World's Fair in Paris in 1889 as part of a coalition of European monarchies opposed to the parallel celebrations of the French Revolution. Such politics were no longer at issue in Chicago, and some 3.6 million *Reichsmark* were officially put aside by the imperial government to finance Germany's participation.² Like other major powers such as Great Britain, France or the United States, the *Reich* had their own government building constructed, the *Deutsches Haus*, designed by Johannes Radke (1853-1938), with picturesque half-timbered elements, bay windows, balconies and turrets that resembled a Renaissance southern German *Rathaus*.³ There was also a German Village consisting of a restaurant, a wine hall in the form of a castle, and an open-air garden, along with replicas of houses from the various regions of Germany.⁴

Among other exhibitions, including a separate pavilion for Krupp and what was apparently the most sizeable canon in the world back then,⁵ Imperial Germany organized a sizable display in the northwest corner of the fair's largest structure, the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, also the world's largest building at the time covering nearly 31 acres. The German exhibition there included paintings, jewelry, silverware, tapestries and porcelain, the latter gathered in what was called the "Porcelain Porch." The German display garnered considerable praise at the time:

No single section has such a picturesque ensemble, or a structure so beautiful, architecturally, as the German, and visitors to the building descry the German exhibit from a distance on account of its monumental beauty. . . . No foreign section in the Chicago Exposition is so rich as that of Germany, and never before was the German empire so well represented at an exposition.⁶

It was that porcelain display that also gave the *Königlich Preussische Porzellanmanufaktur* (KPM, the Royal Prussian Porcelain Factory) an opportunity to showcase its artistic production. Founded in 1761 by Johann Ernst Gotschowsky (1710–75) in Berlin and purchased in 1763 by Frederick the Great (1712–86), turning it into a state-run enterprise, it continues to this day, albeit under the name of the *Königliche Porzellanmanufaktur* (Royal Porcelain Factory) and in the private ownership of the German entrepreneur Jörg Woltmann, to produce high-quality dinnerware and decorative pieces.⁷

The centerpiece of the KPM's contribution to the fair was clearly a porcelain wall painting with two side panels (cf. fig. 1). Huge in proportions at roughly 25 feet high, 30 feet wide, and made of 1,057 tiles, it was originally alternatively called *Deutsche Kunst und deutsches Kunstgewerbe, der Germania huldigend* (German Art and German Arts and Crafts, Paying Homage to Germania) or *Germania beschützt Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Germania Protects Art



Die Porzellanhalle in der deutschen Sektion im Industriepalast.

Fig. 1. *Germania Protects Art and Science* at the World's Fair, in *Unsere Weltausstellung: Eine Beschreibung der Columbischen Weltausstellung in Chicago, 1893* (Druck und Verlag Fried. Klein Company, 1894) 436.

and Science).⁸ The English rendering of the latter appears to have been the title used most frequently at the World's Columbian Exposition.⁹ In a German source published a year after the end of the fair, *Triumph der Germania* (Triumph of Germania) is also indicated as a title used.¹⁰

The goddess Germania herself, attended by maidens, reigns supreme in the center of the scene as a symbolic, unifying and personifying manifestation of the common heritage of the German people. In his *De Origine et situ Germanorum* (*On the Origin and Situation of the Germans*) of roughly 98 AD, Tacitus had described the region of north-central Europe inhabited by various Germanic tribes as “Germania.” Equally as far back as Roman times, representations of the goddess as a symbol of those peoples can be observed on Roman coins. Not very present in the Middle Ages, she became prevalent again during the Napoleonic Wars in the early 19th

century as a symbol of unity in opposition to French occupation. The height of her iconic value occurred during the Romantic period of the mid-19th century, especially in connection with the attempts to unite Germany politically



Fig. 2. Lorenz Clasen's *Germania auf der Wacht am Rhein* (Germania on Guard on the Rhine, 1860), https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germania_auf_der_Wacht_am_Rhein.



Fig. 3. The Niederwald Monument of 1883 (photograph by author).

after the Revolution of 1848 in the run-up to actual German unification in 1871 when she, represented in a war-like fashion, was appropriated by the new German nation's heady imperial desires. Lorenz Clasen's painting, *Germania auf der Wacht am Rhein* (Germania on Guard on the Rhine) of 1860 (cf. fig. 2), was a popular representation of the goddess at the time.¹¹

The most immediate inspiration for the main figure in *Germania Protects Art and Science* was quite obviously the Germania atop the Niederwald Monument located above the vineyards near Rüdesheim on the Rhine (cf. fig. 3).¹² Designed by Johannes Schilling (1828–1910),

with his daughter Clara apparently standing as model for Germania, the foundation stone for the monument was laid in 1877. Kaiser Wilhelm I was in attendance at the event, as he was again when the monument was completed in 1883, even surviving an attempt on his life at the inauguration ceremonies. Overall, the Niederwald Monument bombastically and martially celebrates the 1871 unification, allegorically, pictorially and with inscriptions depicting the preceding war against France as a defining moment, including scenes of departing for and returning from battle, Wilhelm I with his generals, and angels of war and peace, among other representations.

A comparison of the two Germania figures is striking in their similarities (cf. figs. 3 and 4). Both very clearly have the same facial features and show the same Roman “contrapposto” pose with most of the body weight on the right foot, thus twisting the shoulders and arms off-axis and lending the figure dynamic movement. This is further emphasized by the flowing, wind-blown hair, albeit more obvious in the Niederwald Germania with its tridimensionality. Both heads are crowned by oak leaves as a symbol, given oak’s hardness, of endurance, strength, loyalty and victory. Both figures similarly hold a sword in the left hand, wound with laurel leaves as a further symbol of victory, yet at rest in a gesture of peace. Both are wearing the same chest armor emblazoned with an imperial eagle; both are wearing a similarly flowing gown, arms bare, although the Niederwald Germania’s dress is brocaded with animal motifs from popular German sagas.

