# PETER LASKO

Peter Erik Lasko

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elected Fellow of the British Academy 1978

by

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*Summary.* Peter Lasko was an art historian whose interests ranged from the 'luxury' arts of the Middle Ages to German Expressionism. He was the first Professor of Visual Art at the University of East Anglia; and as Director, he found a new home for the Courtauld Institute at Somerset House.

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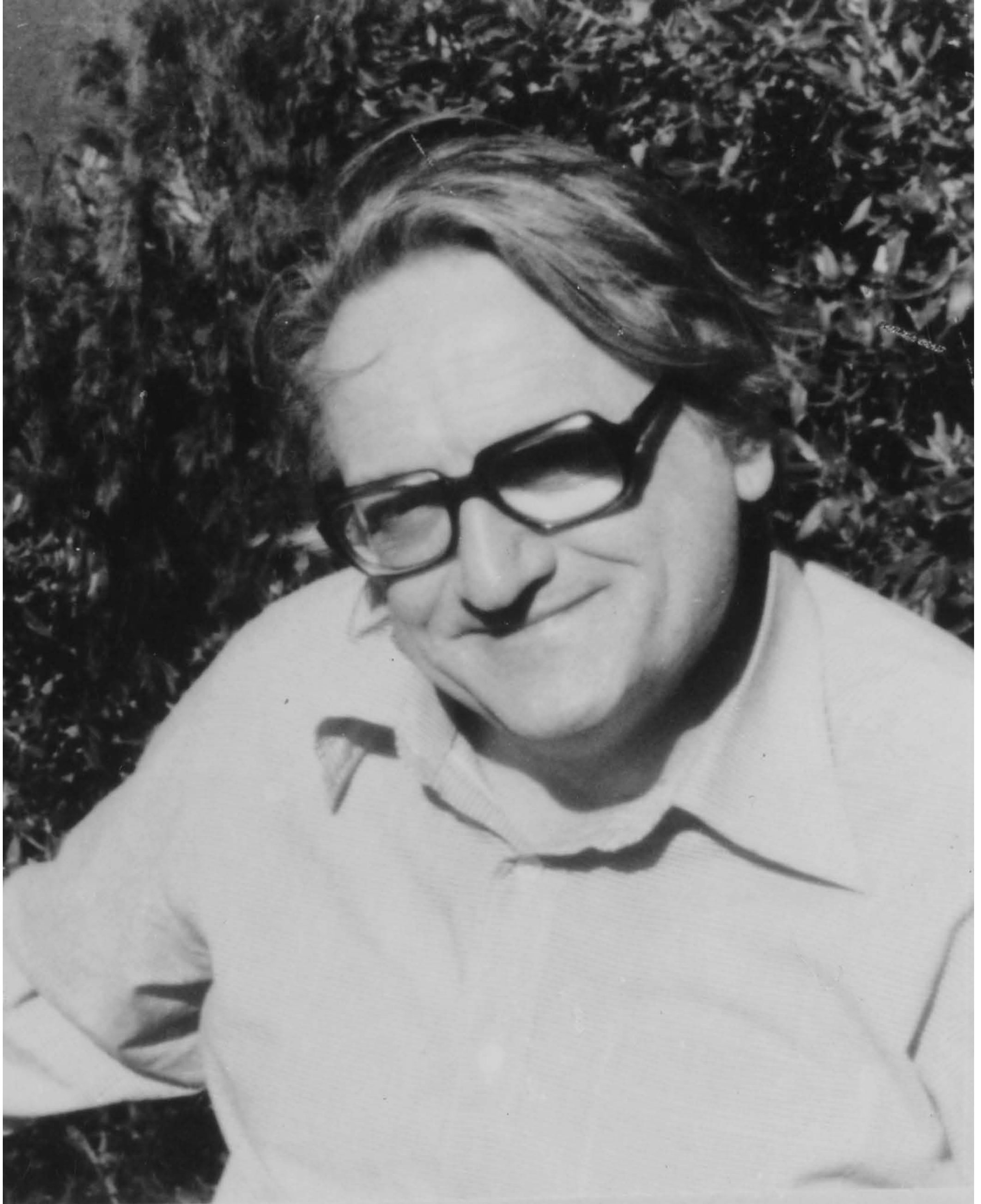

