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Franz Leopold Ranke, the Ranke Library at Syracuse and the Open Future of Scientific History

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- Baur pays tribute to “the father of modern history,” whose twenty-ton library crossed the Atlantic in 1888, arriving safely at Syracuse University. After describing various myths about Ranke, Baur recounts the historian’s struggle to devise, in the face of accepted fictions about the past, a source-based approach to the study of history.
- Librarianship in the Twenty-First Century
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- Battin urges academic libraries to “imagine the future from a twenty-first century perspective.” To flourish in a digital society, libraries must transform themselves, intentionally and continuously, through managing information resources, redefining roles of information professionals, and nourishing future leaders.
- Manuscripts Processing at Syracuse: An Insider’s View
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- After explaining the specialness of special collections, Manwaring compares the processing of books and serials, with their preselected, preorganized content, to the processing of manuscripts, which “reflect the chaos inherent in real life.” The latter requires “total immersion” in order to “discover and reflect the underlying structure of the individual’s life experience” while making his or her papers accessible to scholars.
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In Memoriam

Franz Leopold Ranke, the Ranke Library at Syracuse, and the Open Future of Scientific History

BY SIEGFRIED BAUR

THINK OF THE YEAR 1888 and the moment of the arrival at Syracuse of nearly twenty tons of foreign books,¹ seeking asylum at the recently founded University after the death in 1886 of their transat-

Dr. Baur is a post-doctoral scholar from Berlin who spent 1998–99 at Syracuse University on a fellowship from the Thyssen Foundation of Cologne to work with the Leopold von Ranke collection. On 12 October 1998 he spoke at the Syracuse University History Department Colloquium in the Snow Conference Room of Eggers Hall. What follows is a revised and edited transcript of his presentation.

1. “The recent purchase of the great historical library of Dr. Leopold von Ranke by an American suggests some reflections. There is no doubt that this library, which numbers many thousands of books, pamphlets, manuscripts and documents of all times and all languages, is the finest historical collection in the world. . . . But this great and invaluable collection, which should have gone to one of the large cities like New York, Boston, Philadelphia or Chicago, or to one of the university towns like Cambridge, New Haven, Ithaca or Ann Arbor, is going to Syracuse, which is neither a large city nor a university town, but a place principally devoted to the manufacture of salt and the supply of provisions to through railroad travellers. The question immediately arises: What do the Syracuse salt boilers want of von Ranke’s historical library? Had it been a collection of saline treatises, the purchase might have been understood.” The (jealous) *Chicago Tribune*, 17 April 1887; see also “The City,” *Chicago Tribune*, 14 April 1887. George F. Comfort of Syracuse University answered, “Chicago is reputed to do something in the pork packing line. . . . Syracuse has a number of citizens who are not engaged in the salt-boiling business as Bishop Huntington . . . not to mention the faculty of Syracuse University.” “The Von Ranke Library and Syracuse University,” *Northern Christian Advocate*, 28 April 1887. Even on 20 March 1888 the *Philadelphia Tèlegaph* still hoped: “The Von Ranke Library of Germany, a most valuable collection of rare books, is about to be purchased by the trustees of the University of Pennsylvania.” But the (proud) *Northern Christian Advocate* (Syracuse) answered on 5 April 1888: “It must be an April fool. . . . Did the trustees of Pennsylvania bid high and pay roundly for some crumbs that fell from the Von Ranke table?”

lantic owner.² Imagine coaches and horses at “Campus Hill” and librarians trying to drag eighty-three huge wooden boxes into the Hall of Languages.³ Two days later “*The Syracusean*” wrote, “On the tenth of March the von Ranke Library, purchased for our Library by [John and Carolina] Reid, arrived at New York on the steamer Galileo [and] arrived here on Monday [26 March].”⁴ The same year Syracuse University started to build a stone house for the reception of the nearly 25,000 books and other materials from Berlin.⁵ On 24 June 1889 the Syracuseans opened the new library (today the Tolley Administration Building) with a worship service, including Haydn’s happy hymn “Achieved is the Glorious Work.”⁶ The librarians, who had done all the unpacking, shelving, and cataloging, were pleased to give the books a new home in the new world.⁷

The “Coming Here” story of the von Ranke Library is a perfect immigration story⁸ but it may be that some students, using “Our New Jumbo-Library” in those days, wondered, “Why had that German historian a private library ten times as big as ours?”

2. It was the time of an enormous increase of German emigration to the United States—a “German Exodus,” as the *Syracuse Weekly Express* wrote on 10 August 1887. Part of this “wholesale desertion of the Fatherland” were Ranke’s books—they were also greeted by the young Statue of Liberty; they were also controlled by the customhouse officials in New York; and they still have some language problems because they speak more languages than historians normally do.

3. “On the day of the arrival of the von Ranke Library at the University some seniors in analytical chemistry had filled the building with fumes of H²S. An observing Freshman remarked that ‘this is von rank(e) smell.’” *University News* (Syracuse University), 2 April 1888. See also “The von Ranke Library arrives,” *Syracuse Daily Courier*, 26 March 1888.

4. *The Syracusean* (Syracuse University), 28 March 1888.

5. “Corner Stone Laying,” *Syracuse Courier*, 26 June 1888.

6. *University Herald* (Syracuse University), 1 July 1889.

7. “Ranke’s Books: Unpacking the Library of Syracuse University,” *Syracuse Weekly Express*, 24 April 1889.

8. “Coming Here,” *Syracuse Daily Courier*, 14 April 1887; “Von Ranke-Library for Syracuse University,” *Northern Christian Advocate*, 21 and 28 April 1887; “The Great Gift to Syracuse University,” *New York Christian Advocate*, 21 April 1887; “Von Ranke’s Library,” *Syracuse Weekly Express*, 20 April 1887, and *New York Times*, 11 March 1888.

Couldn't he use official libraries and some normal handbooks to write history as others do? And why did all his books run for shelter to the United States? Was there no other place for them in the house of science? Anyway—the man, his science, his reception, and his books—what does all that have to do with us?”⁹

The Ranke books are still at Syracuse University, secured in the Special Collections stacks on the sixth floor of E. S. Bird Library.¹⁰ Perhaps still today some of us have the same questions about Ranke, his science, and his books. What I would like to do is to find some

9. *Syracuse Daily Courier*, 14 April 1887; see also “Scientific Works in the Von Ranke Library,” *Northern Christian Advocate*, 6 June 1889.

10. See, for the history of E. S. Bird Library and of the Ranke library: Daniel Brassel, “Syracuse University Library, 1871–1972,” *The Courier* 9, no. 4, and 10, no. 1 (1972); Alicia H. Parry, “The Growth of the Syracuse University Library During Chancellor Day’s Administration, 1894–1922” (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1952); W. Freeman Galpin, *Syracuse University, Volume I, The Pioneer Days* (1952), *Volume II, The Growing Days* (1960), and Galpin et al., *Volume III, The Critical Years* (1984) (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press). Other titles on the von Ranke library of Syracuse include Howard O. Brogan, Antonio Pace, and Adolph Weinberger, *The Leopold von Ranke Manuscripts of Syracuse University: The First One Hundred Titles* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1952); A. Charvat, “The Leopold von Ranke Historical Library,” in “A History of the Syracuse University History Department” (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1957); Jeremy C. Jackson, “Leopold von Ranke and the von Ranke Library,” *The Courier* 9, no. 4, and 10, no. 1 (1972); John J. Morrison, “Charles W. Bennett’s ‘The Purchase of the von Ranke Library,’” *The Courier* 15, nos. 2 and 3 (1978); Edward Muir, *The Leopold von Ranke Manuscript Collection of Syracuse University* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1983); Muir, “Leopold von Ranke, His Library, and the Shaping of Historical Evidence,” *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier* 22, no. 1 (1987); Gail P. Hueting, “Álvaro-Agustín de Liano and his Books,” *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier* 20, no. 1 (1985); Raymond P. Schrodt, “Five Renaissance Chronicles in Leopold von Ranke’s Library,” *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier* 23, no. 2 (1988); David H. Stam, “Peaks of Joy, Valleys of Despair: The History of the Syracuse University Library from 1871 to 1907,” *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier* 30 (1995). Not only Ranke but also his library in Syracuse is nearly forgotten in Germany—I could only find three German titles dealing especially with that: Bernhard Hoefft, “Das Schicksal der Ranke-Bibliothek,” *Historische Studien* 307 (1937); Walther P. Fuchs, “Der Nachlass Leopold von Rankes,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 195 (1962); Hubert Kiesewetter, “Das Schicksal der Ranke-Bibliothek,” *Historische Mitteilungen* 4, no. 2 (1991).

answers together with you—perhaps this is a way to bring both Ranke’s work and your Ranke collection¹¹ back to life again.

BEGINNINGS

The conventional story of Ranke’s life and work runs as follows: Born as a *von* Ranke in 1795 in Prussia, after studying theology and history, he published in 1824 his *Histories of the Latin and Teutonic Nations*, his first step toward becoming a German right-wing ideologist. Between 1832 and 1836 he published *Historisch-Politische Zeitschrift* (Historico-Political Gazette), an allegedly official Prussian government organ, which shows perfectly Ranke’s counter-revolutionary character: how he tried to reverse the Enlightenment with his diplomatic and skeptical historiography and so legitimate the restoration of the *ancien régime*. Like Fichte, his concept of history was idealistic; like Hegel, Ranke was state-oriented; his science, like Schelling’s, was romantic; like Bismarck, he believed in the primacy of powerful foreign policy; and, last but not least, Ranke allegedly took history as a proof of God’s omnipotence: Historians are priests of history, not allowed to judge or to change its holy rules or to engage directly in politics. Ranke accepted neither the liberation movements of young nations nor the public discussions of modern democracies, but helped the kings to hold their thrones. According to this conventional story, Ranke, the German mandarin, was part of the German Special Path. He allegedly supported even the imperialism of the Reich on its way to world domination. It must be that some “misunderstandings”

11. I would like to say thank you to Mark F. Weimer, curator of special collections at Syracuse University Library. Without him and his excellent team of librarians I would have been lost in the stacks. With the help of David Louis Jensen, for instance, we found the old handwritten catalog of Ranke’s books, which Walther Fuchs and Edward Muir had thought to be lost forever. I also remember a Ranke memorial lunch to which I was invited by Professor Antje B. Lemke on 23 May 1998, exactly 112 years after the day Ranke died. Let me also say thank you to the Global Affairs Institute, which was my base of operations at Syracuse University. Last but not least is the history department: let’s hope that Professor Joseph M. Levine, Professor Frederick D. Marquardt, and Professor Dennis Romano will not regret at the end of my brief remarks on Ranke that they once invited me to make them. I try my best, following Ranke’s Latin rule: *Labor ipse voluptas*—work itself be the joy!

(the purchase of the Ranke Library, then, was one of the effects, poor Syracuse) made Ranke the father of the historical sciences even in the United States. But fortunately, after Ranke's death in 1886, historians began to see through "That Noble Dream" of 1824,¹² in which Ranke first pretended "to show how it really was," in order to hide what the old powers actually did. According to these critics, "naked facts," "objective truth," and "scientific autonomy" do not really exist—Ranke was trying to confuse the progressives and to weaken moral standards. But, so the story goes, progress superseded "Ranke the Reactionary." Today's historical sciences have more important things to do than to remember him, his library, and his altogether "predemocratic" paradigm.

There are some contradictions in this myth: What, for instance, is "romantic" about "naked facts"? How can skepticism be a good basis for praising "holy rules"? Why should the "weakening of moral standards" help the kings to hold their thrones? Is the idea of "scientific autonomy" really "predemocratic"? Above all: When there is no "objective truth," only "misunderstandings" must remain. Why shall some misunderstandings then be more equal? And what is left for these Ranke critics to offer, after saying that it is impossible "to show how it really was"? Obviously this left-wing Ranke myth says little about Ranke, but a lot about the illusions people had about him.¹³ To produce in your readers the impression

12. Peter Novick, "The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession," in *That Noble Dream* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); see Joseph M. Levine, "Objectivity in History: Peter Novick and R. G. Collingwood," *Clio* 21, no. 2 (1992): 109f.

13. The left-wing Ranke myth starts with Heinrich Heine—a former friend of Ranke—and his foreword to *Französische Zustände* (Leipzig, 1833), and is still going on. See, for example, Manfred Asendorf, "Objektivität der Geschichte—Leopold von Ranke und die deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft," in Manfred Hahn and H. J. Sandkühler, eds., *Gesellschaftliche Bewegung und Naturprozess* (Studien zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte des Sozialismus), vol. 3 (Köln, 1981); Hans U. Wehler, "Was bedeutet Ranke heute?" in Wehler, *Aus der Geschichte lernen* (München, 1988); more general is Bernd Faulenbach, *Ideologie des deutschen Weges. Die deutsche Geschichte in der Historiographie zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus* (München, 1980). See also Charles Beard, "That Noble Dream," *American Historical Review* 41 (1935); and Peter Burke, "Ranke the Reactionary," in Iggers and Powell, eds., *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline*.



Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886). Except where noted, photographs in this article are from Syracuse University Library.

of Ranke as a “hostile historian,” you don’t need to know who Ranke was or what he wrote,¹⁴ but only what your readers fear the most. Much of the criticism on Ranke has relied on false allegations.¹⁵ But the same must be said about the corresponding right-wing Ranke myth, according to which Ranke’s skepticism was weak, his objectivism was bloodless, and his emancipation from politics was nothing but arrogance.¹⁶

14. One day we will find a sociopathology of politically motivated critics of Ranke: They seldom read or quote primary Ranke texts (today there are nearly 75 volumes by Ranke, plus translations), but they use secondary literature about him. One of the masterminds of the left-wing German Bielefeld school wrote in 1972, when important Ranke-manuscripts were rediscovered and published by Walther Peter Fuchs, that the publication is not only completely unnecessary, “but hinders us to do more important things.” Hans U. Wehler, ed., *Geschichte und Ökonomie(!)* (Köln, 1972), 33–34, 55. At the same time as the Bielefeld school tried to get rid of Ranke, Kenneth Pennington of Syracuse University wrote: “Thanks to the original gift of the Ranke Library by Dr. and Mrs. John Reid, Syracuse possesses the finest collection of early modern Italian manuscripts in North America. . . . It has been a long time since any scholar has cited a Ranke manuscript in a footnote, but I hope that lamentable situation will soon end. Medieval men believed that the phoenix regenerated itself from its own ashes; fortunately Ranke’s manuscripts are not yet ashes—merely covered with dust. A miracle will not be required to bring Ranke’s manuscripts to life again.” See Pennington, “The *Libellus* of Telesphorus and the *Decretals* of Gregory IX,” *The Courier* 11, no. 1 (1973): 26.

15. You can study that technique in statements that the leading historians of the old German Democratic Republic (GDR) made about Ranke: They were never interested in either open democracy or free historical science, but blamed Ranke for being nonscientific and too deeply rooted in predemocratic ages; you cannot call that a “misunderstanding.” This sort of Ranke critique is a well-calculated denunciation, a waft of mist to hide political interests, a method to disconnect historians from Ranke’s critical power. See Gerhard Schilfert, “Leopold von Ranke,” in Joachim Streisand, ed., *Die deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft vom Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zur Reichseinigung von oben* (Berlin [GDR], 1969).

16. Even if it is today forgotten, there is also an extreme right-wing Ranke myth, which could be as easily reconstructed as the left-wing Ranke myth. It starts with the sharp critique of Ranke’s journal made by the reactionary *Berliner Politisches Wochenblatt* (Ausserordentliche Beilage), no. 9 (1832). The Nationalsozialist Walter Frank, president of the Reichsinstitut für Geschichte (1935–45), in several articles attacked what he called the objective, cool, dissociating, even

Even more interesting than the question, WHAT are left- or right-wing Ranke myths fabricating? is the question, WHY do they do it? Apparently Ranke presents a challenge to certain kinds of persons who deal with history—and the rule is that the more political they are, the more allergic they are to Ranke. Whoever misuses history to satisfy ideological needs can never accept Ranke’s broken histories, critical source-based science, and its autonomous movements. It is striking that, despite his importance, neither totalitarian system in our century had a place for Ranke. German fascists had no place for his nonracial universalism and his “aristocratic” eighteenth-century skepticism; communists dismissed his respect for the particular and his “bourgeois” nineteenth-century class-consciousness; both hated his so-called apolitical discipline and his autonomous concept of history. In short, whoever admires closed political doctrines more than open historical science must try to get rid of Ranke. Reactions have ranged from neglect, to mean-spirited critique, to the plundering of the Ranke Museum by postwar communists in Ranke’s birthplace, Wiehe/Thuringia. In the Third Reich the Ranke *Akademie Edition* sank into oblivion and remained there even during the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic; most of Ranke’s letters and parts of his manuscripts were destroyed during World War II. How lucky it was that, before the eve of twentieth-century ideological Europe, at least Ranke’s books could emigrate to the U.S.A.¹⁷

But few may realize that even in nineteenth-century Europe there was no place for Ranke and his critical methods of investigating and understanding, teaching and writing history—unless he himself found a way to secure never-before-known free spaces (Spielräume). In doing so Ranke violated a lot of rules and made a lot of enemies (remember the two Ranke myths above). His success was unexpected.

arrogant historians of the so-called “Great Powers”—that is, Ranke and his school. See Frank, “Zunft und Nation” (Gild and Nation), *Historische Zeitschrift* 153 (1935); Frank, “Die Deutschen Geschichtswissenschaften im Kriege” (The German Sciences of History at War), in *Historische Zeitschrift* 163 (1941).

17. Shortly after World War II some historians tried to rescue at least some of Ranke’s ideas; see, for instance, Pieter Geyl, “Ranke in the Light of the Catastrophe” (1952), in Geyl, *Debate with Historians* (New York, 1956).

Especially as a young man Ranke was a historian with no frontier, lost at the Massachusetts Bay of the unknown continent of scientific history, lonesome, but nevertheless unstoppable—asking too much of himself and of others: Where Ranke went, nothing was prepared; when Ranke appeared, sooner or later nobody was pleased; what Ranke discovered never fitted into established frames, not even his own; what Ranke wrote—not as the ultimate truth, but only as first steps in the right direction—nobody could use. Some tried to stop him; everybody had problems with Ranke, even those who at first promoted him. Who wonders that the young Ranke often stumbled, that he often lost his path, that he had dark hours and desperate moments, that he only had one intimate friend in his life, but even this one became a Ranke critic in the end.¹⁸ So, before we condemn or praise Ranke and his new work, we should read him carefully to see his immense problems and his never-ending attempts to solve them.¹⁹

18. Heinrich A. Ritter, *An Leopold von Ranke. Über deutsche Geschichtschreibung—ein offener Brief* (An Open Letter to Ranke) (Leipzig, 1867). The philosopher and student and editor of Schleiermacher, Heinrich August Ritter, was the best friend of the young Ranke during his critical years between 1825 and 1836. Ritter wrote a huge anti-Hegelian history of philosophy based on its real sources, which today is as forgotten as his important influence on Ranke's philosophy of history and concept of science. Without the help of Ritter Ranke would not have been able to write either "Great Powers" and "Political Dialogue" in his *Historisch-politische Zeitschrift*, or to draft his ideas of general history and historical truth, which are more than products of some critically investigated fragments. You might say that while Ranke was concentrated on the foundations of facts, Ritter was working at the roofs of ideas—evidently they were a good team. Ranke and Ritter discussed nearly everything they wrote, including the articles they wrote for the *Gazette*. The "Political Dialogue" is not only a mixture of Ranke and Ritter's ideas, but a document of their friendship and their daily dialogues. We have hundreds of surveys on Ranke and Hegel, but none on Ritter and Ranke. One exception is Gunther Scholtz, "Das Griechentum im Spätidealismus. Zur Philosophiegeschichtsschreibung in den Schulen Hegels und Schleiermachers," in Scholtz, *Ethik und Hermeneutik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1995), 286f.

19. To go his own way, to start into the unknown, to discover new worlds as Columbus or even Cook did—these themes appear so often in letters and diaries of Ranke. Ranke wrote in 1818: "'But where shall we begin?' they ask. 'Everywhere,' I say. 'It only depends on your strength of mind. . . . Just start and go on.'" Or, in 1829: "To search and to find is something stimulating and vitaliz-

Whether revealing the “Misunderstandings of Ranke,”²⁰ or debating the “Crisis of the Rankean Paradigm,”²¹ or judging the “Rise, Decline and Persistence”²² of his legacy, we should never forget: Discovering a scientific way to the lost lands of the past is a dangerous adventure with no success guaranteed.

But when you read today’s writings about Ranke,²³ you will find little acknowledgment of the existential problems he had in finding his own way. Whether the authors like him or not, you will find a man who was born as an influential historian, lived as an influential historian, and died as an influential historian. This is the

ing. You hope, you wish and you try to come near. You will find a lot of problems, you can only get out by your—I don’t know what it is—skill-fullness or agility? Of course you will find broader fields than you ever expected.” Or in 1830: “I’m often accused of going the difficult way—they say, there are shorter ways [but] I hope to have a long life to go my long way.” Or in 1862, in a lesson about history: “Universal History is extending like a huge unknown country: Our job is to travel through it, to learn everything in particular and in general about it.” Ranke, *Frühe Schriften (Aus Werk und Nachlass)*, vol. 3 (München, 1973), 483; Ranke, *Vorlesungseinleitungen (Aus Werk und Nachlass)*, vol. 4 (München, 1975), 303; Ranke, *Briefwerk* (Hamburg, 1949), 95, 126, 137, 143, 145, 169, 193, 203; Ranke, *Sämtliche Werke*, vols. 53–54 (Leipzig, 1890), 113, 155, 162, 164, 169, 176, 178, 179, 180, 192, 220, 227, 233, 338, 241.

20. Dorothy Ross, “On the Misunderstandings of Ranke and the Origins of the Historical Profession in America,” *Syracuse Scholar* 9 (1988); Ross, “Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century America,” *The American Historical Review* 89, no. 4 (1984).

21. Iggers, “The Crisis of the Rankean Paradigm in the Nineteenth Century,” in Iggers and Powell, eds., *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline*; see also Iggers, “The Image of Ranke in American and German Historical Thought,” *History and Theory* 2 (1962); and Iggers, *The German Conception of History* (Middleton, 1968; rev. 1983).

22. Ferdinand Schevill, “Ranke: Rise, Decline and Persistence of a Reputation,” *Journal of Modern History* 24 (1952).

23. For a survey of recent secondary Ranke literature, see the brilliant article of Ernst Schulin, “Universal History and National History,” in Iggers and Powell, eds., *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline*, 70f. See also the Bibliography in Roger Wines, ed. and trans., *The Secret of World History: Selected Writings on the Art and Science of History/Leopold von Ranke* (New York, 1981), 267f. See “Suggested Readings” and “Supplementary Suggested Readings” in Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, rev. ed. (Middleton, 1983), 371f.

third Ranke myth²⁴—you may call it the easy-street Ranke myth²⁵—and it is of course the most dangerous one, especially for historians, because it insinuates that investigating and understanding, writing and teaching history in a scientific way is like buying one of the most valuable treasures you can get without having to pay for it.

Both Ms. Everywoman and Mr. Everyman are thinking and saying wrong things about the past. By ignorance, by accident, by habit, or even intentionally—even when we try to handle our own memories in a more or less responsible way, we seem to have no choice. Because day by day the irresistible *zeitgeist* is decorating our minds with fantastic histories: “misinformation.”²⁶ Wherever you look—there is a huge market for “nonsense . . . on historical subjects.”²⁷ Obviously this mixture of misinformation and nonsense is not only part of the discourse of the modern, but also part of the identity of Ms. and Mr. Everybody.²⁸ How can we expect a disci-

24. Myths tear away all individuality, as some students of Ranke said. *Mythical* is therefore the opposite of *historical*; see “Political Dialogue,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 1 (1859): 269f.

25. One problem is that the old Ranke and his master students, such as Wilhelm Giesebrecht, or the editors of his selected letters and biographical essays such as Alfred Dove, helped to bring about this “easy-street Ranke myth.” See Anthony Grafton (to whom I would like to dedicate my footnotes), “The Footnote from de Thou to Ranke,” Grafton and Suzanne L. Marchand, eds., “Proof and Persuasion in History: A Preface,” *History and Theory* [Theme Issue] 33 (1994).

26. “It is only necessary to turn . . . to the columns of a newspaper to find out that public men know a great many things about the history of the United States which never happened.” Albert B. Hart (Harvard University), “Methods of Teaching American History,” in *Methods of Teaching History*, ed. Andrew D. White, Charles K. Adams, et al. (Boston, 1898), 1.

27. Edward A. Freeman, “The Difficulties of Historical Study,” *The Methods of Historical Study: Eight Lectures* (London, 1886), 87.

28. “[His so-called history] Mr. Everyman has woven, he could not tell you how, out of the most diverse threads of information, picked up in the most casual way, from the most unrelated sources—from things learned at home and in school, from knowledge gained in business or profession, from newspapers glanced at, from books (yes, even history books) read or heard of, from remembered scraps of newsreels or educational films or ex cathedra utterances of presidents and kings, from fifteen-minute discourses on the history of civilization broadcast by the courtesy (it may be) of Pepsodent, the Bulova Watch Company, or the Shepard Stores in Boston. Daily and hourly, from a thousand unnoted

pline to be welcome that reveals everyone—even a society as a whole and its rulers—to be lying? Pursuing history as a science brings the danger of permanent impeachment against everybody dealing with history. Furthermore, scientific history means not only different, but above all dynamic, historical knowledge—incessantly in motion—at its best setting our minds free, but giving no further orientation. Sometimes old narratives are found to be falsified, sometimes new ones to be true, and sometimes it is the other way round. But most of the time the progress of investigation and discussion will force us to revise before there is a chance to establish. Let us take it for granted that not everyone is flexible enough to follow, but that some are flexible enough to denounce the inconvenient. To fix myths, you have to deny the autonomous movement of historical knowledge.²⁹ To be sure a history of historiography also reveals the harm done to men's minds—banished historians wherever you look, and Ranke is one of the most famous. How can we think that working like Ranke will be a comfortable job?

What I tried to do in my dissertation³⁰ was to correct the easy-street myth of scientific history, to recover the long and winding road the young Ranke had to follow, to show the new and different practices and theories he thereby found (his *Historik*), and to

sources, there is lodged in Mr. Everyman's mind a mass of unrelated and related information and misinformation, of impressions and images out of which he somehow manages, undeliberately for the most part, to fashion a history." Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," *American Historical Review* 37, no. 2 (1931): 229.

29. The young and the old Ranke took it the other way round: To escape myths, you only have to wake up the critical, autonomous motions of historical knowledge by starting free research. See, for instance, Ranke's remarks on David Friedrich Strauss from 1835, in Ranke, *Tagebücher* (Diaries), vol. 1 of *Aus Werk und Nachlass* (München, 1964), 104; or Ranke's preface to his *Ursprung und Beginn der Revolutionskriege* (The Origin and Beginning of the Revolutionary Wars, 1791–1792) (Leipzig, 1875).

30. Siegfried Baur, "Versuch über die *Historik* des jungen Ranke" (Essay on the Praxis and Theory of History of the Young Ranke) (Ph.D. diss., Free University of Berlin, 1996), later published by Duncker and Humblot (Berlin, 1998). Chapters 4, 5, and 6 deal with young Ranke's despairing beginnings.

remember the price (think of the Ranke myths) he had to pay.³¹ In short, going back critically to the sources, I not only tried to rescue the young Ranke from the cages in which others had confined him, but to “make it possible to tell a quite different story about Ranke,” to bring back his real experiences.³² Let me give some examples.

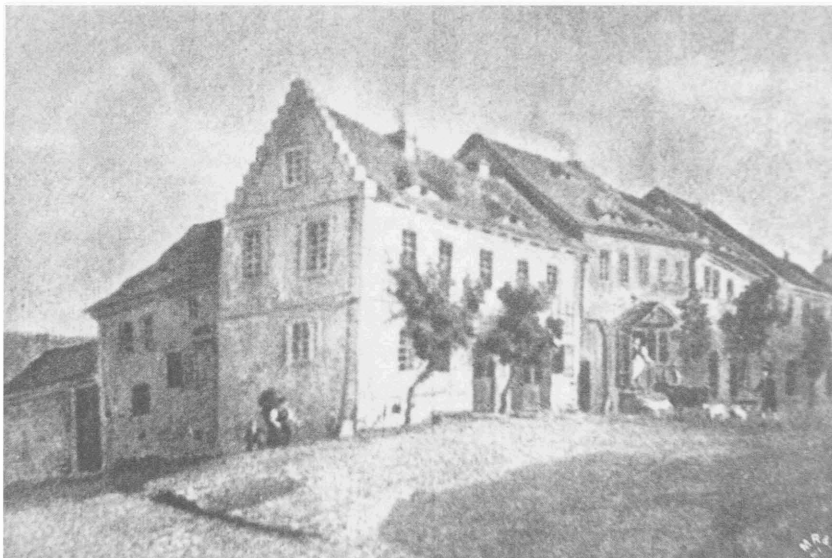
FIRST EXAMPLE

The young Franz Leopold Ranke was neither born in Prussia nor was he a born “von Ranke” upper-class member, and he never actually studied history or theology, but rather classical philology³³ under one of the best classical philologists in Germany, Gottfried Hermann of Leipzig. In 1817 Ranke finished his philological dissertation about Thucydides as one of the student members of Hermann’s “Greek Society,” which became the model of Ranke’s famous historical seminar. Hermann, a close friend of Wilhelm von Humboldt, thought that philology must identify, clean, restore, and edit antique primary sources to rescue at least some original and “pure fragments” of his beloved “classical language”; he also thought that, despite the existence of many so-called antique sources, so much remains unknown that nobody can ever write ancient history without compensating for what is missing with his fantasy. But nobody wants to read modern fictions in place of the real sources.

31. In an unpublished speech at the Syracuse Ranke conference in 1986, Joseph Levine brought precisely to the point what the real task of coming works on Ranke should be: “It might be interesting . . . to imagine how a narrative history of Ranke’s intellectual life—well told—might throw vastly more light on the general questions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiography than any analysis or classification.” I hope my dissertation on the young Ranke may be a step in this direction.

32. Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, 1997), 61.

33. Of course there was a Ranke who studied theology to become a pastor. This was Heinrich Ranke, the brother of Franz Leopold. Defending himself as a classical philologist and not a protestant theologian, Franz Leopold Ranke wrote in 1820 to his brother Heinrich: “Even that way we are serving the Almighty, even that way we are priests.” Ranke never directly spoke of historians as priests, but compared the office of both later on in a letter to his son Otto, who then was a young pastor. Ranke, *Sämtliche Werke*, vols. 53–54, pp. 90, 96, 102, 103, 120, 121, 126, 137, 146, 149, 154; Ranke, *Das Briefwerk* (Hamburg, 1949), 518.



Ranke was born in 1795 in the corner house above. The building still stands in Wiehe, Thuringia, part of the former East Germany. The second floor once housed the Ranke Museum. During the era of the Communist regime the museum was destroyed and the Wiehe Ranke Society was suppressed. After the Berlin Wall came down, the Ranke Society was refounded by two local citizens, Pastor Braasch and Dr. Ullrich. They revived the Ranke Museum and moved it to the Wiehe Town Hall.

Hermann's question was, What comes first—history or language, fairy tales or critical philology? He chose the latter and wrote sharp reviews against books on ancient history to reveal them as mere illusions—written by scholars who had neither any idea of the condition of their sources and the capacity of their discipline, nor of their responsibility as scholars. Hermann would not accept Niebuhr's *History of Rome*, and Hermann's pupil Ranke agreed.³⁴

34. Ranke, *Sämtliche Werke*, vols. 53–54, pp. 31, 41, 47, 59; Ranke, *Vorlesungseinleitungen (Aus Werk und Nachlass)*, vol. 4 (München, 1975), 134, 227f. The worst fight Hermann had with August Boeckh (classical philologist in Berlin and the teacher of Droysen) took place when Ranke came to Berlin. See Gottfried Hermann, *Über Herrn Boeckhs Behandlung der Griechischen Inschriften* (Leipzig, 1826).

Working as a teacher of Greek and Latin in Frankfurt/Oder, Ranke began to criticize books on modern history just as Hermann had criticized those of ancient times. Ranke soon argued that the basic works of historiography—for instance, the works of Francesco Guicciardini at first, then Franciscus Beaucaire, Juan de Mariana, Johannes Sleidanus, Johannes Cochläus, Sismonde de Sismondi—were products of fantasy written by generations of historians who had no idea what it really meant to write history. In addition to this critique, Ranke tried to show that source-based historiography could only hope to present fragmentary historical knowledge, the smallest unit of which he called the “naked fact.” According to the condition of the sources, and to avoid poetical, political, and metaphysical fantasies, Ranke, unlike Niebuhr, and in fact against him, proclaimed that the goal is not to write history “as we want it” but rather fragmentary *histories* of “naked facts” as they really were: “Rigorous presentation of the facts, however conditional and lacking in beauty they may be, is without any question the supreme law.” Just as Hermann tried to rescue pure pieces of the antique, his student Ranke tried to find pure fragments of modern history, a parallel that is overlooked today.³⁵

Ranke’s *Critique of the Later Historians* and his *History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations*³⁶ became the two parts of his first book. It

35. Obviously the classical philologist Hermann is very important even for the history of modern historiography. Nevertheless, Hermann is completely forgotten today. I could only find three recent works on Hermann, one being Anthony Grafton’s book, with its important chapters on Ranke, *The Footnote* (pp. 37, 87f.), another being Joseph Levine’s already mentioned speech, and the third being my own dissertation.

36. Ranke, *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker 1494–1535, Nebst einer Kritik Neuerer Geschichtschreiber* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1824), 6, 7. Only one part of Ranke’s first book is translated (by Philip A. Ashworth): *History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations* (London, 1887). Ranke’s *Critique of the Later Historians* is for the most part unknown to English readers, although it is Ranke’s paradigmatic “Declaration of Independence” of scientific history. The corresponding “Constitution” is hidden in Ranke’s works, developing year by year and amendment by amendment. Ulrich Muhlack first discovered this phenomenon and called it Ranke’s “implicite Historik,” in his *Geschichtswissenschaft im Humanismus und in der Aufklärung* (München, 1991), 9f. As is typical for avant-garde enter-

brought Ranke an extraordinary chair of history in Berlin, where a former student of Hermann, Johannes Schulze, was secretary of cultural affairs in Prussia. We know Ranke's sentence in the Foreword to the first part of this book: "To history has been attributed the function to judge the past, to instruct ourselves for the advantage of the future. Such a lofty function the present work does not attempt. It aims merely to say how it actually took place." But we must not forget that in his book of 1824 Ranke was the first to turn the philological crusades of the new humanist Hermann against modern historiography. Ranke's attack not only showed the importance of classical philology for the shaping of scientific history, but above all led to a *Big Bang*: the complete fragmentation of historical knowledge because of the withdrawal of all elements of fantasy. One consequence was the withholding of historical judgments and the rolling back of historiography to start at point zero again. For this beginning Ranke's critique and histories (plural) are paradigmatic—following Johannes von Müller, Ranke, up to 1839, would never use the word "history" in any of his titles. We must not forget also that, despite some students of Hermann like Gustav Adolf Harald Stenzel, almost nobody was pleased about Ranke's philological destruction of the metanarrative of his time. Only the progressives were enthusiastic because they saw how easily Ranke's revolutionary methods could be used to destroy the old-fashioned fictions of later academic historiography—but they wished to replace those fictions with their own political fictions. Ranke had seemed to prepare the ground for them.³⁷

prises, the young Ranke could not start with already made rules, but found his new concepts by acting and reflecting. I often wonder why it is that everybody knew "all" the influences of Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, or the Holy Ghost on Ranke's science, BEFORE they worked out what Ranke's "implicite Historik" was and what its problems and its developing scientific solutions really were.

37. See the ecstatic review by the aristocratic Francophile liberal Karl A. Varnhagen von Ense, "Rezension von 1: Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker und 2.: Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber, von Leopold Ranke," *Spener'sche Zeitung* (12 February 1825). Later on Varnhagen called Ranke a fool. See Varnhagen von Ense, *Tagebücher*, vol. 4 (Leipzig, 1861; reprint, Bern, 1972), 355.

SECOND EXAMPLE

It is not surprising that the young Ranke was welcome in the circles of fashionable progressives, though not at the faculty of history, when he arrived in Berlin in April 1825. He was not a historian, but a young and rebellious classical philologist with extraordinary methods who had just received an extraordinary chair for history. No wonder that his new colleagues were suspicious about that young troublemaker who mistrusted their usual way of mediating history. It may be that they had some ideas about the Aristotelian concept of poetry, but probably most of them simply thought, "When other sources are more important than we are, what happens to us?" What luck for them that Ranke's first puzzling lectures were catastrophes; his few fragmentary histories attracted no interest. Indeed Ranke was unable to teach in the usual way. Soon he was alone.³⁸ To his first lecture came thirty students; to his second lecture came nobody.³⁹ Ranke spent most of his time in the "Kommode," the old Royal Library of Berlin at the Forum Fredericianum near his home, where he rediscovered forty-six volumes of Venetian *relazioni*—handwritten primary sources of high quality

38. "A. D. White in 'The Forum' for February 1887 has given a graphic and amusing picture of Ranke in his lecture-room: 'He had a habit of becoming so absorbed in his subject as to slip down in his chair, hold his finger up toward the ceiling, and then, with his eye fastened on the tip of it, go mumbling through a kind of rhapsody, which most of my fellow-students confessed they could not understand. It was a comical sight: half a dozen students crowding around his desk listening to a professor as priests might listen to the Sibyl on her tripod, the other students being scattered through the room in various stages of discouragement.'" Herbert B. Adams, *Annual Report of the AHA, Papers of the American Historical Association*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1888), 112; see also the Eisevskij-report of some Ranke lectures from 1859, Günter Berg, *Ranke als akademischer Lehrer* (Göttingen, 1968), 219f.

39. Years later the Chancellor of Syracuse University wrote, after his visit to Ranke: "In his lecture room Prof. Ranke was not popular. . . . Usually he had but twenty or thirty hearers, while hundreds would crowd the lectures of . . . Droysen." Quoted in George F. Comfort, "Reminiscences of Berlin—Professor Leopold von Ranke," *Northern Christian Advocate*, 8 January 1885; see also Comfort, "The Death of Leopold von Ranke," *Northern Christian Advocate*, 3 June 1886.

on modern European history, which were forgotten by that time.⁴⁰ In 1827 Ranke published a book based on these relazioni; it was a confusing mixture of some puzzling histories of Spain and Turkey and the Netherlands. Ranke was still experimenting by finding and mediating broken histories, and some may say that he thereby invented microhistory in 1827, as he may have invented oral history in 1829.⁴¹ But the contemporary reviews were mostly bad, agreeing that Ranke was more or less unable to write history. Some tried to denounce him by claiming that he had converted to Catholicism. It got worse: A Berlin colleague wrote such a horrible review of his first book that Ranke had the plan to shoot him in a duel.⁴²

40. The Swiss historian Johannes von Müller gave some hints in the manuscript of a speech he never gave, von Müller, *Sämmtliche Werke*, part 8. *Kleine Schriften* (Tübingen, 1810), 415f.; see Ranke, *Tagebücher*, 237; Ranke, *Fürsten und Völker von Südeuropa* (Hamburg, 1827), foreword; Ranke, “Venetianische Relationen aus dem sechzehnten Jahrhundert” and “Aus den spätern Venetianischen Relationen,” in *Französische Geschichte*, vol. 5 (Stuttgart, 1861); Friedrich Wilken, *Geschichte der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1828), 53. See also Willy Andreas, “Die Relationen als Aufgabe der Forschung,” in Andreas, *Staatskunst und Diplomatie der Venezianer* (Leipzig, 1943), 73f.; Gino Benzoni, “Ranke’s Favorite Source: The Relazioni of the Venetian Ambassadors,” and Umberto Tucci, “Ranke and the Venetian Document Market,” both *The Courier* 22, no. 1 (1987).

41. Ranke, *Fürsten und Völker von Südeuropa im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg, 1827); Ranke, *The Ottoman and Spanish Empires in the 16th and 17th centuries*, trans. Walter K. Kelly (London, 1843; Philadelphia, 1845); Ranke, *Die Serbische Revolution* (Hamburg, 1829); Ranke, *History of Servia and the Servian Revolution*, trans. Alexander Kerr (London 1847–48)—Ranke’s “Servian Revolution” contains surprising insight into ethnological details, which the young Ranke took from a second sort of primary sources—the oral accounts of his Servian friends, when he stayed in Vienna. Except for the Servs, nobody in Austria was pleased about this book. In 1848 Heinrich Wuttke wrote a sharp critique of Ranke’s “Servian Revolution” in the *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 9 (1848): 228f. In his copy of Wuttke’s bad review, which is still in the Ranke Library at Syracuse, Ranke wrote on the first page: “Wer sich vor Spatzen fürchtet, der darf keine Hirse säen . . .” (Don’t sow millet, when you fear sparrows).

42. The fight between the young historians Heinrich Leo and Leopold Ranke is the first “Historiker Streit” of modern historiography, questioning, What is the idea of history? What are historical facts? What are historical ideas? What is historical truth? What are the real historical methods to find and present it? What does history as a science mean? What is the task of historical research? Of historical writing? Of philosophy of history? And, above all, What is the real

You may dismiss these existential problems⁴³—but it is obvious that the young Ranke could not yet handle his new methods, nor could the others understand what he was really doing. For Ranke the old idea of “*Historia magistra vitae*”⁴⁴ was broken, but how could he replace it? He soon began to fear the “horreur” of the university and the academic routine. Again with the help of that former student of Hermann and Wolf, the secretary of cultural affairs, Schulze,⁴⁵ Ranke was exempted from academic service. He escaped in 1827 and started a six-month journey to foreign archives, which took nearly four years. Ranke’s motto was not “Go west”; it was “Go south.” The reason was that Venice—which for hundreds of years had been famous for its diplomacy—had become part of Austria at the Congress of Vienna, with the effect for historians that the important diplomatic archives of Venice were

profession of historians—to give some detailed facts or to write a story? See Heinrich Leo [H. L. Manin], “Rezension von Rankes, ‘Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker,’ and ‘Kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber,’” in *Ergänzungsblätter der Jenaischen Allgemeinen Literaturzeitung*, nos. 17 and 18 (1828), column 129f.; Leo, “Replik auf Rankes Replik,” *Intelligenzblatt der Jenaischen Allgemeinen Literaturzeitung*, no. 39 (1828) column 305f.; Ranke, “Replik auf Leos Rezension der ‘Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker,’” *Hallesche Literaturzeitung*, no. 131 (1828), column 193f.; Ranke, *Sämtliche Werke* 53–54, p. 659f., see also pp. 156 and 207. When reading the controversial articles of Arthur Marwick and Hayden White, some may see that even today historians are discussing the same questions that Ranke and Leo did. See Marwick, “Two Approaches to Historical Study: The Metaphysical (Including Postmodernism) and the Historical,” and H. V. White, “Response to Arthur Marwick,” both in *Journal of Contemporary History* 30, nos. 1 and 2 (1995).

43. Although the book of Leonard Krieger, *Ranke: The Meaning of History* (Chicago and London, 1977), is one of the best on Ranke, it passes too easily over Ranke’s existential problems. See also Theodore H. von Laue, *Leopold Ranke: The Formative Years* (Princeton, 1950) and Ernst Schulin, “Rankes erstes Buch,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 203 (1966).

44. Reinhart Koselleck, “*Historia Magistra Vitae*,” Keith Tribe, trans., *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge 1985), 21f.

45. Johannes Schulze (1786–1869) was a doctor of theology and philology and a member of the Prussian ministry of public instruction; he was editor of Hegel and Winckelmann, translator of Thucydides, and founder of the *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik*. Schulze’s library was purchased by Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., in 1869.

opened by order of the Austrian government, and that a huge and uncontrolled black market for important documents of European history arose.⁴⁶ A paradise for historical research in European history was born. We know what a great success Ranke's Italian journey became and what never-seen-before sources for the history of later Europe he found—he bought hundreds of original Venetian *relazioni*, which today are in the stacks of Syracuse University Library's Department of Special Collections. But we forget that Ranke was thrown out of the cozy academic orbit amidst the unknown stars of dusty documents by the force of the Big Bang he had provoked with his first book. If it is really the aim of historical sciences not only to criticize myth-history but to start again with broken histories that are in keeping with the incomplete and doubtful character of the sources, then there is one great chance to reconstruct at least some parts of the past: starting critical research,⁴⁷ going through the primary sources from the East to the West, from the North to the South. Source-based historiography means to stop mediating history as usual, to break free from “rumor” and “bad books” and to follow the movements of critical investigation—writing *fact by fact* what will be trustworthy, changing even yesterday's writings when other facts are discovered, trusting in a lucky progress towards some more *universal* views, perhaps. It does seem that Ranke caused the inflexible historical discipline to move.⁴⁸ Once in 1828 Ranke was asked, “Why are you doing history that way?” He answered, “It is just because I don't want them to tell me lies.”⁴⁹

46. Ranke was not the only young German academic going south in those years. See, for instance, Friedrich Blume, *Iter Italicum* 1–4 (Berlin, 1824–1836); and Georg H. Pertz, *Italiänische Reise* (Italian Journey) (Hannover, 1824).

47. See Grafton, *The Footnote* (p. 231), on the difference between mere narratives and research-based historiography.

48. “Come on, old mother science—what about your feet? Are you really doing some steps forward?” wrote the young Ranke in his diary in 1816, answering, “Oh sad eyed lady, what a shame—you will never be reborn.” See Ranke, *Tagebücher*, 91.

49. Ranke, “Erwiderung auf Heinrich Leos Angriff” (Reply to Leo's Attack), *Sämtliche Werke*, 53–54, 659f., 663.

THIRD EXAMPLE

But it was not only some old-fashioned historians who were unable to understand Ranke's philological turn from fantasy to broken histories, because they had never looked behind the comfortable secondary-literature illusions of well-known history. Reading the newspapers and periodicals and pamphlets of his time, Ranke found that his colleagues had important imitators outside academic walls. Especially after the French Revolution of July 1830, the public was flooded with articles dealing with history in exactly that unscientific and dangerous way. The young Ranke tried to dance away.

Despite the political differences between Conservatives and Liberals, or Reactionaries and Radicals, they all tried to make the water of history run their mills. Whichever you choose—the *Journal des Debats* or the *Times* or the *Berliner Wochenblatt*—the journals never doubted the second-hand information of old-fashioned historical handbooks, as long as they could plunder them to find supporting arguments for their party interests. This misuse of history culminated in typical left- or right-wing declarations like, “The World History had decided . . .”; “The eternal laws of History force us to . . .”; “The holy lessons of History demand . . .”; “History is on our side.” The young Ranke could not accept these fantastic attempts to use history in public discussion.⁵⁰ For Ranke there was no water of history to run the mills of anyone, because the once-established historiography had fallen apart, and scientific research had just begun to find its critical way to the forgotten sources. It may be that at the end of that procedure we will come to know what history really is; perhaps then one of the parties will be proved right. Finally “knowing good and evil,” we may be able to make politics in the name of history then—but as long as the investigation is going on, only fools will speak in the name of something yet unknown. For Ranke the public opinions and the

50. Rudolf Vierhaus was the first who brought together both Ranke's critique of public opinions on history and Ranke's scientific concept, which lay behind it. See Vierhaus, “Rankes Verhältnis zur Presse” (Ranke's Relationship to the Press), *Historische Zeitschrift* 183 (1957), 543f.; Vierhaus, *Ranke und die soziale Welt* (Münster, 1957).

political parties were as perfectly lost in fictions about history as the old-fashioned historiography had been.⁵¹

We remember the fairy tale of the “King’s New Clothes”: the parade of the naked king, the blind people praising his fictional clothes, one child suddenly shouting, “Hey, the king is naked”—and everybody applauds the child. In 1824 Ranke had already played the role of that enlightening child in traditional academic historiography. When Ranke returned from Italy in spring 1831 he got the chance to play that role again in the realm of the public misuse of history. Since 1829 the liberal publisher Perthes had planned a journal to discuss contemporary problems; in fall 1831 Ranke was glad to escape the university again and become not only the editor of the *Historische-Politische Zeitschrift*,⁵² but—under the condition that he could write free from any censorship⁵³—its main writer. Beginning with the Foreword to his *Gazette*, Ranke’s method was always the same—nearly every article started with the perplexing idea that nobody knew the *objective* events of contemporary history; and they would not be known as long as they were subject to the pretensions of the parties. Ranke criticized neither the Revolution nor the Restoration itself, but tried to destroy the black

51. It was in these days that Ranke decided to finish and publish his famous book on the Popes, which is also a book against a “gigantic fiction” of history. See his introduction to the second book of the “Popes,” and the “Analecta,” especially his critique on Sarpi and Pallavicini and their views of the Council of Trent. Ranke [History of] *The Popes*, trans. Sara Austin (London, 1840).

52. Ranke, *Historisch-politische Zeitschrift* 1, nos. 1–4 (Hamburg, 1832); and 2, nos. 5–8 (Berlin, 1833–36). All quoted articles are from the first volume.

53. In 1820 as a young teacher Ranke had very bad experiences with the Prussian secret service. He and his brother Heinrich were under observation, their letters were censored and confiscated, and Heinrich was not allowed to teach in Prussia—all because both were fans of the father of gymnastics and leader of progressive students Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, who was imprisoned in 1820. No wonder that Ranke even in 1831 refused to let any of his articles be censored by Prussian authorities. To evade the normally inevitable censorship, Ranke and the publisher Perthes tried to win the more liberal Prussian secretary of foreign affairs to support their *Gazette* project: Before Christian Günter Graf von Bernstorff in 1832 retreated, the newly founded *Gazette* was exempt from any censorship—which exemption was taken as proof of its so-called “governmental” character, but in fact it was proof of Ranke’s incorruptibility.

and white legends about them. Ranke was more than a teacher of history; he taught what it was to be a true historian. But nobody wanted to admit that the original truth we know about history is that we usually know nothing about history—or, in Ranke's words, that "our knowledge is worth nothing—we are following only rumors."⁵⁴

Take Ranke's article on "The Restoration in France," which was against public opinion, against the policy of the Prussian State, against the Liberals and Conservatives. In that article Ranke showed that the Restoration was as revolutionary as the Revolution itself. In another article, "The Great Powers,"⁵⁵ Ranke pointed out the overlooked details of the never-ending movements of domestic and foreign policy in and between the European nations, which made it impossible for any party to dominate Europe for a longer period. Drawing on the collection of political pamphlets that Ranke brought back from his journey, he wrote several articles proving, point by point, that both left- and right-wing pamphleteers in Italy, France, and Germany were not judging in the name of history, but rather in the name of their illusions about history, badly violating the sense of the individuality of each nation. Ranke's journal was the first attempt ever made to enlighten the public through autonomous scientific histories, and it contains the best of Ranke's writing. But nobody wanted to see "naked facts," especially the naked fact of being ignorant; nobody liked to be revealed as an illusionist, least of all in front of his enemies; nobody was pleased to learn that his party would never comprise the whole picture, not least in the nervous years after the Revolution of 1830; nobody was applauding. The Right took for granted that Ranke was on the Left; the Left took it the other way round. So the Ranke myths started and the *Gazette* died. Ranke lost nearly all of his

54. Ranke, *Tagebücher*, 143, from the year 1816–17; see also his statement (p. 241) from 1840: "Again and again we are rewriting history; as others already noticed. Every time and its mainstream is trying to take history over just to copy its own ideas on it. That's the (usual) basis for blame or praise. And so it goes on and on. At the end nobody can see what actually happened. Then our last hope is to find ways back to the original source."

55. Ranke, "The Great Powers," in Wines, *Secret of World History*, 121f.

friends—even his publisher left him alone. Take all that as evidence that Ranke's *Gazette* was objective.

AN OPEN END

Ranke came from philology to scientific history as Columbus came from Europe to America—by accident—and he needed at least twelve years to understand where he was and what he had to do. It was inevitable that he not only found more problems than he could handle, but above all that he provoked a sort of enmity rarely seen before—even today misunderstandings surround him and keep him more or less isolated.

It is striking that the bases of both left- and right-wing Ranke myths were already developed *before* Ranke ever started to publish his famous books. “Poor Ranke, that pretty talent to paint little historical figures”—so sneered Heinrich Heine in 1833 about Ranke the “Jesuit.” Friedrich Koeppen called Ranke the *diplomate* “arabesque-painter” and servant of the Prussian king, and Heinrich Leo said he would like to give Ranke some porcelain vases for his little tiny objective flowers. It was also Leo who joked about Ranke “the naked historian” because of his silly search for “naked facts”—a confusing project, which must have been paid for by the predemocratic Prussian state, as Heine cunningly added.⁵⁶ Following Heine, Karl Marx later appointed Ranke a “born chambermaid of History,”⁵⁷ faithfully serving the reactionary Prussian monarchy.

Most people, used to hearing only their own echo in history,

56. Heinrich Heine, *Französische Zustände* (Leipzig, 1833), 33, 34, 57; Friedrich K. Koeppen, “Berliner Historiker,” in Arnold Ruge, ed., *Hallsche Jahrbüchern*, no. 109 (1841), 433; H. F. Helmolt, *Leopold Rankes Leben und Wirken mit achtzehn bisher ungedruckten Briefen Rankes* (Leipzig, 1921), 197; Ranke, *Briefwerk* (Hamburg, 1949), 179, 197f.; Alfred Stern, “Wer war der Verfasser des Aufsatzes ‘Berliner Historiker’, in *Halle’schen Jahrbüchern* 1841?,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 143 (1931): 512f.

57. The older Karl Marx called Ranke a “capering little troll,” but as a young man he praised Ranke’s article on the “Restauration in France,” from Ranke’s *Gazette*, perhaps because of its dialectical argumentation; see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 41 (Letters), ed. Hobsbawm, Diskin, et al. (New York, 1975), 560f., 691.

were not interested in the message of Ranke's *Gazette*: that history—despite whispering faintly from far away—is speaking itself “in a thousand voices.” According to Ranke, one must first listen to these voices and let them speak for themselves. But nobody was interested merely to hear about actions of autonomous entities of the past, with their own problems and solutions, with their own greatness and weakness, their own joy and despair. Most people were—and still are—used to looking at history as a perfect gallery of already black and white painted idols.⁵⁸

With the death of his *Gazette*, Ranke was out. But the fictions were in; they emerged in newspapers, streets, minds, salons, universities, parliaments, and books; even paintings remained full of historical fictions, fighting against each other in an endless struggle. What is the so-called emancipation of the past good for, when it only leads from one cage of fictions to the next? Are there no free places in between? Ranke had the nightmare of coming “religious” wars⁵⁹ if scientific history failed to correct these political-

58. In the preface of *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber* (Critique of the Later Historians), Ranke describes not only the overwhelming variety of history and its sources but also what we should ask first: “As one would feel on entering a numerous collection of antiquities in which the genuine and spurious, the beautiful and repulsive, the magnificent and mean, belonging to various nations and ages, are mingled, thus would he feel, who should be at once brought to all the various records of modern history. They speak to us in a thousand voices; they present the greatest variety of character; they are clad in all colors. Some strut in a solemn gait; they wish to present; they think they take the path of the ancients. Others strive to draw lessons of wisdom for future ages from the past; many wish to defend or to accuse; not a few endeavor to explain events from the hidden springs of conduct which lie deep in the heart. There are some whose only object is to relate simply what has happened. The most important question is, Who, in this multitude of witnesses, is possessed of original knowledge; who can really inform us?” Translation from the *Encyclopedia Americana*, vol. 6 (Philadelphia, 1831), 344; see also Wines, *Secret of World History*, 74, 75.

59. See Ranke's notices on “public opinion” or “press” in his diaries, *Tagebücher*, 252, 253, 254, 255, 322, 323, 324, 335, 341, 347, 370, 384. See also Ranke, “Über die Trennung und die Einheit von Deutschland” (Some Remarks on the Dissolution and Unity of Germany), *Historisch-politische Zeitschrift* 1, no. 2 (1832): 340f.; and Ranke's introduction to the *Historisch-politische Zeitschrift*. During those days Ranke worked out not only his book *The Popes*, but also had the idea to write what would become *German History in the Age of Reformation*, vols.

party fictions—but he had to learn that it was nearly impossible to do so without making himself everybody’s enemy. Nobody liked to be caught using flimsy history either for his career or his doctrines or for the legitimation of both. So Ranke retreated from this battlefield of illusions—disillusioned about his very Socratic attempt to disillusion others.

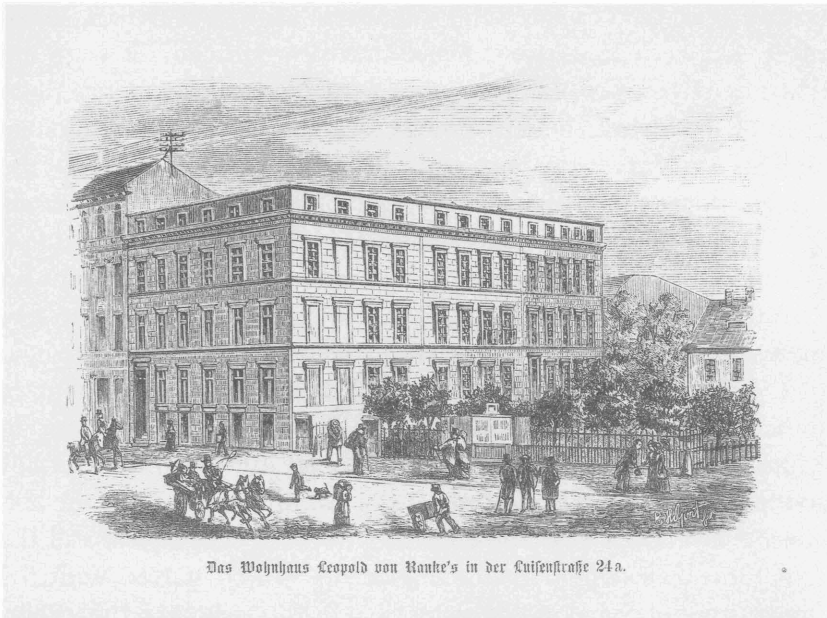
But where could such a talent as Ranke’s seek refuge when nearly everybody embraced the splendid fictions of ready-to-use history? Was there some free space somewhere for Ranke, the first scientific historian? Even Socrates had his students: weren’t there at least some allies? The very last essay of his dying *Gazette*, the “Political Dialogue” from 1836,⁶⁰ gives some hints, when Friedrich says:

“Out of the glamorous world you are creeping home to the solitude of this small study-apartment?” Carl: “I come to say hello to my Benedictine Brother. I’m tired of that fancy world, I’d like to meet at least one human being. . . . Outside they are repeating and repeating the newspapers endlessly.” Friedrich: “You like to flee from that superficial society and get perhaps deeply involved in real questions?” . . . Carl: “I’m longing for that—that’s the only way to leave small talk behind and to come back to human dialogue; Oh how I like to get away from the well worn and to start again with real searching and finding.”

So Ranke came back to his basic station, back to his home behind the Saint Hedwigs Cathedral and later in the Luisenstrasse, back to his collection of relazioni, documents, chronicles, pam-

1–6 (Berlin, 1839–1847), to which his article “Über die Zeiten Ferdinands I und Maximilians II” (Remarks on Ferdinand I and Maximilian II and their Time) (*Historisch-politische Zeitschrift*, vol. 1, no. 2 [1832]: 223f.) was the first step. As he proved in this article, it was also the fury of the press that led Europe to the religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries. Who wonders that Ranke collected many pamphlets as important sources—more than 2,500 pamphlets from France, England, and Germany of the 16th, 17th, 18th and even 19th centuries are still in the Ranke library at Syracuse.

60. Ranke, “Politisches Gespräch,” *Historisch-politische Zeitschrift* 2 (1833–36), no. 8 (1836), 775f.; see von Laue, trans., “A Dialogue on Politics” and “The Great Powers,” *The Formative Years*, 152f.



Ranke's home, where he lived from the late 1840s until his death in 1886.

phlets, and books, back to his student times and the “Greek Society” of his teacher Hermann, and, at last, Ranke came back to his students. Ranke meant to turn his home into a laboratory, putting the sources under a microscope,⁶¹ not only to flee the temptations of illusionary history but also to find some trustworthy results under the cover of his books, his “lumber,” as he called them.⁶² In his library Ranke started again the puzzling work of free searching and finding—but this time together with his students, and it was also because of their help that Ranke's project of scientific histories did

61. Unfortunately, Ranke's *Critique of the Later Historians* is not translated—but anyone interested to study Ranke's process of critiquing the sources may read his essay “Clarendon,” in the *Analecta*, vol. 6 of Leopold von Ranke's *History of England*, trans. C. W. Boase, G. W. Kitchin, et al. (New York, 1966).

62. “As we left Ranke's seminar, [we] had been impressed with the idea that the public opinion is going all wrong on the subject, the nature and the influence of the French Revolution”—this quotation of Gustav Droysen was used by Charles Kendall Adams in one of his presidential addresses to the American Historical Association, *Papers of the AHA*, vol. 4, part 1 (1890), 58.

not die with his *Gazette*. Schmidt, Waitz, Hirsch, Wilmans, Döniges, Köpke, Giesebrecht, Sybel, and later Burckhardt were the first rescue team to invent in the “seminar” a never-before-seen kind of teamwork, which soon became so successful that Ranke and his students could not only prepare in 1836—the year the *Gazette* died—the brilliant *Yearbooks*,⁶³ but also in 1844 the *Journal of Scientific History*, which was edited by the Ranke student Schmidt.⁶⁴ Together with his former students—he called them his “family”⁶⁵—Ranke discovered one of the most important free places of scientific history in 1858, when he founded with the help of the Bavarian King Maximilian II—even he was a student of Ranke—the “Historical Commission” at the Royal Academy in Munich. This was a great step towards institutionalization of autonomous scholarship and the basis of famous projects like the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (German General Biography) and the *Historische Zeitschrift* (Historical Journal), which started with the Ranke student Sybel as editor in 1859.⁶⁶ You may take this grow-

63. See the crushing critique by Georg Waitz and Siegfried Hirsch, “Kritische Prüfung der Echtheit und des historischen Werthes des Chronicon Corbejense,” in Ranke, ed., *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reiches*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1839). This typical product of Ranke’s seminar teamwork continues what Ranke’s *Critique of the Later Historians* once began. Contributors Waitz and Hirsch revealed one of the most important sources for early medieval history as a mere product of forgery made by a famous historian of the eighteenth century. Felix Gilbert gives an excellent insight into Ranke’s seminar of the late 1830s and early 1840s in “Ranke as the Teacher of Jacob Burckhardt,” *Syracuse Scholar* 9, no. 1 (1988): 19f. See also Gilbert, “What Ranke Meant,” *The American Scholar* 56 (1987): 393f.

64. See Adolf Schmidt’s preface to the *Journal of Scientific History* 1 (1844); Schmidt wrote on the freedom of reason. See his *Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert der Kaiserherrschaft und des Christentumes* (Berlin, 1847).

65. J. A. Thompson, “Leopold von Ranke,” in *Great Lives from History (Renaissance to 1900)*, vol. 4 (Pasadena, 1989), 1935f.

66. As a member of the Bavarian Royal Academie since 1868, George Bancroft could study the Historical Commission as a model for historians of the United States to follow. For the history of the Historical Commission, see the memorandum of Heinrich von Sybel and Wilhelm von Giesebrecht, *Die historische Commission bei der königlich bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1858–1883* (München, 1883).

ing teamwork as proof that although Ranke could provoke a Big Bang of traditional historical knowledge, he was too weak on his own to find and bring together all the resulting fragments. Confronted with history as a just-starting and dynamic science, everybody was a student, and students were his natural allies. Ranke himself remained a student of history among other students. He was a discoverer, but no emperor, and his seminar was not a court of an order-giving king, but rather a parliament of equal deputies of scientific history. The so-called Ranke School was founded on equality.⁶⁷

The first free place of scientific history was Ranke's private library. The famous Ranke Seminar with its exemplary teamwork was founded there by just a few students of history based on Ranke's books and sources.⁶⁸ Until the end of his life Ranke rejected any university or government subsidies for his seminar, so that it might stay free from outside control. And Ranke's library became the base camp not only for the early team of students, who found their way to Ranke through the thorny myths surrounding him, but for many other famous historians. Jacob Burckhardt, Wilhelm Roscher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Johann Gustav Droysen, Lord Acton, John L. Lincoln, Andrew D. White, Herbert B. Adams, Charles K. Adams, John William Burgess, George F. Comfort, Charles W. Bennett, and even Herbert L. Osgood caught a glimpse of the old Ranke; Franz Lieber was a friend of Ranke from 1823, and even George Bancroft, who from 1867 to 1874 was ambassador of the United States in Berlin.⁶⁹ They all sat in Ranke's library and

67. The only advantage Ranke had was the complete lack of all illusions about the nature of historical knowledge.

68. If one follows the track of the footnotes of the dissertations of Ranke's early students, one will find titles of chronicles, annales, scriptores, and the first volumes of the *Monumenta*—more than 400 of them are still in the Ranke library.

69. Volume no. Ra 973.6 U 58 (1871) of the Ranke library is dedicated to "Chancellor Ranke" by George Bancroft. As U.S. ambassador he wrote this "confidential" memorandum of *The Haro-Channel* (Vancouver) for the Prussian King and German Kaiser Wilhelm I in an attempt to mediate between the United States and the British government in the controversial question of the Haro-Channel borderline between the two countries. In his introduction Bancroft writes, "We regard it as a great luck, that these discussions will take place in a nation [whose] sciences are made by . . . Ranke (and others)."

spread their ideas of Ranke's "Historical Seminar" all over the scientific world.⁷⁰

American historians very early saw the importance of Ranke. "A few such critics as Ranke would contribute greatly to the progress of historical knowledge,"⁷¹ wrote the *Encyclopedia Americana* in 1831. For the young nation, whose so-called history was only an echo of European fairy tales at that time, and whose historical education was therefore full of imported semifictitious narratives, the revolutionary concept of a source-based historical science helped to open the horizon towards individual and independent understanding even of national history. It was on the basis of these ideas that Bancroft started to write his *History of the United States* in 1834.⁷² To give another example, the founders of the American

70. See Ranke, "Vorrede zu den Jahrbüchern (Yearbooks) des Deutschen Reiches" (30 November 1836) (Berlin, 1837); and the forewords by Ranke's students in the first volumes of the yearbooks (1837f.); Ranke, "Die alten Schüler," in Ranke, *Sämtliche Werke*, vols. 53–54, p. 649f.; see also the Ranke student Adolf Schmidt, "Vorwort zur Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft" (Preface of the Journal of Scientific History) 1 (1844); Georg Waitz, *Die historischen Übungen zu Göttingen, Glückwunschschreiben an Leopold von Ranke* (Göttingen, 1867); Herbert B. Adams, *Methods of Historical Study*, 2d series, vols. 1–2, *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science* (Baltimore, 1884); Charles K. Adams, "Recent Historical Work in the Colleges and Universities of Europe and America," *Annual Report of the AHA* (1889), 19f., 35f.; "In Memoriam of John Larkin Lincoln" (1894), 577f.; Edward G. Bourne, "Ranke and the Beginning of the Seminar Method in Teaching History," in *Essays in Historical Criticism* (Freeport, N.Y., 1901; reprint 1967), 265f.; Walter P. Webb, "The Historical Seminar," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 42 (1955–56): 3f.; Günter Berg, "Ranke und seine Schule: Das Seminar," in *Ranke als akademischer Lehrer* (Göttingen, 1968).

71. "But the great end of history seems to us to be particularly promoted by the method followed by professor Ranke in his contribution to the criticism of modern historians (Berlin, 1824) (*Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber*), in which he endeavors to determine the degree of confidence we owe to and the degree of information contained in the chief sources for the beginning of modern history." *Encyclopedia Americana*, vol. 6 (Philadelphia, 1831), 344.

72. "Much error had become incorporated with American history. . . . The early history was often written with a carelessness which seized on rumours and vague recollections as sufficient authority for an assertion which satisfied prejudice by wanton perversions, and which, where materials were not at hand, substituted the inferences of the writer for authenticated facts. These early books

Historical Association thought that the best method of teaching history for a modern, sovereign nation was the democratic teamwork Ranke and his students had cultivated in the "Seminar."⁷³ "The private class in Ranke's study became . . . the seminarium for all future historical work," as Ephraim Emerton of Harvard University said.⁷⁴ Its best fruit was and is the power of independent thought.⁷⁵

[W]e admire the simplicity, the honest, free, catholic [=universal] spirit of that man. This was his fundamental excellence, out of which all that is highest in his achievements flowed. May his succession continue unbroken in his country, and may men of his character be multiplied elsewhere, especially on this side of the Atlantic, where the need of such is imperative. American scholars, especially of the younger gen-

have ever since been cited as authorities, and the errors . . . have almost acquired a prescriptive right to a place in the annals of America. . . . I appeal with confidence to the judgement of those who are critically acquainted with the sources of our early history." George Bancroft, *History of the United States*, 9th ed. (Paris, 1842), 1st ed. (1834), vol. 1, Introduction.

73. Charles K. Adams started in 1869 with the "seminar method," "to encourage independent thought and research." Herbert B. Adams followed in 1871. See C. K. Adams, "Special Methods of Historical Study," *Methods of Teaching History* 1:113f.; J. Franklin Jameson, "The American Historical Association 1884-1909," *American Historical Review* 15, no 1. (1910): 3f.; Herman Ausubel, *Historians and Their Craft: A Study of the Presidential Addresses of the AHA, 1884-1945* (New York, 1950), 26.

74. Ephraim Emerton, "The Practical Method in Higher Historical Instruction," in White, Adams, Burgess, et al., *Methods of Teaching History*, vol. 1 (1989), 36. "The most characteristic contribution of Ranke to the advanced historical teaching was the development of the seminary or practice work." Edward G. Bourne, "Leopold von Ranke," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1896*, vol. 1 (1897), 74.

75. The "student must learn among his first lessons, that truth . . . is no ready-made article, . . . that it is a human interpretation, and subject therefore to the fallibility of human insight and reasoning—one-sided, coloured, incomplete. Unless this thought be continually impressed upon him . . . he will . . . make dogma of his learning and this is the negation of progress. . . ." John W. Burgess, "The Methods of Historical Study and Research in Columbia College," in *Methods of Teaching History*, 218.

eration, owe a debt of gratitude to him which cannot be easily repaid.⁷⁶

After a long friendship the old von Ranke was elected in 1885 as the first honorary member of the newly founded American Historical Association.⁷⁷ It was not by accident or misunderstanding, but as the final part of the transplantation of “Ranke’s Seminar” to receptive ground, that three years later Ranke’s library found its way to the United States of America. It was purchased by Charles W. Bennett of Garret Biblical Institute in Evanston, a former Syracuse professor. There is a special relationship between the discovery of a New World and the discovery of new sources, between the Declaration of Independence and the start of autonomous scientific history, between the separation of powers and the teamwork of real students of history, between the blessings of liberty and the free motions of historical knowledge—and I think that this special relationship will have a great future.

Since the Berlin Wall broke asunder in 1989 and buried twentieth-century ideological Europe and its parties beneath its ruins,

76. Herbert L. Osgood, “Review of Ranke,” *Sämtliche Werke*, vols. 53–54. “Zur eigenen Lebensgeschichte [autobiographical sketches],” *Political Science Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (September 1891): 562.

77. On 5 December 1885, the president of the AHA, George Bancroft, wrote the following letter to Ranke: “My Venerable Master and Dear and Most Highly Honored Friend.—We have had many historical societies in our several States. We have lately founded the AHA, which is to devote itself to the affairs of the United States of America. We wish for your benediction; and for that end we ask you, and as yet, you alone, to accept the proof of your reverence by consenting to become our honorary member. We have meant to make this special homage to yourself as the greatest living historian. I add my personal request to the request of the society that you will give us this mark of your regard. We thank Heaven that you approach your ninetieth year in the enjoyment of health. May you long continue to enjoy the ever increasing proofs of the honor and affection in which you are held by your fellow-men. Ever your very affectionate and devoted scholar and friend.” *Papers of the AHA* 1, no. 6 (1886). See also Ranke’s answer, in *Papers of the AHA*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1887), 13f.; Herbert B. Adams, “Leopold von Ranke,” *Papers of the AHA*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1888), 101f.; Edward G. Bourne, “Leopold von Ranke,” in *Annual Report of the AHA for the Year 1886*, vol. 1, 67f.



The grave of Leopold von Ranke is located in the yard of the Sophien Kirche, in the center of the former East Berlin. Clarissa Graves-Perceval, Ranke's wife, and his son, Albrecht, are also buried there.

everybody can climb on the remains of illusionary metahistory, to see not only the free horizon of a reopened future again, but also the free horizon of a reopened past. The nightmare is over. When trying some first-dazzling glance in the morning light, just think of Ranke and his idea, that even in spite of totalitarian fictions somewhere there remains a free, a human, place for scientific histories, which will surrender at last. You only have to discover it and to go your way in the open—and when trying your first lonesome tottering steps, remember that Ranke only found allies because he kept on going even in the worst crisis.

It may be that some still prefer to stay within their imaginary walls, because they fear the movements of free historical research; it may also be that some still try to block other ways just to sell yesterday's illusions; it may be that some still refuse to become real stu-

dents of history, just to flee teamwork—don't worry: in between the old ruins there will be enough places for them. But for those who really want to “take up their bed and arise” just to go back to the sources; for those who really want to follow the critical motions of historical knowledge; for those who merely like to see what actually happened, history as a science has just started again. Don't forget that in the United States, at Syracuse University, in the Special Collections in E. S. Bird Library,⁷⁸ you have the base camp of modern scientific history. In 1887 you could read in *The Christian Advocate* that the von Ranke Library “is a great thing for the United States.”⁷⁹ But it is also the other way round: the United States is a great thing for the Ranke library. Professor Bennett added, in his address at the dedication of the new Von Ranke Library on 24 June 1889 in Syracuse, “We have only just begun.”⁸⁰ Let me conclude with some further words of the man who brought Ranke's library—the nucleus of Ranke's ideas—and the United States together:

I congratulate the noble and generous donors on their ability to secure this great Library and place in this community what must prove an inspiration to higher and more advanced historical study. . . . We must consider that Syracuse University . . . has had as an agent to collect its historical Library the foremost historian of the century. . . . Let [for instance] the student, who is accustomed to pass lightly over the history of the middle ages as of little account, go into this Von Ranke Library . . . and his respect for the men and the civilization of what he had been accustomed to call the “Dark Ages” will strengthen and deepen. . . . Or, once again, let him who supposes, that ancient history has been written once for all and lies before us like the fossilized forms of a far-off geologic age, spend

78. Who knows that birds were the animals Ranke loved the most?

79. *New York Christian Advocate*, 18 April 1887, “Dr. Bennett did service and honor to all American schools when he acted as the agent of liberal America.”

80. *In Memoriam Charles W. Bennett (1828–1891)* (Chicago, 1891); and George F. Comfort, “Dr. Bennett's Work on Christian Archaeology,” *Northern Christian Advocate*, 15, 22, and 29 November 1888.

a few days [in the Library. He] will rise from such examination convinced, that we have only just begun our studies.⁸¹

Exactly one hundred years later Theodore von Laue added: “Up then, historians: In honor of Leopold von Ranke, and in his spirit: give universal history a try!”⁸²

This article is dedicated to Syracuse University Professor Emeritus James M. Powell. In the 1970s Professor Powell called attention to the Ranke library as a first-class source for studying the history of historiography. With support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and other institutions (including Thyssen), Powell directed a ten-year project to restore and catalog the Ranke material and took steps to make them accessible through international bibliographic databases. Powell was also chair of an international Ranke conference, held at Syracuse in 1986, the centennial of Ranke’s death. See Powell, “The Place of the Ranke Collection at Syracuse University,” *The Courier* 15, nos. 2 and 3 (1978): 38f.; “The Confusing and Ambiguous Legacy of Leopold von Ranke,” *Syracuse Scholar* 9, no. 1 (1988); and Georg G. Iggers and J. M. Powell, eds., *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990).

81. Charles W. Bennett, “The Purchase of the von Ranke Library,” *Northern Christian* (Syracuse), 11 July 1889 (no. 2519); Bennett, “The Ranke Library in America,” in *Papers of the AHA* 3, no. 1 (1888): 131f. See also John J. Morrison, “Charles W. Bennett’s ‘The Purchase of the von Ranke Library,’” and “An Address by Professor C. W. Bennett, Read at the Dedication of the New Library at Syracuse University,” *The Courier* 15, nos. 2 and 3 (1978).

82. Theodore H. von Laue, review of *Ranke und die moderne Geschichtswissenschaft*, ed. Wolfgang J. Mommsen (Stuttgart, 1988), *History and Theory* 28, no. 1 (1989), 78f.