A more substantive difference lies in what is held aloft in the right hand. In the case of the Niederwald’s Germania, it’s an imperial crown that she appears poised to place on her head, symbolically placing herself in the tradition of another imperial time, namely, the *Heiliges Römisches Reich deutscher Nation* (Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation) of the Middle Ages when German lands also wielded great power. Placing a crown on one’s own head is also symbolic of independence from other authorities that traditionally performed coronations such as the Pope of the Catholic Church. Another interpretation might be that Germania is presenting the crown to the German people. In the *KPM*’s version, Germania holds laurel leaves in her right hand. Although such leaves were also a symbol of victory, as mentioned earlier, they come across as softer than the imperial crown, aside from the pastel colors of Germania in the porcelain painting as opposed to the dark and greenish hues of the bronze-casted Niederwald Germania. Form has corresponded here harmoniously with content. Whereas the Niederwald Germania projected an image of the new nation’s power with references to past imperial power as well, the *KPM*’s gentler version was more appropriate to her function as a protector of the arts and sciences as one of her original titles indicated.¹³

In the porcelain wall painting, Germania is seen against the background



Fig. 4. *Glory of Germania*, in *Germania Club Centennial 1865-1965* (Bockmann Engraving Co. 1965), Frontespiece.

of the towering twin spires of the Cologne Cathedral as the jewel of German Gothic architecture and no doubt representing Germany's spirituality (cf. fig. 4). Begun in 1248, the cathedral also alludes to medieval times when the *Heiliges Römisches Reich deutscher Nation* represented the aforementioned high-point of German power. To Germania's right we see two female figures that may be referring to art and industry.¹⁴ Fourteen historical figures in the arts and sciences form a group to the left of her, some of whom we are still familiar with today, such as the artists Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553) and Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), the philosopher and naturalist Gottfried Wilhelm Baron von Leibniz (1646–1716) or the printmaker Johannes Gutenberg (1400–68). Others are more obscure from today's perspective: the Romantic author Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder (1773–98), the gold and silversmith Wenzel Jamnitzer (1507–85) or the sculptor and foundryman Peter Vischer (1455–1529). The figure of Johann Friedrich Böttger (1682–1719) was no doubt a nod to the creator of porcelain in 1708, and thus honored the alchemist who had made the material of the porcelain painting possible.¹⁵ As the original titles of the artwork mentioned above indicate, Germania is alternatively being symbolically honored by these figures or protecting them, in either case as a type of apotheosis to German culture in the spirit, for example, of Raphael's 16th century Vatican fresco, *School of Athens*. *Walhalla*, a temple shrine built in the 1830s above the Danube near Regensburg that honors great figures from German history with commemorative plaques and busts may have been an influence as well. Perhaps the *Ruhmeshalle München* (Munich Hall of Fame) built slightly later and dedicated to famous figures from Bavarian history, in this case under the protection of the goddess Bavaria, also exerted an influence.

On the right one sees a billowing imperial flag, in turn on the left medieval-looking troops with flag references to Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg and Baden, i.e., the principal German lands Bismarck united in 1871 into a politically and administratively integrated nation state. Below the knights are two further male figures, one holding a wine barrel, the other pulling a rope, probably connected to the barge the allegorical figure of Father Rhine is riding on. The two figures may be symbolic representations of agriculture, wine arguably its most sophisticated product, and commerce since the Rhine as Germany's most significant inland artery was integral to the transportation of goods. The figure of Father Rhine belongs, of course, to the mythical references of the porcelain wall painting and is not the only one. In the artwork he is thoroughly enjoying himself with a maiden, perhaps a reference either to the Danube or the Mosel.¹⁶ Two dwarfs allude to the Rheingold, the treasure of the Nibelungen, a founding myth of the Germanic people. One of them appears to be offering a glass of wine to Father Rhine.

Art objects are spread out below Father Rhine and may have been other creations by the *KPM*. A black and menacing crowned imperial eagle can also be seen.

Finally, across from the lofty spires of the Cologne Cathedral, we see angelic figures with palms and trumpets, symbolizing peace and, in a sense, proclaiming the mix of myth, legend and history below them as quintessentially German or, more specifically, Wilhelmine, the era in which the artwork was created and referring to the two Hohenzollern emperors Wilhelm I and his grandson Wilhelm II, the latter in power at the time the porcelain painting arrived in Chicago. The two much smaller side panels include putti and examples from the German decorative arts, on the left more the secular (helmet, cross-bow and stein), on the right more the ecclesiastical (crucifix, reliquary). The Germania image and what surrounded her ultimately represented the Wilhelmine concept of what was German, its self-consciousness, an imaginative attempt to establish the essence of a national identity that tied together the inhabitants of a common ancestry and the regions of the German-speaking world.¹⁷

As much as the *Germania Protects Art and Science* was Wilhelmine in spirit, it was also the design and creation of a specific artist, namely “A. Kips” as one of the tiles in the right-hand corner of the porcelain wall painting indicate. Alexander Kips (1858–1910) was the *KPM*’s artistic director provisionally in that post in 1886, then appointed permanently in 1888, the same year Wilhelm II ascended to the throne.¹⁸ Kips served in that directorship capacity until 1908. He had studied at the *Lehranstalt des Berliner Kunstgewerbemuseums* (Institute of the Berlin Museum for Arts and Crafts), and a sojourn in Italy, Greece and Asia Minor had had a profound influence on his portrayal of the human body and landscapes with ancient and classical architecture. Drawing upon that extended trip, Kips was initially quite a successful painter and contributed to imperial art exhibitions. At the *KPM* he was originally in charge of the instruction in painting flowers and ended up specializing in larger porcelain paintings on tiles, although his artistic influence can be seen in many areas of the *KPM* production during that time.¹⁹ The creation of the porcelain wall paintings involved tracing a huge sketch onto porcelain, then filling in the colors. A new type of porcelain invented at the time by Hermann Seger (1839–93), the so-called Seger Porcelain, allowed for an expanded range of underglaze hues once the tiles were refired for adding the enameled effect. Kips created images of classical landscapes for various rooms of the Hohenzollern castle in Berlin and for private homes as well. A number of *KPM* vases can also be traced to him.

As artistic director, Kips also played a very significant creative role in the *KPM*’s representative function at major exhibitions and was frequently in

charge of the sale of the porcelain artwork. Aside from such exhibitions in Germany and Chicago, he created an allegorical porcelain tile painting with the title of *Kampf um das Feuer* (The Struggle for Fire) for the World's Fair in Paris in 1900 and *Die Arten der Verwendung von Kunsttöpferei* (The Types of Use of Artistic Pottery) for the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904. Regarding Chicago, Kips also created four smaller porcelain paintings of the four seasons and a porcelain medallion of Wilhelm II although they no longer seem to exist.²⁰ The grandeur of his large works fit well into the heightened self-consciousness of German imperial power. As an imperial enterprise, it was the heyday of the *KPM* as well, above all under the leadership of Albert Heinecke as the general director. The period is marked by a series of technical innovations and exquisite artistic designs.²¹ Although Kips created quite a few of the large porcelain paintings, most appear to be lost and/or destroyed as result of World War II. *Germania Protects Art and Science* may very well have been one of his largest and the only one remaining.

In any case, Kips traveled to Chicago to oversee the overall installation of his manufacturer's exhibit, including his Germania artwork. In an article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* from the time of the fair we read: "Prof. Kips has seen personally to its mounting, and thanks to careful packing it stood the passage from Germany unhurt by so much as scratch."²² Kips "superintended in person the work of arranging the exhibit and the putting of the finishing touches to the labors of carpenters and artists."²³ Aside from the lost porcelain plaques of the four seasons mentioned above, he took "the greatest pride in a porcelain medallion of Emperor William II."²⁴ He clearly felt much indebted to the monarch whose imperial rule was connected to the success of the *KPM*.

The archives of the *KPM* have very little documentation to help us understand the genesis of *Germania Protects Art and Science*. Many of the documents appear to have been destroyed or were otherwise lost during the tumultuous years of twentieth century German history. Interestingly, however, the *KPM* does possess two sketches by Kips that show two different designs that he and the *KPM* were apparently considering for the fair (cf. figs. 5 and 6). One shows Germania in water colors in the way she was ultimately executed, although many details are still missing. The other, specifically marked as "für Chicago" (for Chicago) and sketched in charcoal, replaces Germania with a martial representation of what would probably have been Kaiser Wilhelm II. He is seen atop of stairs against the background of the Berliner Dom (Berlin Cathedral) in its earlier Baroque version by Johann Baumann the Elder that was completed in 1705, but then demolished in 1893 and replaced with the current Neo-Renaissance construction designed by Julius and Otto Raschdorff and finished in 1905. In any case, the troops on the right with flag references to Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg and Baden made their



Figs. 5 and 6. Alexander Kips's alternative sketches for the porcelain wall painting, Alexander Kips "Entwurfsskizze für ein Fliesengemälde der KPM," Aquarell und Gouache auf Papier, Berlin, vor 1893, SPSG, KPM-Archiv (Land Berlin), Mappe 358, Blatt 174 & 175, photograph by Daniel Lindner, courtesy of Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg (SPSG), KPM-Archiv (Land Berlin).

way into the left-hand side of the final porcelain version and are absent in the original sketch.

It would be fascinating to know what debates took place that ultimately let Germania prevail over the Kaiser (or the Rhineland with the Cologne Cathedral over Prussia and the Berlin Cathedral). Perhaps it was felt that the iconic value of Germania, albeit still patriotically, but ultimately more generally, transcendently, softly and less politically, symbolized the German nation better at that time than the Prussian version could have. It was, after all, a world's fair with the opportunity for staging the *Deutsches Reich* as a whole and not just Prussia as the dominant power within it. Given the connections between Germania and the Rhineland discussed above, and by extension with the Cologne Cathedral as the most significant structure on the Rhine, it would have been strange to place her in front of the Berlin Cathedral. Besides, the Cologne Cathedral, in 1893 the highest building in the world at roughly 516 feet, is certainly even today the greater architectural monument with its soaring qualities as compared to the Berlin Cathedral of 1750. As mentioned above, that cathedral was torn down anyway in 1893, probably something Kips knew about when he was working on his designs just in advance of that year. With the new plans for the cathedral only on paper at best, it would not have made sense to represent a building that was scheduled for demolition.

Glory of Germania

Contextual, framing aspects for the display of *Germania Protects Art and Science* were also of considerable importance to the KPM as evidenced by the architectural model they created of the entire “Porcelain Porch” in advance of the exhibition that still exists at least as a photo (cf. fig. 7). Most immediately it should be pointed out that the main image of Germania is embedded in the classical form of a Roman arch, including the indentations for the capitals. Whereas the Roman arch has a load-bearing and load-dispersing function, in *Germania Protects Arts and Science* it is a pure form element, nonetheless with the symbolic value of alluding to the perceived greatness of classical times and thus attempting to transcendently lend that greatness to Germania as well. The fact that the artwork was also a variant of a triptych with its two side panels, a standard and popular art format for religious paintings starting in the Middle Ages, also adds to the quasi-religious undertones of the work.

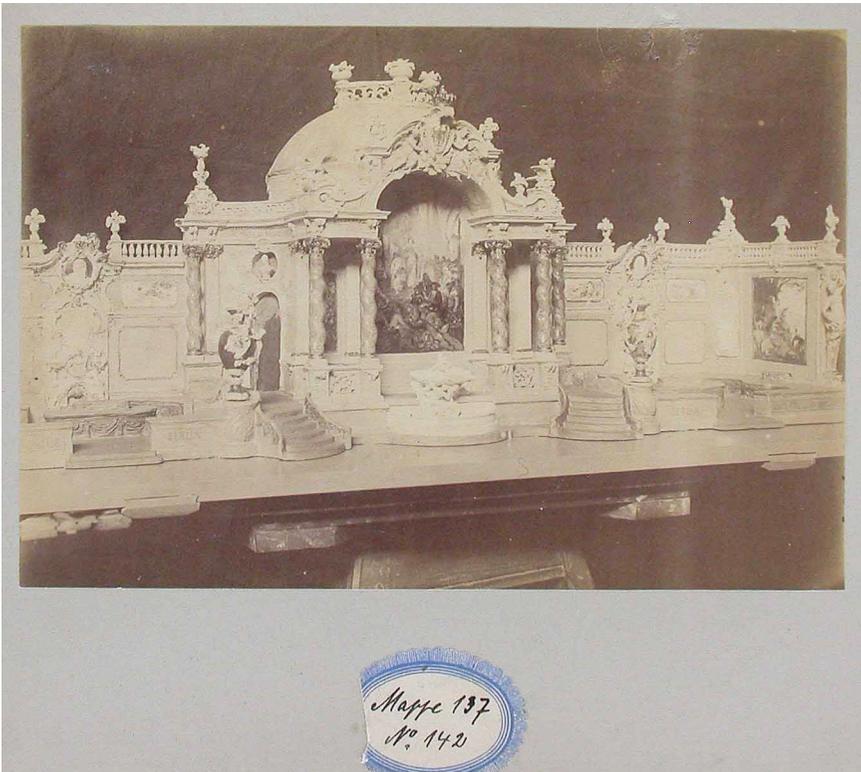


Fig. 7. Architectural model for the display of *Germania Protects Art and Science* at the World's Fair, “Aufnahme von dem Modell für den Ausstellungsstand der KPM für die Weltausstellung in Chicago 1893,” Album in Papier, SPSPG, KPM-Archiv (Land Berlin), Inv. Nr. Fo 414.5., photograph by Daniel Lindner, courtesy of Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg (SPSPG), KPM-Archiv (Land Berlin).

To lend even more grandeur to the porcelain wall painting, it was framed by a larger Baroque-Rococo construction that included Solomaic, twisted columns, glazed as faux-marble, and an elaborate canopy arch with further angels holding a representation of the imperial eagle and crown aloft, again a symbolic manifestation of Germany's power and the creation of the *KPM*'s sculptor at the time, Paul Schley (1854–1942). So overwrought and bombastic was the surrounding structure that the porcelain tableau itself became somewhat dwarfed by it, aside from a problem of the gloss of the porcelain in the eyes of an anonymous critic: "Die durch starke Glanzglasur verursachten Reflexe hinderten stets eine klare Uebersicht" (The reflections caused by the strong gloss constantly prevented a clear overview).²⁵ The reflections may very well have been the result of less than optimal lighting under the glass ceilings of the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building.

However, there was also praise. In the *Scientific American Supplement* we read: "The colossal group 'Germania' rises prominent above all, and [is] one of the most striking objects in the Manufactures building."²⁶ L. P. Gratacap speaks of a "fine mosaic plaque of Germania, rich in color, academic in treatment, and absolutely perfect in technique."²⁷ It is not surprising that an official report for the *Reich* on the Columbia Exposition by Julius Lessing would also come to a very positive appraisal: "Das Bemerkenswertheste in der Gruppe war der überwältigende Erfolg der Berliner Königlichen Porzellanmanufaktur; ihr Aufbau war nicht nur das Prächtigste in ganz Chicago, sondern wohl das Prächtigste, was überhaupt jemals auf Ausstellungen gezeigt worden ist" (Most noteworthy in this group was the overwhelming success of the Berlin Royal Porcelain Factory; its display was not only the most splendid in all of Chicago, but probably the most splendid that has ever been shown in exhibitions).²⁸ Lessing does relativize his own and Gratacap's hyperbole somewhat when he goes on to write that this particular type of porcelain painting was a new process that had not yet been technically perfected, nonetheless it was "ein Werk des vortrefflichen Künstlers und artistischen Direktors Professor Kips, dem in Verbindung mit dem Obermodelleur Professor Schley in erster Linie der hohe Stand der jetzigen Arbeiten verdankt wird" (a creation of the excellent artist and artistic director Professor Kips, whom, together with the head sculptor Professor Schley, we need to thank for the high standard of the current pieces).²⁹ In his article William Reichert points out the difficulties of painting on porcelain. If there are flaws,

[t]hey are mostly due to the exceedingly difficult medium in which the work was executed, an art which succeeds only by trial and error. The painted tiles, before they are fired, look all grey. Minute quantities of minerals or metals are mixed with the enamel, which produce

under fire the desired hues and shades. It stands to reason that such a gigantic work took infinite patience of experimentation.³⁰

In any case, Kips is named (albeit misspelled as Kipps) as having been awarded a prize at the fair in the category of “Group 142—Paintings on Porcelain.” *Germania Protects Arts and Science* is not specifically mentioned, but one can reasonably assume that the award was for that artwork or at least included it among Kips’s other contribution to the fair mentioned above, i.e., the representation of the four seasons or the medallion of Emperor Wilhelm II.³¹

Ultimately, the artwork can be seen within the historical context of a reassertion of traditional art in Germany. Although Germany had come together as a nation in 1871, the united front of the three wars against Denmark (1864), Austria-Hungary (1866) and France (1870-71) had been the driving force. Keeping and building that unity in peace proved difficult as different nationalist, economic, expansionist, social-reform and liberal interests and ideologies, along with their political organizations and other entities such as the army, began to pull the *Reich* apart again. Divisions became evident in the arts as well, with the so-called “academic taste” and its almost photographic exactitude on one side of the spectrum.³² Franz von Lenbach (1836–1914), Hans Markart (1840-84) and Anton von Werner (1843-1915) can be seen as examples in this school of art, whereby Werner even created his own Germania painting with the title of *Heil, Germania!*, an allegory on the 1871 German unification. Many of them, including Kips, were members of the “Verein Berliner Künstler” (Club of Berlin Artists), founded in 1841. In 1893, for example, they organized the “Große Berliner Kunstausstellung” (Great Berlin Exhibition). Kaiser Wilhelm II clearly supported this “official” art.

The avant-garde was at the other end of the artistic spectrum. In 1889 only a few years before the creation of Kips’s Germania, a group of young artists under the auspices of Max Liebermann (1847–1935) had shown their art at the World’s Fair in Paris and created controversy. A few years later in 1892, the “Vereinigung der XI” (Group of Eleven) was founded in Berlin that, aside from Liebermann, came to include such painters as Walter Leistikow (1865–1908), Ludwig von Hofmann (1861-1945), Hugo Vogel (1855–1934) or Dora Hitz (1856–1924).³³ In a palace in the center of Wilhelmine Berlin, they exhibited their naturalistic, impressionist and symbolistic paintings, a total of eleven times until the year 1899, in each case accompanied by a considerable debate in the press. As the first artistic movement of the avant-garde in the German-speaking world, they laid the foundation for the later secessionist movements (for example, 1893 in Dresden, 1897 in Vienna and 1898

in Berlin). The development toward an increasingly abstract art continued and manifested itself in further expressionist groups such as “Die Brücke” (The Bridge, starting in 1905) or “Der Blaue Reiter” (about 1911).

Clearly things were percolating in the artistic world of the *Reich* when *Germania Protects Art and Science* was created for the Chicago fair. It can therefore also be seen as a statement to “protect” traditional and “official” German art as well, especially within the international context of the fair. This was image German art was to project abroad. After all, Kips himself had been educated in that tradition, and nothing else could be expected from a state enterprise like the *KPM* anyway, aside from the protection of the sciences. Wilhelm II placed considerable emphasis on their development since he saw “Wissen ist Macht” (Knowledge is Power) as one of the principles by which Imperial Germany could assert its prominence.

After the exposition, some sources indicate the porcelain painting was donated by the Kaiser and the German Empire to the Germania Club of Chicago, probably the most significant German-American organization in Chicago at the time and home to the German-American elite of the city.³⁴ An article in the Chicago *Abendpost* at that time wrote that the club purchased it.³⁵ This is, in fact, the case as a letter in the archives of the *KPM* from the Germania Männerchor (the predecessor of the Germania Club) indicates. Dated November 10, 1893, it talks of two promissory notes at \$1250.00 each that are included in the letter “[i]m Auftrage des Verwaltungsrats des Germania Männerchors und im Namen seines Präsidenten, Herrn Ed Koch” (on behalf of the Board of the Germania Männerchor and in the name of its president, Mr. Ed Koch) for “das Fliesenbild, ‘Germania’” (the tile image of ‘Germania’).³⁶ Further notes written by the *KPM* on the letter indicate the receipt of the \$2,500, which would have a value today of roughly \$76 000.³⁷

The artwork ended up gracing the west wall of the main ballroom of the Germania Club’s own building on Chicago’s near-north side, designed by a fellow German, William Augustus Fiedler (1842–1903), and officially opened in 1889. It remained there until the club’s demise in 1986. When German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer (1876–1967) visited the US in 1953 to thank the country for its postwar support, his trip also took him to Chicago where he was a guest of the Germania Club on April 14. A banquet was held in his honor in the main ballroom, and, as a Cologne native, he must have felt comfortable under the porcelain wall painting with its representation of the Cologne Cathedral (cf. fig. 8).

Founded in 1865, the Germania Club always strove to bring together German-Americans in Chicago in order, in its own words, “to foster and perpetuate German cultural ideals and the fine inheritance known as *Gemeinlichkeit*.” That meant enhancing “the happiness of its members,” and



Fig. 8. *Glory of Germania* in the Germania Club, *Germania Club Centennial 1865-1965* (Bockmann Engraving Co. 1965), 30-31.

encouraging “a better understanding and appreciation of the fine and beautiful things of life by such cultural features as musical and literary programs, art exhibits, lectures and high-minded discussions.”³⁸ The members simply wanted to be good citizens of the expanding country and take part fully in its social, political and economic institutions, a point that pervades much of the history of the club, all of this in a city that in the late 1800s had the third largest German population in the world after Berlin and New York, and could count some 450 German clubs.³⁹

Although the Germania Club was not named after the main figure in the porcelain painting, it very much became a part of the ideals the club wanted to project with its allusions, mythical representations and cultural figures. From the club’s perspective, a more general cultural-historical essence of what was German ended up transcending the Wilhelmine aspects of the artwork, a period in German history which ultimately turned out to be rather bellicose and led to the disaster of World War I. To the extent that *Triumph of Germania* had been the title of the artwork at the Columbia Exposition,⁴⁰ a name change to the Germania Club’s *Glory of Germania* can probably already be seen as an attempt to tone down the latent militarism of the original name. A visible sign of the shift in emphasis was that the emblem in the canopy that wielded a commanding imperial eagle was changed to one showing a “G,” presumably for “Germania,” referring both to the artwork and the club.

The Germania Club was very clearly proud of its ownership of the porcelain wall painting, and remained so throughout its history. An anonymous poem from the 1940-41 *Germania Club Year Book* sang the *Glory of Germania's* praises as follows:

Tarry, revere at Germania's Festival Hall,
More than one thousand tiles proclaim from the sunset wall
Our Sire's Sagas and mighty deeds in heavenly hue.
They brought the flowering seed to the promising new land
Which we shall raise to beauty and wealth with our mind and hand
To pay homage to the old, and the new—to both be true.⁴¹

In 1955, the aforementioned William Reichert wrote somewhat melodramatically:

Ashes and debris, the signs of destruction mark the site, where our "PEERLESS PORCELAIN PICTURE" was conceived. Its creator Professor ALEXANDER KIPS, Art Director of the—then—Royal Prussian Porcelain Works, has gone to Valhall. His assistants, who kneaded the porcelain earth into fire clay, burnt it and fired the painted tiles, so they may resist the tooth of time, are no more. But their work is safe in our Ballroom, four thousand miles from the spot, where they toiled. The papers, which might have given us a clue to the thoughts and intentions of the artist, have gone up in smoke in the fires of the second World War.⁴²

In a publication in connection with the 100th anniversary of the Germania Club in 1965, a description of the porcelain artwork concludes with the following words: "The picture glorifies what we desire to keep for America: The traditions of world wisdom, sagas, the arts and sciences. May we always be inspired by the spirit radiating from this masterpiece!"⁴³ It was a very clear assertion of a German national pride of ancestry freed of politics. In short, the *Glory of Germania* became the central symbol of the Germania Club, which made postcards available of the artwork, even decals to be dipped in water and applied to whatever surface desired.⁴⁴

As the Germania Club folded in 1986, largely a result of declining interest in German heritage and subsequent financial difficulties, the value of the *Glory of Germania* was placed at \$300,000 and \$350,000 in two appraisals carried out at the time.⁴⁵ The artwork was deemed in good shape with only some scattered chipping.⁴⁶ In his assessment, Richard-Raymond Alasko came to the following conclusion:

The singular achievement of the Berlin studio was the indescribably detailed enameled “bildplatte” (picture plates) that came to be produced during the Nineteenth Century. The mural, here appraised, can be described with justification, as the “grandest example” which grew from the bildplatte tradition. Not in scale alone, but in its dramatic conception and combination of painterly and decorative elements, the mural with its proscenium superstructure is a climax of the KPM enameled porcelain art.⁴⁷

Alasko added: “Charles Gregersen, an expert on the Columbian Exposition has observed that the mural and its proscenium is the sole remaining example of one of the interior pavilions from the fair.”⁴⁸

Nonetheless, attempts to find a new home for the artwork, including the Chicago History Museum and the new Central Library, were unsuccessful.⁴⁹ Ultimately deemed more kitschy and historical than artistic, it was unprofessionally removed from the ballroom wall, some tiles broken in the process. It was boxed up and put into storage in the attic of the Altenheim, a German immigrant senior residency founded in 1885 in the Chicago suburb of Forest Park. The columns were stored there as well, but the grand canopy has disappeared without a trace. Various further attempts by the German American Heritage Institute (GAHI), entrusted with the porcelain painting, to find a new location for display were also unsuccessful, this time including Concordia University in Oak Park and O’Hare Airport.

Things became rather silent surrounding the *Glory of Germania* until the author learned about the artwork in connection with his historical research on the Germania Club. Some detective work was involved, one thing led to another, including some fortuitous coincidences and the strong interest on the part of the German American National Congress in Chicago (DANK) in having the porcelain painting resurrected, and where it was on temporary display from June to December 2018 (cf. fig. 9). It is in remarkable shape with only about twelve tiles broken. Meanwhile, GAHI has negotiated a two to three-year loan agreement with the *KPM* in Berlin for a level of restoration yet to be determined and display before being returned to Chicago. For the *KPM*, *Germania Protects Art and Science* or the *Glory of Germania* represents a unique piece in their artistic tradition that they would like to exhibit in that sense, but also for the purpose of attracting attention to their current production of high-grade, artistic porcelain.

Back in 1955, Reichert had expressed the hope that “visitors to Chicago will put a trip to this memento of German greatness on their itinerary.”⁵⁰ Although the statement is hyperbolic and the idea of “German greatness” wrought controversy, there can probably be agreement with the general senti-



Fig. 9. *Glory of Germania* on display in DANK Haus in Chicago (photograph by author).

ment that the *Glory of Germania* is very well worthy of artistic attention. The artwork can still be appreciated within its historical context as a symbolic representation of Germany in another age. Although the future and more permanent location of the *Glory of Germania* remains unclear, it is hoped that

the porcelain wall painting's ultimate display under much more ideal lighting conditions than at the World's Columbian Exposition, and freed from the bluster of the surrounding structure, will indeed lure visitors to see it and will heighten the aesthetic enjoyment of the work.

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Notes

¹ There are extensive sources for the Columbian Exposition. Some appeared fairly soon after the end of the fair, for example, *Unsere Weltausstellung: Eine Beschreibung der Columbischen Weltausstellung in Chicago, 1893* (Chicago: Druck und Verlag Fried. Klein Company, 1894). A major work was also Rossiter Johnson's three volumes that appeared as *History of the World's Columbian Exposition Held in Chicago in 1893* (New York: D. Appleton, 1897). More recently, cf. Norman Bolotin and Christine Laing's *The World's Columbian Exposition: The Chicago World's Fair of 1893* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002). Art has also taken on the Columbian Exhibition, for example, Erik Larson's bestseller, *The Devil in the White City* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003). In June 2018, June Finfer's and Elizabeth Doyle's musical, *Burnham's Dream: The White City*, premiered at Theater Wit in Chicago.

² Cf. Adolph Wermuth (Reichskommissar), *Amtlicher Bericht über die Weltausstellung in Chicago 1893* (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1894), 1: 76.

³ It was one of only three buildings that survived the more temporary constructions of the fair. The Palace of Art later became the Museum of Science and Industry, the Spanish cloister La Rábida a hospital. The *Deutsches Haus* was renovated in about 1900 and was home to a refectory and museum before it burned to the ground in 1925. Cf. Stanley Appelbaum, *The Chicago World's Fair of 1893: A Photographic Record* (Dover Publications, 1980), 107.

⁴ For a more detailed description of the German presence at the fair, cf. Potter Palmer et al., *Handbook of the World's Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Company, 1893) esp. 117, 123, 170–71 and 217. Also cf. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Book of the Fair. An Historical and Descriptive Presentation of the World's Science, Art, and Industry, as Viewed through the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893* (Chicago and San Francisco: The Bancroft Company, Publishers, 1893), 197–204.

⁵ Cf. Ray Johnson, "The Krupp Gun Pavilion at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition: The largest gun, a huge scandal, historic mystery and the cooling of the White City," <http://www.chicagonow.com/chicago-history-cop/2013/11/the-krupp-gun-pavilion-at-the-1893-worlds-columbian-exposition-the-largest-gun-a-huge-scandal-historic-mystery-and-the-cooling-of-the-white-city/>.

⁶ Anon., "Germany at the World's Columbian Exposition," *Scientific American Supplement* 36, no. 916 (July 22, 1893): 1.

⁷ Cf. the KPM exhibition catalogue *Königliche Porzellan Manufaktur Berlin 1763-2013* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2013). There had been a predecessor to the KPM that Wilhelm Wegeley (1714–64) founded in 1752 with the patronage of Frederick the Great as well. However, dissatisfied with the production, the king withdrew his support in 1757.

⁸ Cf. Marianne Ouvrier-Böttcher, "Die Arbeiten der KPM zwischen 1835 und 1890" (Dissertation, Technische Universität Berlin, 1984), 139.

⁹ Cf. William Reichert, "Earth and Fire—Our Picture," *Germania Club News* 15, no. 10 (March 1955): 5.

¹⁰ Cf. *Unsere Weltausstellung*, 445.

¹¹ It is not surprising that Germania popped up more than once at the Chicago fair. Although she was most majestically represented in the porcelain wall painting being discussed here, there was also a version of her to be seen in a “Chocolate Temple,” part of the exhibition by the chocolatiers Gebrüder Stollwerck and designed by the well-known German sculptor Reinhold Begas (1831–1911). In addition, she appeared in the aforementioned castle, apparently formed of wax and reigning above a group of 51 allegorical figures of German heroes from the past and present. Cf. Sarah Gulich, *Die Präsentation Deutschlands auf den Weltausstellungen in Chicago 1893 und St. Louis 1904* (Norderstedt: GRIN Verlag, 2011). There was also a Germania figure of porcelain in the Meissen Porcelain exhibit adjacent to the KPM’s Germania. Cf. L. P. Gratacap, “The World’s Columbian Exposition II.—The Liberal Arts—Germany, Austria, and Japan,” *Scientific American Supplement* 36, no. 938 (Dec. 2, 1893): 14944. Finally, on June 15 during the fair, German Day was celebrated in coincidence with the coronation of Wilhelm II. The focal point was the *Deutsches Haus* where delegations from St. Paul, Milwaukee, St. Louis and Cincinnati, aside from Chicago’s own German-Americans, heard a series of speeches, including Chicago Mayor Carter Henry Harrison Sr. The culmination was a fireworks display launched from barges out on Lake Michigan that featured large figures of both America and Germania. Raymond Lohne writes: “America carried only her flag and shield, but a massive eagle crouched at her feet and was looking up at Germany. For her part Germania carried a massive broadsword, and was holding aloft the Emperor’s crown. Her eagle was relegated to a symbol on her sash. But the larger message, namely that the American Republic and the German Empire stood together, could not have been clearer.” Raymond Lohne, “Founded at the Bier of Lincoln: A History of the Germania Club of Chicago, 1865–1986” (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 2007), 246.

¹² For more background information on the Niederwald Monument, cf. Wolfgang Kootz, *Das Niederwalddenkmal bei Rüdesheim* (Ubstadt-Weiher: Kraichgau-Verlag, 2015).

¹³ Germania’s iconic value became essentially historical in 1918 with the end of World War I. During the Nazi period in 1942, Hitler developed elaborate plans for a renamed Berlin as Germania. Aside from these plans ultimately coming to naught, the name did not immediately reference the goddess Germania. Rather, it stood for connecting all members of the German race with what was meant bombastically to become Hitler’s world capital, his “Welthauptstadt.” Cf. Henry Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier 1941–1942* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1965), 182. In the 21st century, Germania still appears in the names of sports clubs and fraternities whose histories often go back to the 19th century anyway. For more on the representation of Germania, cf. Lothar Gall, “Die Germania als Symbol nationaler Identität im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert,” *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften Göttingen, I. Philologisch-Historische Klasse 1993* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 35–88.

¹⁴ Cf. “Wonders in Wrought Iron,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (May 7, 1893): 25.

¹⁵ The identity of all fourteen figures is not entirely certain and remains a part of my ongoing research on the artwork.

¹⁶ Either case could be made. The Danube makes sense as Germany’s other most significant river. However, here, too, parallels can be drawn with the Niederwald Monument. It depicts a similar Father Rhine figure in repose, in this case ceremoniously presenting a signal horn to his daughter, the Mosel River, as a symbol of the incorporation of Elsass-Lothringen into the German Empire as the most significant territorial gain of the war against France.

¹⁷ In France, England and Switzerland, the symbolic figures of Marianne, Britannia or Helvetia fulfill similar functions.

¹⁸ For the following, cf. Ouvrier-Böttcher, “Die Arbeiten der KPM zwischen 1835 und 1890,” 138–41.

¹⁹ Cf. *Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur Berlin 1763–2013*, 34, 90, 100, 104, 106, 108, 110, 158 and 218.

²⁰ Cf. “Wonders in Wrought Iron,” 25.

²¹ Cf. *Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur Berlin 1763–2013*, 12.

²² “Wonders in Wrought Iron,” 25.

²³ “Wonders in Wrought Iron,” 25.

²⁴ “Wonders in Wrought Iron,” 25.

²⁵ Cf. *Unsere Weltausstellung*, 445.

²⁶ “Germany at the World’s Columbian Exposition,” 1.

²⁷ Gratacap, “The World’s Columbian Exposition II.—The Liberal Arts—Germany, Austria, and Japan,” 14944.

²⁸ Julius Lessing, “Kunstgewerbe,” *Amtlicher Bericht über die Weltausstellung in Chicago 1893* (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1894), 2: 799.

²⁹ Lessing, “Kunstgewerbe,” 799.

³⁰ Reichert, “Earth and Fire—Our Picture,” 5.

³¹ Cf. *Revised Catalogue. Dept of Fine Arts* (Chicago: Conkey, 1893), 17.

³² For the following cf. David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780–1918* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 321 ff.; Hagen Schulze, *Germany. A New History*, trans. by Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998), 169 ff., esp. 176–80 and 183; Frank B. Tipton, *A History of Modern Germany Since 1815* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 210–14.

³³ Cf. Tobias Hoffmann, Anna Grosskopf und Sabine Meister, eds., *Skandal! Mythos! Moderne! Die Vereinigung der XI in Berlin* (Köln: Wienand, 2019).

³⁴ *Unsere Weltausstellung*, 139. This is also indicated in *Germania Club Centennial 1865–1965* (Chicago: Bockmann Engraving Co., 1965), 21.

³⁵ “Aus dem Jackson Park: Ein Uebereinkommen zwischen dem Direktorium und den Park-Kommissären,” *Abendpost* (Dec. 9, 1893): 2.

³⁶ Letter of the Germania Männerchor to the KPM, KPM Archives (Potsdam): XXVI., 28, Vol. 4, Direction der Königlichen Porzellan-Manufaktur. Acta betreffend die Weltausstellung in Chicago 1893, folio 75.

³⁷ Cf. CPI Inflation Indicator: http://www.in2013dollars.com/1894-dollars-in-2020?amount=2500&future_pct=0.03.

³⁸ “Our Policies and Ideals,” *Germania Club Centennial 1865–1965* (Chicago: Bockmann Engraving Co., 1965), 5.

³⁹ For more detailed histories of the Germans in Chicago, cf. Andrew Jacke Townsend, *The Germans of Chicago* (Chicago: Jahrbuch der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois, 1932) and Rudolf A. Hofmeister, *The Germans of Chicago* (Champaign: Stipes Publishing Co., 1976).

⁴⁰ Cf. n. 9 above.

⁴¹ *Germania Club Year Book and Historical Review 1940–1941* (Chicago: Bockmann Engraving Co., 1941), Front Material.

⁴² Reichert, “Earth and Fire—Our Picture,” 5. He is referring here to the fact that the KPM was bombed in April 1943 during World War II since it was producing porcelain for war purposes. It was not until then that the KPM began evacuating its artwork and archives. No doubt much was destroyed, which explains the dearth of documentation on what process went into creating the porcelain wall painting as mentioned earlier.

⁴³ *Germania Club Centennial 1865–1965*, 41.

⁴⁴ For more on the history of the Germania Club, cf. the author’s two-part article, “The Germania Club of Chicago—a History and some Curiosities,” *German-American Journal* 65, no. 2/3 (April/May and June/July 2017): 10–11 and 10–11.

⁴⁵ Richard-Raymond Alasko of the Alasko Company and Victor Sorell of Chicago State University carried out the two appraisals in 1986 and 1987 respectively.

⁴⁶ In this regard, cf. particularly the more detailed Alasko appraisal: "A Porcelain, Tiled Mural By Alexander Kips, Allegory Of German Art or The Glory of Germania" (1986).

⁴⁷ Alasko appraisal.

⁴⁸ Alasko appraisal.

⁴⁹ Cf. John Camper, "1893 Exposition Relic May Not Fit Into 1986," *Chicago Tribune*, (June 11, 1986): 21.

⁵⁰ Reichert, "Earth and Fire—Our Picture," 6.

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