Peter Lasko arrived in England with his mother and sister in 1937, from Berlin. They followed in the footsteps of his father, Leo, who had arrived the previous year. Peter was 13 and already blind in one eye as a result of a youthful accident in Paris where the family had lived briefly, from 1933. The return to Berlin was said to be occasioned by Leo's distrust of French surgeons – but the treatment Peter's eye received in Germany was to no avail and in other respects the times were inauspicious for those of Jewish heritage in Germany, especially if they espoused the kinds of Modernism that were out of favour with the Nazis. In 1933, Hitler had declared Modern art to be *entartete,* part of a left-wing conspiracy. Leo was a film maker, he and his wife moved in those bohemian and 'degenerate' circles. His parents' lifestyle occasionally left Peter (their youngest child) to his own devices, reportedly getting himself ready for school and meeting his parents in the street on their way back from an all-night party. Such personal reminiscences were rarely vouchsafed; Peter always looked to the future not back to the past – which complicates the job of writing a memoir. The avoidance of retrospection is perhaps an unexpected characteristic in a man whose major scholarly achievements were grounded in the history of the European 'minor arts' (metalworking, enamelling, gem setting and ivory carving, etc.) from the 6th century to the 12th. But Lasko's interests were as much in the aesthetics and techniques of manufacture as in history *per se*. And his career development was to depend as much on innovative 'vision' – entrepreneurial and progressive – as on the study of early medieval art.

As this suggests, Peter inhabited various personae but they were not mutually excluding: there is no contradiction in loving past technology and seeking to design different ways forward. He was practical – a do-it-yourself car mechanic and home improvement enthusiast – and interested in ideas and how they are conveyed. It was in conversation with him that I first *c.* 1978 heard the word 'semiotics' used in the context of thinking about how art communicates; it was not yet a commonplace among art historians. But this interest in philosophy had been of long gestation, undoubtedly nurtured when he worked at the University of East Anglia (UAE) in the mid-1960s where several schools of study had a philosopher on the faculty, though there was no School or department with the name. It was regarded as an underpinning discipline. Some 40 years later in his book on Expressionism and what abstraction might mean, he exemplified the differences between French and German modernism by giving Nietzsche and Bergson diagnostic if not explanatory agency. But by that time Lasko had been subject to many other formative experiences.

His life during the Second World War is effectively a blank – so from 15 to 21. One of his daughters thinks he might have been interned as an enemy alien near Bristol, but clearly it was not something Peter talked about. In 1946, however, he was back with his parents in London and attending Hammersmith College of Art. His upbringing and predisposition led him to think of art as his metier. But within a year he recognised – probably quite realistically – that he would never be a great painter. Apparently, though,

a picture of a clown made at the time was displayed in various of his digs, bedsits and perhaps subsequently. Whatever the disappointments of art school, Peter did meet his future wife, Lyn Norman, there. They married in 1948 and, as happens in good relationships, played as a team through all that was to come. By this stage Peter was an undergraduate studying art history, first falling under the spell of Nikolaus Pevsner at Birbeck College and apparently rapidly transferring to the Courtauld Institute of Art, whence he graduated in 1949. His mentor at the time would have been Christopher Hohler, to whose *Festschrift* in years to come Peter contributed an important paper on a (hitherto unrecognised) Late Antique ivory carving. Peter and Christopher were a supreme, almost Ealing Comedy, duo. They enjoyed what separated them as much as they enjoyed what united them. Another key figure was no doubt Tom Boase, Director of the Courtauld, also with only one functioning eye, and also with an interest in the medieval past and the 19th century. Both Hohler and Boase were historian-antiquarians who wore 'Victorian' spectacles in regarding the past, but Lasko was a Modernist, and in a sense also a Primitivist. Like Roger Fry, for example, there was a grip on what it meant to be human in an engagement with early European art (from prehistory to the Romanesque) and with the art of the indigenous peoples of Africa and the Pacific.

On the strength of his enthusiasm for the processes of making, his facility in German and his Courtauld Institute education, Lasko identified a vacant niche in the expertise available on early medieval art in England. Within a year of his graduation he was hired as a curator in the (then) department of British and Medieval Antiquities at the British Museum as a replacement for Thomas Kendrick, who had been appointed as the Museum's new director. The Department was small, about six people including part-timers and volunteers, so it was necessary for staff to develop a wide range of expertise. One brief that Peter took on was the collection of clocks and watches, and he set about understandings their mechanisms. Up-close scrutiny of intricate technology was much to his taste and played to his strengths. It also helped secure the Courtenay Adrian Ilbert Collection, with over 2000 objects, for the Museum.

As regards colleagues, there were people with cognate interests elsewhere in the building including those working on Asian art (such as William Watson and Ralph Pinder-Wilson) and in the Department of Manuscripts (Julian Brown and Derek Turner). Peter made close friends among the group, especially with David Wilson, later to be director. It was significant for things to come that the membership of what became an unofficial lunch club comprised historians and archaeologists, a liturgist and a palaeographer who could and did relate to and discuss each other's specialisms. The lunch club tended to favour Soho rather than Bloomsbury or Holborn – the atmosphere may have reminded Peter of his boyhood in Berlin and Paris. It was around this time that David Talbot Rice invited Peter to contribute a chapter on the Frankish Kingdom to a book on the Dark Ages, published in 1965. The chapter subsequently appeared as a book, and in

the Introduction Lasko stressed the need for an interdisciplinary approach calling it a study 'of the scanty literary remains [and] of archaeology, art history, numismatics and … of place-names and linguistics'. This was a product of his formation in the scholarship of the Museum.

But Peter also had other interests. In 1953 he journeyed to the north German coast, to resorts visited and painted by the German Expressionists. This interest was to bear fruit fifty years later in his book *The Expressionist Roots of Modernism*, which may already have been in gestation. As travelling through Europe became somewhat easier, Peter also visited the major church treasuries and museum collections of 'sacred art' on the Continent. He was often accompanied by close friends, such as George Zarnecki and Reg Dodwell. By *c.* 1960 this trio had been asked by Pevsner, as commissioning editor, to write volumes for the Pelican History of Art. Originally envisaged as a single volume, to be authored by Hanns Swarzenski (still being trailed in 1955), three separate books, on painting, sculpture and the luxury arts, were now allocated to them. As well as officer commanding *Ars Sacra*, Peter was the chauffeur and mechanic who got the trio from place to place in order to visit the key monuments of European art and architecture of the period 800-1200. On one research trip, to Catalonia, Lasko and Zarnecki were due to be joined by their wives, who were travelling by train. The rendezvous was at Port Bou on the Franco-Spanish border. There was no signposted route to the station but, knowing roughly the direction, they took a left turn down a street that got progressively narrow so that the car was in danger of getting stuck. At the end was a flight of steps which indeed led down to the station. After a moment's reflection, and to the consternation of the locals and his passenger, Peter engaged forward gear and drove on. The decision was symptomatic of his attitude to life in general.

Lasko, Zarnecki and Dodwell were close friends with common interests and complementary expertise. Long before his own book in the series, *Painting in Europe, 800-1200*, was finished (1971), Dodwell was thanking Lasko in the acknowledgements of his edition and translation of *De diversis artibus* – the early 12th-century treatise (by 'Theophilus') on manufacturing techniques in painting, metalwork and glass. Peter was asked to check that Dodwell's English rendition of the Latin made practical sense of the making processes. In time, the trio became competitors too, working in different universities. Even in those days recruiting students mattered and so did acquiring status in the subject, but the friendships endured. Dodwell claimed that Manchester was the second most prestigious art history department in England. Lasko joked that this must mean the Courtauld was now third.

While at the British Museum, Lasko inevitably dealt on a regular basis with scholars, academics and curators from Europe and America studying aspects of the collections, as well as with dealers. Among Peter's major acquisitions were a walrus ivory tusk, probably used as a reliquary, carved with foliate scrollwork similar to that on the Lewis

chessmen (so, arguably Scandinavian), and an English portable altar carved from whalebone – both of them mid-12th century. The great prize that escaped him was the 'Cloisters' Cross. Carved from walrus ivory with some 80 figures and about as many inscriptions, it is arguably the most important piece of medieval art to appear on the market since the end of the Second World War. The success of Thomas Hoving and others at the Metropolitan Museum in New York in acquiring it was dependent on superior purchasing power and a less scrupulous attitude to provenance. The latter issue (the possibility that object was war loot) was fundamentally what prevented Parliament from granting the money for the British Museum to acquire it.

By this time, 1963, Peter had been at the Museum for some fourteen years and he was getting restive. The departure of David Wilson for University College, London, in 1964 may have prompted Peter to think of a move to academe. He had some teaching experience, lecturing for the Workers' Education Association and standing in for Pevsner at Birkbeck when the latter went on sabbatical leave. The times were propitious as the new universities were beginning to make appointments and several were establishing art history departments. The visual arts were increasingly recognised as worthy of study, more than 'just a sideshow in history' as Andrew Martindale was to put it. One was the University of East Anglia (UEA), just outside Norwich. The founding Vice-Chancellor, Frank Thistlethwaite, was a very competent musician and his wife, Jane, an art historian, and so a School of Fine Arts and Music was part of the vision. Benjamin Britten and Anthony Blunt were asked to help identify potential founding professors. In the event, Philip Ledger and Peter Lasko were selected. The choice of Lasko is initially surprising as Blunt regarded an interest in the Middle Ages as something akin to a mental affliction. No doubt Peter impressed Thistlethwaite with his energy and enthusiasm, but it is not far-fetched to identify George Zarnecki's influence at work behind the scenes. Blunt raised Zarnecki to the deputy directorship of the Courtauld and, despite some differences in outlook, they worked together closely and effectively in promoting art history across Britain.

Peter and Lyn moved to Norwich with their daughters in 1965. The first thing Peter needed was a lieutenant and he found the perfect man in Andrew Martindale. The department they built between them was remarkable for the quality and character of its teaching staff and their commitment to research. All first-year art history students had to study German, the seminal language of *Kunstwissenschaft*. At UEA Peter fell in with other founding professors, some of whom became close friends – James McFarlane in Scandinavian Literature, Malcolm Bradbury beginning to establish creative writing as a university subject, the librarian Willi Guttsman and other fellow spirits. It was in conversations with his compeers in the sciences, when every School had just a handful of faculty members, that a proposal was developed for a School of the History of Arts and Sciences. It would have chimed with Peter's inclinations to abolish the barrier between

C.P. Snow's 'two cultures', but the Vice-Chancellor would have none of it. This became a cause of disaffection that no doubt contributed to Lasko's readiness to leave UEA when the directorship of the Courtauld Institute fell vacant on Anthony Blunt's retirement in 1974. But he took some enduring legacies with him. One was the supporting of Norwich City football club – a coterie of art historians regularly attended matches at Carrow Road. What he did not take was a piece of driftwood fished out of the River Yare on the UEA campus. He kept it in his office, declaring to visitors that it was the only surviving Carolingian plough shaft and had been loaned to the Charlemagne exhibition in Aachen.

His principal scholarly activity at this time was the completion of *Ars Sacra*, delivered to Pevsner as series editor in 1968. Its content is largely concerned with artwork made of precious metals, gemstones and ivory – in other words the 'luxury' arts, almost always and for obvious reasons on a small scale. From the outset Lasko challenged the notion that these are 'minor'. Quite apart from the technical expertise involved in their making, the objects he discusses are often aesthetically ambitious, and demonstrate sculptural understanding beyond anything carved at the time from wood or stone. It is hardly surprising that only the best artists were entrusted with such expensive materials. Only the very wealthiest could afford them, and so for the first two sections of the book the subject is organised largely according to the reigns of kings and emperors; this was a command economy. This decision served to privilege north-western Europe at the expense of Italy and Spain, which received only scant attention. This changed in the third section entitled 'Romanesque' which is organised around countries, regions and (even) named artists, four of them, working primarily either in the valley of the River Meuse, in Cologne or Saxony. This terrain indeed sits at the heart of the whole book, but there is a shift of emphasis away from patrons to the agency and careers of makers who were sought out for commissions across different polities. The best-known was Nicholas of Verdun, but following in the footsteps of Godefroid de Claire (although he doesn't get a chapter of his own). Enamelling was increasingly practised on gilt copper, not pure gold. The scale could be increased accordingly. Inevitably this meant that the materials came to matter less than the 'art'. Partially as a result, the age of the great artist was dawning and with it the internationalisation of style that came to be typified as 'Gothic' in its various manifestations and media. Much of this is implicit rather than explicit in Lasko's text. While interested in social change and changes of status, his aim was to foreground style, and while he acknowledged it was a limited perspective on the subject, he believed someone should do it. And when all said and done, his commissioning editor was a formalist, Nikolaus Pevsner, to whom 'I owe a great debt of gratitude … my first teacher'.

Among Peter's achievements at UEA were the creation of one art collection and the acquisition of another of rather different character. The first, begun in collaboration with Alastair Grieve (his next departmental appointment alongside Eric Fernie), was the University Collection, bought with Senate's permission from internal funds. Senators

clearly thought this university (with its Denys Lasdun architecture) should have its own art collection. Its tenor was to be Modernist, abstract and quasi-utilitarian (plywood chairs, for example). It was to be international in scope, tracing the story back from the 1970s fashions for multiples, kinetic and geometric art to their early 20th-century origins. The other coup with which Peter is associated was the acquisition of the collection of Robert and Lisa Sainsbury and the creation of the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts. This was and is, and can still be seen as, an eclectic mix of largely figurative art from across the millennia and across continents. The point for Peter (as for the Sainsburys) would have been that it demonstrated the global ubiquity of art-making as a human activity, and exhibited levels of aesthetic sensibility and technical skill essential to the functioning of the objects. Another attraction was that the spread of the collection seemed to instantiate a Modernist desire to stay connected with the Primitive. Peter's formation in and love of German Expressionism could be crucial here, though I never heard him express it in those terms. Whatever the case, UEA ended up with an amazing building designed for the Sainsburys by Norman Foster, in which generations of students could interrogate the relationship between manufacturing processes, social function and world view. But these developments were to be left behind when Peter moved to London in 1975 with a more daunting agenda to realise.

There were two internal and two external candidates for the directorship of the Courtauld, all with outstanding, though very different, credentials. John White had held the fort at UCL and was a great force in the subject. Alan Bowness did not have that sort of academic clout and graciously and appropriately moved soon after to directorship of the Tate. John Shearman was briefly deputy director but then left for the United States. Given the manifold talents of these men, Peter's success has been attributed to his entrepreneurial track record, but *Ars Sacra* had recently been published to enhance his scholarly profile. Another factor was almost certainly his belief in the student (especially undergraduate) experience as interdisciplinary not monodisciplinary. At Home House, where the Courtauld had long been stationed, there were very limited opportunities for students to broaden their intellectual and social horizons. Several of those on the staff felt that students should be and feel part of a larger community than was possible at 20 Portman Square. Its location behind Selfridges was a mile or so from the nearest outliers of London University, and the lease on the building was coming up for renewal in 1981. But alongside the supporters of the Institute becoming a proximate and integral part of the University, there was a coterie of splendid isolationists who wished to keep their distance. The assumption of the joiners was that the destination would be Bloomsbury, with adjacency to the Warburg Institute, the Courtauld Galleries and University College. For reasons partly of planning permission denied, it was not to be. So, in a typically entrepreneurial sideways move, Lasko discussed the possibility of a lease on part of Somerset House, adjacent to King's College. An advantage was that

King's had no (potentially competitive) art history department, whereas UCL did have a distinguished one, and turf wars (even amalgamation) might be envisaged. And would a move to Bloomsbury affect the relationship between the Warburg and the Courtauld? Postgraduates only in the former with the latter as a mere feeder school? It would not have been to Peter's taste. It did not help that Ernst Gombrich was 'snobbish' about Peter's lack of a classical education. There was a potential stand-off about which much more could be said, but at base there was a fundamental difference of ethos. This was captured in a conversation between a Warburg research student and a senior member of Courtauld staff who asked him 'what do they think of us over there?'

Peter's time at the Courtauld was not easy. Not only did some colleagues not want to leave Portman Square but they had no particular loyalty to their new director; he had not appointed them, he was not 'the boss', as Blunt was characterised by John Shearman. Furthermore, Lasko was moving from a new university (not establishment), with many active young academics, to an Institute where some faculty were set in their ways. There was little cutting-edge research. Peter's attempts to 'ginger up' his new colleagues occasioned some resentment. His efforts thus failed to enlist the general support he wanted from the staff. Among backbiters he was known, *inter alia*, as 'Captain Pugwash' and 'One-eyed Pete'. But Lasko soldiered on. Following the collapse of the Bloomsbury option, a move to Somerset House offered attractive benefits. The Royal Academy had been based there and some of the exhibition spaces were intact. The Courtauld, Lee, and Gambier-Parry collections could, at last, be located adjacent to the student body in this – appropriate enough – setting. As a location, it was a good deal grander and more historic than the Adam town-house domesticity of Portman Square. A problem, however, was expense. The landlord had to be paid and there would be eye-watering conversion costs. The immediate effect was not good for Peter's health, nor as it turned out for the Institute's finances. Nonetheless, the deal was clinched. But in 1985 Peter stepped down from the directorship, his detractors claiming he was sacked by the Courtauld Trustees for mismanagement! I know of no suggestions of impropriety on his part, only of a Wilkins Micawber like optimism that something was sure to turn up. Without Peter at the helm, the move to Somerset House was eventually seen through by his successor, Michael Kauffmann, a friend and fellow medievalist.

During this difficult period, not surprisingly, Peter had achieved little as regards research or writing. And he took on other roles, for example becoming President of the British Archaeological Association in 1977, and accepting David Wilson's invitation to serve as a trustee of the British Museum. In this latter role he encouraged and advised the Department of Prints and Drawings on the acquisition of works of 20th-century German art. He became general editor of the Pelican History of Art as it transferred from Penguin Books to Yale University Press and was transformed in format and given integrated colour illustrations. In quasi-retirement Peter took on another task: chairing the committee

of the Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland (CRSBI). Once again in Peter's career, the power behind the throne was George Zarnecki. The subject was his, not Peter's, but Zarnecki wanted to speak from the ranks not to lead, expressing the view that corporals were the bedrock of an army, not generals. However, the inclusion of Ireland (and the Royal Irish Academy) speaks clearly of George's agenda. He was deeply conscious of the 'Celtic' in the history of the art of the period. It was Zarnecki who persuaded the British Academy to adopt the Romanesque Corpus, on the basis, no doubt, that it was the logical continuation of Rosemary Cramp's Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, already well underway as a research and publishing venture under the aegis of the Academy. The task was, however, huge. The number of sites was potentially ten times larger than Cramp's Corpus which was itself starting to be published in multiple volumes. Peter took another tack. At an early CRSBI committee he announced that the aim was not for paper, but digital communications. The technology was coming, he assured us, that would make print media a thing of the past – the future was elsewhere, especially for a project on this scale, with thousands of entries and accompanying images. He was not wrong – even though when he said it most of the committee, including me, did not understand how this could be. This was 1988: the technology was not yet there to support such a venture. The delivery of CRSBI would depend on a level of computing power yet to be created but already envisaged. At the meeting when this was proposed, Zarnecki was visibly uneasy – perhaps they had not discussed it. Why wait for new technology to catch up, go for the tried and tested outputs? But as is still true, print text is definitive and, unfortunately, limited in its potential. Peter wanted something more manipulable, more facilitating and adaptable than a definitive product: a resource that could accommodate revision, dissent and new data. The decision has proved to be wise. But there were battles yet to be fought and won. This was still the age of analogue photography; negative and positive photographs were the archival gold standard. In sheer technician terms this had to be abandoned as wasteful and unnecessary. When I took over from Peter as chair of the Corpus, my view was that a digital image, even in colour (anathema to some who studied historic sculpture), would be as good as or better than a grainy black and white photo.

Peter's final contribution to the history of art was his book on Expressionism and Modernism. His interest in the material went back to his student days, at least. But his research was renewed in the 1990s and resulted in 1997 in a major article in the journal *Art History* on the educational background of the four founding members of the group *Die Brücke*. It explored in detail their studies at the Technical Highschool in Dresden, in drawing, art history and the technical aspects of architecture as well as discussing the contribution some of their teachers made to their thinking. The subsequent book, *The Expressionist Roots of Modernism*, published posthumously in 2003, is a *crie de coeur* on behalf of thinking artists, combining their manifesto statements with extracts from their

letters and quotes from the publications they could have read (and in some cases obviously did) and the art they saw face to face or in reproduction. What it shows to a dispassionate observer (such as a historian of art should be) is that what artists do and what they say cannot always easily be reconciled. As regards understanding ‘art’, Lasko is dismissive of the idea propounded by Panofsky and others that representational art ