

## Otto Pächt 1902–1988

NO SCHOLAR OF HIS GENERATION surpassed Otto Pächt in his knowledge of works of art in his chosen fields, the art of the Middle Ages, especially manuscript illumination, and the painting of the Netherlands in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. None introduced more new material to scholarship, while at the same time recognising and clarifying its art historical significance.<sup>1</sup>

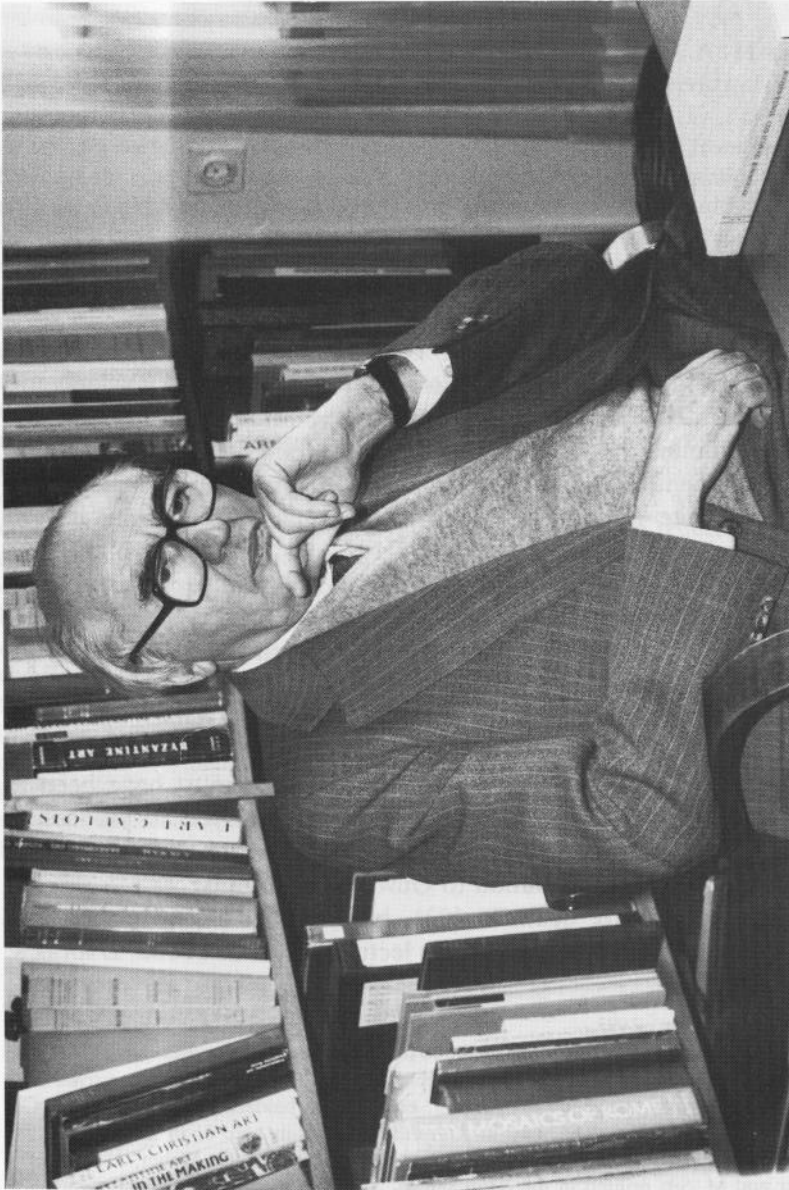
Pächt was born on 7 September 1902 of well-to-do Jewish parents, David and Josephine Pächt (née Freundlich). His father had textile interests with links to Manchester, a business which Pächt's brother was to continue. Pächt attended the Volksschule and Stadtgymnasium in Vienna XIII and began his studies in the History of Art and in Archaeology at the University in 1920 where Max Dvořák was Ordinarius. Dvořák's interests in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Netherlandish art must have been a stimulus to Pächt to study a school of painting which was to preoccupy him throughout his career. His first publication in *Kunstchronik* for 1921–2 concerned problems of attribution to Ouwater and Bouts.

Dvořák's premature death in 1921, however, led Pächt to move to Berlin to attend Adolph Goldschmidt's lectures. Karl Swoboda, Dvořák's

© The British Academy 1993.

<sup>1</sup> Bibliographies of Pächt's writings can be found in *Kunsthistorische Forschungen Otto Pächt zu Ehren*, eds. A. Rosenauer, G. Weber, Salzburg, 1972, in O. Pächt, *Methodisches zur kunsthistorischen Praxis, ausgewählte Schriften*, eds. J. Oberhaidacher, A. Rosenauer, G. Schikola, 2nd edn. Munich, 1986, and in *Kunsthistoriker* as in note 6. In addition to the evaluations of Pächt's work by R. Preimesberger, A. Rosenauer, G. Weber, J. Mitchell, D. Bogner and M. Sitt printed in the latter see M. Sitt, 'Otto Pächt. Am Anfang war das Auge', *Kunsthistoriker in eigener Sache. Zehn autobiographische Skizzen*, ed. M. Sitt, mit einer Einleitung von H. Dilly, Berlin, 1990, pp. 25–61, and A. Rosenauer, forward to *Van Eyck. Die Begründer der altniederländischen Malerei*, Munich, 1989. I am most grateful to Charles Mitchell, the late Carl Nordenfalk, Michael Pächt, Artur Rosenauer and Jo Trapp for helpful comments and corrections to this memoir.

his character, still permitting himself the occasional dash of mischievous humour.



O. PÄCHT

...Kunstwerke in ihrer Zeit. Eine methodische Skizze, ed. M. Sill, in: *Das Kunstwerk als Problem*, ed. M. Sill, Berlin, 1991, pp. 25-81. and A. Kutschera, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Language*, ed. M. Sill, Berlin, 1991, pp. 1-10. I am most grateful to Prof. Dr. G. G. Bruns for his kind invitation to visit the Max-Planck-Institut für Philosophie in Bonn, where I was invited to give a lecture on the philosophy of language in the summer of 1991. I am also grateful to Prof. Dr. G. G. Bruns for his kind invitation to visit the Max-Planck-Institut für Philosophie in Bonn, where I was invited to give a lecture on the philosophy of language in the summer of 1991.

assistant, asked Bruno Fürst, who became Pächt's lifelong friend, to 'take Pächt under his wing in Berlin', as Fürst later recalled with amusement. Pächt returned to Vienna the following year where Julius von Schlosser was now in charge of the Kunsthistorisches Institut, and took his doctorate in 1925 with a dissertation entitled 'Verhältnis von Bild und Vorwurf in der mittelalterlichen Entwicklung der Historiendarstellung'. He had also studied Archaeology with Emil Reisch and Emmanuel Löwy. Whether his interest in classical art led him to Riegl, or whether it was the other way round, in 1927 he published a new edition with notes of Riegl's *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*. The main chronological poles of his work were thus already set from the late Antique to the Early Modern period, and his allegiance to the Vienna school of Art History and its founders. Wickhoff and Riegl, established.

In 1929 Pächt's first book *Oesterreichische Tafelmalerei der Gotik* appeared. This was followed by a long and closely argued article on Michael Pacher in the first issue of the *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen*, 1931. This was a new theoretical art historical journal which he edited from its inception in 1931 to 1933 when it ceased publication due to lack of funding. In both book and article Pächt aimed to describe the debts to outside influences and also the specific characteristics of Austrian painting. This brought him to a conviction of the existence of national constants in art, which he never abandoned. Pächt had also contributed to the *Kritische Berichte zur Kunstgeschichtlichen Literatur*, which had been started in 1927 and was edited by Fürst, and initially Friedrich Antal, until 1938. He was thus already a prominent member of the 'Younger Viennese School', as Meyer Schapiro called it in a lengthy review article of *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen*, 2, 1933.<sup>2</sup> Hans Sedlmayr, slightly older than Pächt, was another prominent member of this group.<sup>3</sup> Schapiro described some of the main influences on their thought, especially Gestalt psychology, and drew attention to their strengths, 'the endeavour to forge a rigorous style criticism', and their weaknesses, 'unfounded theoretical claims'. 'We do not blame the authors for neglecting the social, economic, political and ideological factors, but rather for offering us as historical explanation a mysterious racial and animistic language in the name of a higher science of art'. Though Schapiro was in Vienna in the winter of

<sup>2</sup> *Art Bulletin*. 18 (1936). 260.

<sup>3</sup> Sedlmayr, born 1896, as is well known, made political compromises. He succeeded Schlosser in the Chair at Vienna from 1936 to 1945. In 1951 he was called to Munich. In a letter to Meyer Schapiro of 1 July 1952 Pächt wrote: 'What you wrote me last time about Sedlmayr's friendly gestures does not surprise me at all. There will be, if necessary, a third and a fourth volte face, but I am not interested in the psychology of chameleons'. Unlike Sedlmayr, but like Dvořák, Pächt never concerned himself with architecture.

1930–1, where he in particular sought out Emmanuel Löwy, he did not meet Pächt at that time. However, he initiated a correspondence via Fürst in 1934 and the letters in reply from Pächt, of which he has kindly given me copies, provide a fascinating account on two levels of Pächt's academic interest on the one hand and of the effects of the approaching Nazi threat on the other.

Pächt seldom spoke to me of his own past and was reticent on personal matters, so that I know little of his life at this time and the letters are consequently of special value.<sup>4</sup> The novelist, Robert Musil, was among his friends at this period, and Fürst and Pächt were among those who contributed to a small stipendium for him in these years. Pächt was instrumental in the publication in 1935 of Musil's *Nachlass zu Lebzeiten*.<sup>5</sup> Pächt kept in touch with Musil until his death in Geneva in 1942.<sup>6</sup> Another friend was Oskar Kokoschka, whom he probably met through Swoboda, and who later wrote a tribute to him in his *Festschrift*. A delicate water-colour of flowers by Kokoschka hung together with Old Master drawings and a Picasso etching in the house in Vienna in later years.

Pächt's Habilitationsschrift entitled 'Gestaltungsprinzipien der westlichen Malerei im 15. Jahrhunderts' was published in 1933 in *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen*, 2, and he was appointed Privatdozent at Heidelberg University by August Grisebach. The Nazi prohibition on Jews holding jobs in Germany enforced in the same year prevented his ever taking up the post, however.<sup>7</sup> In the first letter to Schapiro dated 4 October 1934 and written from Vienna, that is only months after the assassination of the Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss in July, Pächt takes up the question of the national constants, evidently in response to Schapiro's critical comment. In this and three following letters of December 1934, February 1935 and June 1936, Pächt defended his views against Schapiro's criticisms which, though Schapiro's letters do not survive, can be reconstructed from the review mentioned and from a paper he published in 1936.<sup>8</sup> Pächt argued against Schapiro's charge that his views lent support to Nazi racialist theories, by pointing to the artists who like Gianbologna, though of foreign birth, took on the style of their adopted country. It could not be, therefore, a matter

<sup>4</sup> Fürst, who knew him so well, put nothing on paper unfortunately, though I remember him sketching a vignette of Pächt in a café in Vienna during the Spanish Civil War with his pockets stuffed with newspaper cuttings.

<sup>5</sup> H. Hickman, *Robert Musil and the Culture of Vienna*, 1984, pp. 168, 171.

<sup>6</sup> For a moving letter of encouragement from Musil written in July 1937 see 'Ein Brief Musils an Pächt', *Kunsthistoriker. Mitteilungen des Oesterreichischen Kunsthistorikerverbandes*, 5 (1988), 9–10.

<sup>7</sup> Saxl noted that this appointment at this juncture was a proof of Pächt's outstanding reputation.

<sup>8</sup> 'Race, nationality and art', *Art Front*, 2 (1936), 10–12.

of race. His observations, he says, are in any case based on empirical evidence, and a scholar must follow his conclusions, however unwelcome the consequences.

On another level the correspondence concerned the possibility of Pächt finding work, having been up to this point supported, evidently, by his father. He first visited England in December 1935, was there again at the end of 1936, also visiting his friend George Furlong (1898–1987, Director of the National Gallery of Ireland 1935–1950) in Dublin in March 1937. He returned briefly to Vienna in the summer of 1937 and finally settled in London in 1938. A letter of 2 April 1938 refers to the arrest of his father and another of 30 April canvasses the possibility of work in the United States.

In London Pächt had two points of reference. One was the Warburg Institute which had migrated from Hamburg in 1933. Correspondence with Fritz Saxl preserved in the Institute archive begins in March 1937.<sup>9</sup> He wrote to Schapiro on 3 December 1938 about a projected exhibition on 'Visual approaches to the classics' at the Warburg Institute and a letter of 30 January 1939 is written from the Institute. Already in the earlier letter, however, he mentioned that he had begun work on a projected catalogue of illuminated manuscripts in the British Museum. Pächt does not say where the original idea for this came from, perhaps it was Saxl's, but he mentions a stipendium for four months from the Society for the Protection of Learning and Science.<sup>10</sup> The correspondence with Schapiro suggests that he had already worked on illuminated manuscripts before coming to England, but the course of events now steered him towards a much closer involvement with them. A letter of 3 April 1937 mentions 'Warmald' already, that is Francis Wormald at that time in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum, who was to become his closest professional friend in England.<sup>11</sup> On 5 May 1939, the first of the letters to Schapiro in English, he wrote that he was reading available literature on manuscript illumination.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> I am grateful to Miss A. C. Pollard, archivist at the Warburg Institute, for allowing me to go through the relevant files.

<sup>10</sup> This was set up by Lord Beveridge after a visit to Vienna in March 1933. See N. Baldwin, *The Society for the Protection of Science and Learning Archive*, Bodleian Library, Oxford, 1988. The archive also concerns material on the internment of refugees in 1940, to which Pächt among many others was subjected.

<sup>11</sup> He cannot have known him very well at this time, unless this is a misprint. For a memoir of Wormald by Julian Brown see *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 61 (1976 for 1975), 523–60.

<sup>12</sup> Pächt's first article in English concerns Bohemian early fifteenth-century illumination and appeared in the *Burlington Magazine* in 1938. He commented in a letter to Saxl in 1937 after a visit to see the Antwerp Bible, the subject of the article, that only three scholars had seen it this century! The Schapiros finally met Pächt briefly on a visit to London in the summer of 1939 and borrowed his flat during his absence.

'What a desert' is his comment, though a new book by Carl Nordenfalk on Canon Tables is a notable exception. Nordenfalk was to become another close friend, though they did not meet until after the War.<sup>13</sup>

On 11 January 1940 Pächt married Jeanne Michalopoulo whom he had met at the Courtauld Institute where she was working as Assistant Librarian. Their son, Michael, was born in October 1942. It was presumably due to the evacuation of the manuscripts from the British Museum at the start of the War that Wormald suggested that Pächt should catalogue instead the manuscripts of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. In Oxford, where he moved early in 1941, Pächt 'felt very much more at home, with its old buildings than I ever did in London, although the problems of housing and feeding are here much more difficult to solve'. Jeanne Pächt helped in the catalogue and slips printed in a format which Eric Millar had designed for the British Museum project were handwritten for every illuminated manuscript in the collection. Pächt wrote to Schapiro of his satisfaction with the project and his many discoveries, 'even in the field of English illumination'. A number of short publications resulted from this work during the War, for example of a pair of eleventh-century Psalters from Tegernsee, of a manuscript ascribed to the young Fouquet (now the artist is identified as the 'Jouvenel Master'), and of a manuscript illuminated by Holbein the Younger in England. But the main work, which involved not just ascription on stylistic grounds, but detailed research on texts, provenance via coats-of-arms, and the identification of comparative material, remained unpublished until I was engaged in 1962 by Dr Richard Hunt, Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, to prepare the slips for publication. The task was to update them and supply bibliography under Pächts supervision. I had started my Oxford D.Phil. under Pächt's supervision two years previously.

The three volumes of the catalogue, European other than Italian, Italian, and British, subsequently appeared in 1966, 1970 and 1973. The format, a very brief description of texts, type of illumination with a ranking, provenance and selected secondary literature, backed up with small illustrations for many of the entries, proved practical in that it enabled some three thousand three hundred manuscripts to be classified and thus made them accessible to interested scholars to examine further, even if much specific and necessary information could not be given.<sup>14</sup> Since Pächt left for Vienna in 1963 there was much correspondence involved in the revision, but we looked together, even if briefly, at every single manuscript during this time.

<sup>13</sup> At that time working in the Göteborg Museum of Art. Director of the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm (1959–69). For a memoir of Pächt by him see *Revue de l'art*, 1988, 82–3.

<sup>14</sup> Pächt may have had in mind the catalogues of illuminated manuscripts in Spanish collections by J. D. Bordona in 1933 as a model.

The Department of Western Manuscripts was an ideal place to do this work with its excellent reference collection on open shelves in Duke Humfrey and with the group of Oxford scholars interested in the manuscript book, Richard Hunt himself above all, Neil Ker and Albinia de la Mare for palaeographical problems, Graham Pollard for bindings, and many others such as A. B. Emden, Beryl Smalley, Malcolm Parkes, Roger Mynors, Richard Southern and later Bob Delaissé. There were many visiting scholars to be consulted too. I remember a visit by Winkler perhaps in 1963, and Pächt showing him the Italian Missal whose illumination he considered to be by Fouquet, a discovery reported to Schapiro already in December 1941.<sup>15</sup> Other visitors to Bodley included E. A. Lowe, André Grabar and Bernard Bischoff.

The Bodleian can today claim to be the best published major collection of illuminated manuscripts in the world for the use of Art Historians, its only rival being the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna of which more will be said later. The project of recording the manuscripts in colour microfilms initiated by Dr W. O. Hassall was also proceeding at the same time. Pächt had also surveyed the illuminated Byzantine manuscripts in Oxford in a small format Picture Book published in 1948.<sup>16</sup> His mapping of the Bodleian collections has in turn both served as an accessible reference point for succeeding catalogues in other libraries, and formed a basis of study for the next generation of students of book painting.<sup>17</sup>

The work enabled Pächt at the same time to lay the foundations of his knowledge of English medieval illumination, which already bore fruit in the article on the 'Giottesque episode in English art' published in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* in 1943.<sup>18</sup> This centred on evidence of knowledge of Italian Trecento art in England in the fourteenth century, such as the Crucifixion in the Gorleston Psalter in the British Museum and the classicizing figure blowing a trumpet in the Psalter of Robert of Ormesby in the Bodleian Library, as well as the complex problem of the sources of the Egerton Genesis with its transmission of early Christian iconographies. Pächt proposed a revised and more coherent chronology for early fourteenth-century English illumination in part based on the degree of its reception of Italian influence. But

<sup>15</sup> Ms. Canon. Liturg. 383. *Illuminated manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, 1, Oxford*, Oxford, 1966, no. 720. Winkler agreed, but the manuscript has still not been fully studied.

<sup>16</sup> The Bodleian Byzantine illuminated manuscripts have now been systematically catalogued by Irmgard Hutter.

<sup>17</sup> François Avril acknowledges their inspiration in his preface to the new series of catalogues of illuminated manuscripts at present being issued by the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

<sup>18</sup> Pächt wrote to Saxl with a similar title for a lecture in August 1941.

this was subsidiary to the main purpose of the article which was to place works of English art in a context of European art and to analyse their specific stylistic characteristics, for instance the physical relations of miniatures, borders and initials in relation to the space construction of the scenes represented. The article was reprinted at the end of the War in 1945 with a series of other important pieces from the *Journal* in a collection significantly entitled 'England and the Mediterranean tradition'. A commitment to underlining the cultural relations historically existing between England and the Continent was clearly part of the Warburg Institute's policy under Saxl from the moment the War broke out.

Research on English medieval art also bore fruit in the collaborative monograph on the St Albans Psalter now in Hildesheim, published by the Warburg Institute in 1960. In this Francis Wormald wrote on the palaeographical and liturgical aspects, C. R. Dodwell discussed the style and iconography of the historiated initials to the Psalms, and Pächt dealt with the full-page miniatures. The Psalter had already been the subject of a monograph by Adolph Goldschmidt in 1895, who was, however, almost exclusively concerned with the historiated initials. Here again Pächt provided a wider European context not just in the matter of iconography, though this was the most sophisticated and detailed discussion of the iconography of an English manuscript to this date, but in wider aspects of the intersection of style and meaning.<sup>19</sup> Pächt demonstrated the debts both in style and iconography of the main artist, the 'Alexis Master', to Ottonian and especially Italo-Byzantine art, as well as to his native tradition of Anglo-Saxon art and even to Early Christian sources preserved in England. But he also demonstrated that the Alexis Master incorporated new imagery such as the Chalice included in the Agony in the Garden, an iconography to become standard in European Christian art from now on. Above all he revealed the achievement of the Alexis Master in forging a new form of sacred narrative.

At this period there was, in part due to Kurt Weitzmann's work, considerable interest in the nature and origins of Christian narrative art, and in its relations to late Antique and earlier Hellenistic narrative art. Also, partly due to the publications on the discovery of the Synagogue paintings at Dura Europos, the possibility of Jewish sources, whether monumental or in book illumination, for Early Christian art was widely

<sup>19</sup> For a review underlining this aspect see H. Swarzenski in *Kunstchronik*, March, 1963. Both Pächt and Wormald had been guests of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, during their research for the book, and thus able to use the *Index of Christian Art*.



discussed. Pächt was also interested in this problem and a collaborative article written with Jeanne Pächt on 'An unknown cycle of illustrations of the Life of Joseph' appeared in *Cahiers Archéologiques* in 1954, whilst Pächt's contribution to the Festschrift for Swoboda in 1959 took up the same issues in relation to the Vienna Genesis. The nature and origin of 'continuous narrative' was a crucial topic here. As said earlier these concerns were already present in the 'Giottesque episode' article of 1943, and were informed by Pächt's earlier studies in Vienna of Late Antique art.

The nature of Christian narrative in English twelfth-century art was also handled in lectures published in 1962, *The Rise of Pictorial Narrative in twelfth-century England*. In the St Albans Psalter monograph Pächt had referred back to Emile Mâle's hypothesis of the influence of the incipient liturgical drama on art of the Romanesque period and had drawn attention to evidence of plays produced by Abbot Roger of St Albans for which Christina of Markyate, the probable commissioner of the Psalter, had provided vestments. This was also linked to the Peregrinus Plays with the three scenes of the Way to Emmaus included in the Psalter.

The question of the dating of the Psalter was of great philological importance since it contains the *Chanson d'Alexis*, one of the key early Anglo-Norman texts. Until then thought to be mid twelfth-century at earliest, since philologists had ignored Goldschmidt's book, Pächt was able to show that an early date based on the evidence of the obits in the calendar, was compatible with the stylistic evidence. Again this was not only a matter of compiling an oeuvre list for the Alexis master, but also of providing a coherent chronology of English twelfth-century illumination, largely new at that time, but which has formed the basis of all further discussion. It should also be noted that Pächt never wrote the book on English twelfth-century illumination which is referred to by T. S. R. Boase in the preface of his Oxford History of Art volume, *English art 1100–1216*, of 1953. Boase fully acknowledges the help given him by Pächt in his own book. Other studies on English twelfth-century art at this period were a discussion of an illustrated copy of Anselm's prayers, 1956, and the publication of the frescoes at Sigena as English work of the later artists of the Winchester Bible in 1961. Pächt had seen photos of these in the *Catalogo Monumental de España—Huesca*, Madrid, 1942, which reached Oxford shortly after the War. He thanks 'the late Professor Fritz Saxl' who, on being told of the discovery, 'with his usual keenness to promote research' had ordered photos of the paintings for the Warburg Institute.

In 1950 a short note published in the *Bodleian Library Record*

on the self-portrait by the monk Hugo 'Pictor' suggested a reading of post-Conquest Norman art which acted as a balance to Wormald's earlier stress on Anglo-Saxon continuity by emphasizing the progressive elements in Norman art. In 1954 and 1955 Jean Porcher, Conservateur-en-chef of the Cabinet des Manuscrits at the Bibliothèque Nationale put on two exhibitions of French book painting, the first of manuscripts from the sixth to the twelfth, the second of manuscripts of the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Examples were drawn not only from the Bibliothèque Nationale and other Paris libraries, but from the French provincial libraries which are extraordinarily rich due to the sequestration of monastic libraries after the French Revolution. The exhibitions revealed an enormous amount of new, unpublished material. Porcher became a close personal friend of Pächt, who in 1963 edited with Carl Nordenfalk a Festschrift for him in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* and like other scholars was intensely conscious of his debt to Porcher who had opened up the collection and shared his knowledge with such generosity. The group of scholars asked to contribute to Porcher's Festschrift includes the majority of the leading authorities working on manuscripts illumination at that time, Nordenfalk, Homburger, Mütterich, Wormald, Swarzenski, Buchthal, Weitzmann, Delaissé, Meiss and Pächt himself. It shows incidentally how comparatively few there were still at this date.

Porcher's two exhibitions, together with that on Italian illumination held at the Palazzo Venezia in Rome in 1950, and slightly earlier exhibitions in Bern and Munich, were milestones in the public appreciation and the scholarly interest in Medieval and Renaissance book painting. And the work of this particular generation of scholars in teaching and writing formed the foundation of the huge extension of interest which has followed in more recent years in both Europe and North America.

Pächt also contributed to this process in two much smaller but still significant exhibitions, *Italian illuminated manuscripts from 1400–1550* held at the Bodleian Library in 1948 and drawn from Oxford libraries only, and, secondly, a selection of Flemish manuscripts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which was part of the Royal Academy of Arts exhibition, *Flemish Art 1300–1700* in 1953. In the former he showed that he had extended his competence to Italian illumination so well represented in the Bodleian by the Canonici collection, but for which there were then few signposts other than H.J. Hermann's catalogues of the Vienna library holdings. Pächt's contribution to the Saxl Festschrift of 1957 charted the origins of humanistic illumination in Italy, a subject on which he had already lectured in 1954, and once again it has formed a

starting point for further research.<sup>20</sup> In the Royal Academy exhibition the manuscripts were drawn from Libraries all over the British Isles, London, Oxford, Cambridge, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stonyhurst College, Holkham Hall, C. W. Dyson Perrins, as well as from the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the selection demonstrates the extraordinary extent to which Pächt had already familiarized himself with the contents of so many and diverse libraries.

No doubt Pächt was asked to make the selection in view of his short monograph, *The Master of Mary of Burgundy*, published in 1948. The fact that the eponymous manuscript is in the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna and that the Bodleian Library contains the Hours of Engelbert of Nassau as well as two other manuscripts illuminated by this Netherlandish illuminator working in the 1470s–80s was no doubt in part responsible for his writing the book. In the preface he emphasizes both the difficulties in the study of illumination in terms of access for the public, but also its importance. Of all his writings in English this perhaps gives the best idea of his methodological focus and his skill at describing an artist's style within the context of its time. Even if it builds on the work of scholars such as Friedrich Winkler and Hulin de Loo, the latter a scholar whose work Pächt especially admired, it contributed both new material and new arguments concerning the artist's identity, as well as a masterly analysis of the relation of miniature to the newly invented *trompe l'oeil* border and of the space construction involved. Pächt mentions that he had seen some of the manuscripts before the War, but that prevailing conditions made it impossible to see all of the material again.

In spite of the involvement with English twelfth-century art in the 1950s Pächt continued to be engaged in the problems of Northern fifteenth-century painting. In 1956 he published a manuscript in the Bodleian illuminated for Jean de Berry by his court painter, Jacquemart d'Hesdin, showing by stylistic analysis, to my mind convincingly, the impossibility that Jacquemart could be the painter of the Brussels Hours, as supposed by Meiss and others. He also suggested in 1956 that the Louvre leaf of Christ carrying the Cross, shown by Porcher in the 1955 exhibition, was part of the Grandes Heures of Jean de Berry and thus documented as by Jacquemart. This is generally accepted now.

In 1953 Panofsky's *Early Netherlandish Painting* was published and Pächt wrote a review article in two parts in the *Burlington Magazine* of 1956. While fully acknowledging the extraordinary scholarship, the

<sup>20</sup> Pächt had already contributed a section on Italian Humanism and England to the photographic exhibition held at the Warburg Institute in 1941, later published as F. Saxl, R. Wittkower, *British Art and the Mediterranean*, London, 1948.

scope and the achievement of Panofsky's book, Pächt expressed important methodological reservations, especially in the matter of Panofsky's famous 'hidden symbolism', as well as a number of disagreements as to interpretation and attribution. There was some criticism of the review at the time, but it does not seem that Panofsky himself bore any resentment and the two men continued to exchange offprints and correspondence. Pächt particularly treasured a letter from Panofsky thanking him for the offprint of his article on Riegl published in 1963, and he contributed to Panofsky's *Festschrift* in 1961.

Other publications at this time discussed the interrelations of art and artists north and south of the Alps, for example the article for Panofsky on the Avignon Diptych, and that, written for Porcher, on the relationship between the Limbourgs and Pisanello. Also bringing together Italian and Northern evidence the article 'Early Italian nature studies and the early calendar landscape' published in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* of 1950, is perhaps the most widely read of anything Pächt wrote, since it tackles the genesis of one of the major genres of later European painting.<sup>21</sup> It does so in a ground-breaking way typical of Pächt's scholarship, by introducing a whole range of new and unpublished evidence, particularly in illuminated manuscripts, originating both north and south of the Alps, and then analysing the changes in means of representation of the natural world from the later Middle Ages to the Early Modern period.

All this activity, for by no means all of his publications at this period have been mentioned, was possible because Pächt had relatively few other commitments. Oriel College, Oxford, had made Pächt a Fellow and Lecturer in the History of Medieval Art in March 1945 due, as he reports to Schapiro, to F. M. Powicke. Sir George Clark succeeded Ross as Provost of Oriel in 1947 and Pächt retained great affection and respect for him, always making a point of visiting him when he returned to Oxford from Vienna. Pächt published a note in 1952 on the College altarpiece, identifying it as a work of Bernard van Orley. He took British citizenship in May 1947. Due to Clark he was made Senior Lecturer in the History School in 1952 and Reader in 1962. He was not a particularly fluent lecturer in English, nor did he make many concessions in subject matter to any possible public taste, so neither lectures nor seminars were as widely attended as they should have been. When he spoke on more 'popular' topics, say Giotto or Dürer, as opposed to say European Romanesque illumination, he reached larger audiences. Meanwhile the only other art history provided in Oxford was study of Greek sculpture under the *Litterae*

<sup>21</sup> Published in French translation *Le paysage dans l'art italien*, Paris, 1991.

Humaniores School, occasional series of lectures by such few scholars in the University as had any competence or interest, T. S. R. Boase, Walter Oakeshott, K. B. McFarlane for example, and the lectures of the annually appointed Slade Professors, who included Kenneth Clark, Ernst Gombrich, John Pope-Hennessy, George Zarnecki and Francis Watson in those years. Since no examinations were connected with any of these and no credit given for attendance, there was little incentive to undergraduates to come. Thus a majority of Pächt's audience were not students of the University but faithful attenders such as his friends Bruno Fürst or Emmy Wellesz, both resident in Oxford. Pächt had only had two graduate students in Oxford, John Beckwith who left to work in the Victoria and Albert Museum before completing his thesis, and myself. He did, however, help and encourage very many who sought his advice in these years and also later, for he was always generous in communicating his discoveries to those who needed and would benefit from them. Kathleen Morand in her book on Pucelle published in 1962 is one of many scholars to acknowledge his help.

In 1955, however, the University decided to fund a Chair in the History of Art and appointed Edgar Wind, who had come to England before the War with the Warburg Institute as a refugee scholar and then gone on to the United States. Pächt was disappointed to be passed over. He had no taste for or skill at University politics, nor for self-advertisement.<sup>22</sup> Wind on the other hand shone in learned discourse at College High Tables and was a brilliant lecturer who mesmerized his undergraduate audiences with his abstruse learning and his extraordinary eloquence. He was able to discuss artists with whose names at least they were familiar, Michelangelo, Reynolds, Picasso, and whose works they were led to believe were now being interpreted for them correctly for the first time. But for all its virtuoso skill, and it was a performance which filled the Oxford Playhouse twice a week, Wind's was a solo performance. Only when Wind was succeeded by Francis Haskell was any Art History other than classical admitted to the undergraduate curriculum in the form of options in the History School. Whether it would have been different if Pächt had been appointed may be doubted. Leading figures in the University like Maurice Bowra or John Sparrow might be impressed by Wind's deep classical learning, but the University as a whole were still sceptical of art history as an academic subject. Even much later Bob Delaissé, by that time a Fellow at All Souls, had to provide set texts ('Gobbets') for his examination papers, since, as he told me wryly, the History Faculty could not accept that works of art were themselves the original and primary documents for study. Pächt's eminence

<sup>22</sup> When invited to meet Bowra at this time in connection with the appointment he commented that Bowra spoke all evening without ever allowing him a word.

in his field was, however, recognized by his election to the British Academy in 1956. Later, in 1971, Oxford University conferred on him the Degree of D. Litt *honoris causa*.

In 1963 K. M. Swoboda retired from the Chair of Art History in Vienna University and Pächt was invited to return. A letter of 25 August 1962 to Schapiro sets out the pros and cons, time for research in Oxford, teaching with the prospect of good pupils in Vienna. Pächt chose the latter and thus at the age of sixty uprooted from Oxford, which was especially difficult for his wife whose circle of friends and ties were in England, and returned to take up a new and onerous post. He took his lectures very seriously and spent an enormous amount of time researching and preparing them, typing them out himself. He was stimulated and delighted by the response and they have become legendary. He was always a hard worker with an undeviating commitment to his work.<sup>23</sup> He remarked with evident approval how when he left work late in the evening, the students would still be there studying. At the same time Otto Demus returned to take up the Chair of Byzantine Art History and thus cordial relations existed between the two subject areas, very different from the days of Schlosser and Strykowski when Pächt had been a student.<sup>24</sup>

I think that Pächt never felt completely at home in England. I remember him reporting with astonishment the opinion of a fellow guest at High Table in Oxford that English weather was the best in the world! Was it a joke which he did not perceive? In any case he found the view incomprehensible, only possible in a country where Insularity can be considered a virtue. The early letters to Schapiro also make plain his sense of betrayal first by Britain and later by the United States at their failure to stem the Nazi threat in time. Perhaps subconsciously the resentment remained. The letters to Schapiro on the other hand show his attachment to France, for example a letter of 6 June 1940, which speaks with anguish of the collapse of France, the 'heart of civilization'. 'Since yesterday Nazi boots are trampling the Champs Elysées'. It was appropriate that he should be honoured by the French Government in 1982 with the Ordre National du Mérite and in 1984 made a Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Above all he returned to Vienna because he felt deeply that he belonged to and had a responsibility to uphold the Viennese tradition of art history. His deep knowledge and love of Vienna and its monuments as

<sup>23</sup> He used to quote with approval from Browning's 'Grammian's Funeral', and he liked to refer to 'the scholar's lonely candle'. I do not know the origin of the quote.

<sup>24</sup> Otto Pächt. *Nachruf von Otto Demus* was published in the *Almanach der Oesterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 138. Jahrgang, 1988, pp. 437–443.

well as of its great art collections, was evinced on conducted tours, and he delighted in sharing, as generous host, his enjoyment of Viennese cuisine. He remained a rather private man, preferring a small circle of friends and gaining his greatest pleasure from discussion of professional matters, from producing a photo, for instance, and challenging a response. The tragic illness and death from cancer of his wife in 1971 turned him even more in on himself, and in his last years he concentrated ever more exclusively on his work.

Inevitably publications fell off in the period immediately after his return to Vienna, but a significant initiative was the revival under a new and improved format of the catalogues of the illuminated manuscripts of the Vienna National Library. Pächt found that Hermann had left an unpublished volume on French illumination in manuscript form, and began by revising this with the help of an able research assistant, Dr Dagmar Thoss, whose work was funded by the Austrian Academy. This was published in 1974 and further volumes co-authored with Dr Thoss on later French illuminated manuscripts and printed books, and on Flemish manuscripts appeared in 1977 and 1983. Dr Ulrike Jenni who had been supervised by Pächt in her thesis on an early fifteenth-century patternbook in the Uffizi, collaborated on the latter volume and was co-author on a volume published in 1975 on the Dutch school. Pächt had been able to enlist the support of Herbert Hunger, President of the Austrian Academy, to which he had been elected as a Corresponding Fellow in 1965, becoming an Ordinary Fellow in 1967. It is good to know that the project to which Pächt devoted so much of his scholarly energies and on which he was working to the end, will continue.

The format devised for the catalogues was less bulky than that of Hermann but much fuller than the Bodleian catalogues, and has the advantage of making possible the inclusion of more codicological information as well as detailed descriptions of individual miniatures. The catalogues also set new standards in the deployment of philological evidence due to Dr Thoss' expertise, while Pächt used his by now unrivalled knowledge of manuscripts in collections world-wide to provide comparative material. The support of the staff of the Nationalbibliothek, especially Dr Otto Mazal and Dr Eva Irblich, of course proved crucial and this was also signaled by the holding of two exhibitions in the Library, one of French, the other of Netherlandish illuminated manuscripts in 1978 and 1987. Their catalogues, compiled by Dr Thoss, were dedicated to Pächt.

Pächt's retirement in 1972 was marked by a Festschrift for his seventieth birthday edited by Artur Rosenauer and Gerold Weber, who have both

written about the charismatic effect of Pächt's teaching.<sup>25</sup> A second Festschrift was published in honour of 'the two Ottos', Demus and Pächt, born in the same year, as volume XXV of the *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*.

In retirement Pächt was able to return to his own researches and his publications, written once again in German, included two lengthy articles on René of Anjou published in 1973 and 1977, which brought together a wealth of new material based on many years interest in the problems of the identity of the artist of the Coeur manuscript in Vienna and of René's patronage of art. He also published in 1974 the attribution to Fouquet of the portrait in the Kunsthistorisches Museum of Gonella, court jester to the Gonzaga. This attribution once made seemed so obvious that it was incredible that it had remained so long a subject of conjecture with a constant harping in the literature on supposed links to Van Eyck.

A volume entitled *Methodisches zur Kunsthistorischen Praxis*, a mixture of earlier and unpublished papers, appeared in 1977. Pächt had seemed to abandon his early interest in the theoretical grounding of Art History after coming to England, though he published a short article on Riegl in a series on art historians in the *Burlington Magazine* of 1963. This emphasized Riegl's concept of the 'Kunstwollen' as grounded on empirical examination of the work of art and this belief in the possibility of unproblematic empirical evidence surfaces also clearly in the earlier letters to Schapiro, who indeed draws attention to it in his *Art Bulletin* review. Pächt's basic assumptions of the task and the methods of art history seem not to have changed and are enshrined in the paper which gives its name to the collection, a lecture given in Vienna in 1970/1. He remained committed to the analysis of stylistic development, using the term 'Strukturanalyse' of the 'Younger Viennese school'. He also remained sceptical of the cult of the individual artist if it implied that the genius could be an exception to rather than a fulfilment of the Kunstwollen, sceptical of the explanation of stylistic change by a social history of art, and sceptical of iconography as narrowly conceived by some of its practitioners. He writes about his view on iconography as a sterile study in itself if divorced from questions of style already in a letter to Schapiro of 1939, and his arguments are set down more fully in a paper of that time preserved among the letters to Saxl of 1937 at the Warburg Institute. A lecture given in Bonn in 1964 for the International Art Historians Congress on 'Künstlerische Originalität and ikonographische Erneuerung' argues that iconographical innovation is not

<sup>25</sup> See *Kunsthistoriker* (as in note. 6). Otto Demus (as in note 24) commented that: 'Seine Forscher- und Lehrtätigkeit machte Wien zu einem Mekka der Kunstgeschichte'. Theses written under Pächt reflect the width of his interests, ranging from Koichi Koshi's studies of the wall-paintings at Reichenau to Ursula Panhans-Bühler's work on Petrus Christus.



necessarily associated with great artists. It is a premise of his disagreement with Panofsky that artistic creation is unconscious, which he supports with a quote from Musil to the effect that the artist only knows what he wants to do when he has done it.

In the late writings there is in effect a return to the problem of the national constants, in that Pächt was arguing that the René Master's style was French not Netherlandish, therefore he could not be, as often thought (especially, ironically, by French scholars), Barthélémy d'Eyck. Similarly with the Gonella portrait he analysed a 'French' cubic space construction which he had already opposed to the 'Netherlandish' relationship of picture plane and represented space in his paper 'Gestaltungsprinzipien' of 1933. An article on 'la terre de Flandres' described the Netherlandish characteristics of landscape in fifteenth-century Flemish illumination, also seen as continuing in later Netherlandish painting.

Unlike Pächt's theory that the Coeur Master was René himself, the attribution of the Gonella has found general acceptance. Like an earlier stylistic perception of Pächt's, the dating of the Dresden Triptych by van Eyck, it was later confirmed by technical examination. In the former the date was discovered on removal of the frame, and in the latter infra-red reflectography revealed colour notes in French beneath the painting!

Other articles to appear in these years were also mainly concerned with problems of Northern fifteenth-century painting and typically dealt with works of art neglected or unknown which Pächt had unearthed in the Vienna collections, for example the drawing of a hoopoe by Marmion published in 1979, or with problems on which he had worked for many years, for example his last publication in the Festschrift for Carl Nordenfalk on the Salvator Mundi image in the Turin Hours. Pächt had continued to think about the Eyck problem, the relative contributions of Jan and Hubert. He would remark that only with a lifetime's experience could one hope to deal with the really difficult problems of Art History. In the event though he lectured on Early Netherlandish painting he did not himself publish his conclusions. Texts of nearly all his lectures exist, however, since he typed them out himself, and three series have been published, the *Buchmalerei des Mittelalters* with his imprimatur, and, posthumously, *Van Eyck. Die Begründer der altniederländischen Malerei* and *Rembrandt*, all issued by Prestel Verlag of Munich under the supervision of Michael Pächt, in whose skill as an editor and designer of books his father took great pride and pleasure.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Japanese and Spanish editions of *Methodisches* have appeared and an English edition is in preparation. *Buchmalerei* has been translated into English, Spanish and Italian. *Van Eyck* will appear in English shortly and another volume on Early Netherlandish Painting is in preparation.

All three books serve to introduce a general audience to a body of material and also by concrete example expound a methodology of visual analysis. In *Buchmalerei* this centres on the relation of image and decoration to the written text. The *Van Eyck*, in spite of the restricted title, is in fact a discussion of the shift in representation which occurs in the *ars nova* of the Netherlands from c. 1420. Whilst Jan's part in this is seen as crucial, Pächt is concerned to analyse the new representation by contrast to the work of predecessors and in relation to that of contemporaries, especially the Master of Flémalle. In this context the question of Jan or Hubert is subsumed within the broader analysis of representation as style and content with a consequential uncovering of distinguishing characteristics. As Artur Rosenauer points out in the Preface, Pächt was also much preoccupied with the recovery of lost compositions or designs by Jan, the 'Turin Master' and the 'Master of Flémalle', and it was his ability to see as it were the style beyond a style which enabled him to make such striking progress in this direction. The discussion of the vestments of the Order of the Golden Fleece is only one example. In the *Rembrandt* also Pächt's method is to analyse representation and narrative in the paintings. By considering them by genre he makes clear once again how form and content are inseparable and within a pictorial tradition shows the particularity of Rembrandt's vision.

Pächt's contribution to scholarship in his chosen area was perhaps foremost in classification and analysis of a notable range of new material. His knowledge of the whole history of manuscript illumination was greater than that of any contemporary or predecessor, and inevitably he thus played a key role in the enormous increase of interest in that particular medium of medieval art. He also saw its importance for the history of panel painting and the reconstruction of lost works by monumental artists. In the letter to Saxl from Vienna of 23 December 1937 after his visit to Antwerp, referred to earlier, he comments on the necessity of autopsy in investigating works of art. Even eminent art historians like Panofsky and de Tolnay, he says, have made mistakes by failing to see works in the original. Few scholars have travelled so widely or been so thorough and painstaking in their investigation of works of art at first hand.<sup>27</sup>

Though he had an extraordinary visual memory and perceptiveness, he was not only a connoisseur able to recognize a style or an artist. His perceptiveness was founded on a deep and broad historical and cultural knowledge. His writings included antiquarian and heraldic research,

<sup>27</sup> Pächt's fine library as well as his notes and collections of photographs were bequeathed to the Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Vienna University, where they are being catalogued with the help of the Getty Grant Program. They will be available to scholars who are also invited to contribute offprints, so that the collection remains a dynamic and growing one.

knowledge of written accounts of lost works of art in obscure texts and of early biographical sources, and philological investigations. An historical context is always an implicit foundation in his writings, and it is that which gives his work perspective and significance. In a letter to Schapiro in 1945 concerning his Bodleian Handlist he says: 'I have learned to see the work of art more closely connected with contemporary liturgy and general history. But I do not know whether I have made any progress worth mentioning in the methodological and theoretical sphere for which I once cared so much'. These historical interests are evident, for example, in *The St Albans Psalter* in his speculations on the artist's possible identity as Anketil, which conflicts with an earlier slogan of 'Kunstgeschichte ohne Namen', and in the long and complex chapter which discusses the text of the *Chanson d'Alexis*.

A further important aspect of Pächt's scholarship was his conviction of the scholar's responsibility to leave certain questions open, and not to claim to have solved all problems at once. At the end of his review of Baldass' book on Jan van Eyck he states his belief that by trying to do less, more will in the end be achieved.<sup>28</sup> His ability to see the larger questions, but to leave open those which he could not find a solution to is another reason why his writings have had such an impact and will continue to retain their relevance.

All the refugee scholars who came from the German to the English-speaking world before the War contributed immeasurably to cultural and academic life in their adopted countries.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps in no other subject in the humanities was this so evident as in Art History, which they transformed into a more professional and a more academic discipline. In Pächt's case in England this was by example as much as by direct teaching. He represented consciously a tradition of art history which though it is sometimes now decried as formalism, at its best interprets the work of art by 'considering style and meaning as inseparable'.<sup>30</sup> To read Pächt's description of the dedication picture of the *Grandes Chroniques d'Hainaut* in Vienna is to see it with new eyes and thus to understand it differently. That is why from the early interest in Gestalt psychology he placed such emphasis on seeing, on the eye's response. In a letter of 3 June 1939 he thanks Schapiro for an offprint and comments: 'I think it is the first "Strukturanalyse" of an high mediaeval work of art. Apart from that it seems to me to be a

<sup>28</sup> *Burlington Magazine*, 95 (1953), 253.

<sup>29</sup> For an account of their contribution in the United States see *The Intellectual Migration. Europe and America, 1930-1960*, eds. D. Fleming, B. Bailyn, Cambridge, Mass., 1969, especially the chapter by Colin Eisler, 'Kunstgeschichte American style: a study in migration'.

<sup>30</sup> The quote is from Margaret Iversen, 'Meyer Schapiro and the semiotics of visual art', *Block*, 1 (1979), 50.

completely new method of iconographical analysis which art history needs so badly'. And again in 1962 thanking Schapiro for his *Cézanne* he says: 'I always marvel at the richness of your descriptive vocabulary and the way the formal values of a particular painting are being related to a specific situation in the artist's development'. He is emphasizing the qualities he admired and himself exemplified in his own writings. I once said to him that I felt that either one could see a style or one could not, and that verbal description was otiose. But he disagreed strongly. Though he distrusted certain kinds of flowery and superficially brilliant language as applied to art, it is the struggle to describe in the right words the results of long and hard looking, which makes all his writings so rich and so fruitful.<sup>31</sup>

JONATHAN J. G. ALEXANDER

*Fellow of the British Academy*

*Note in proof.* P. Lasko, 'The impact of German-speaking refugees in Britain on the Fine Arts', in *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, ed. W. E. Mosse (Tübingen, 1991), pp. 268–274, with its discussion of the contribution of refugee art historians in Britain, reached me at proof stage.

<sup>31</sup> Pächt discussed the problem of the verbal description of the work of art in one of his earliest writings, 'Das Ende der Abbildtheorie', *Kritische Berichte zur Kunstgeschichtlichen Literatur*, 3/4 (1930/31), 1–9.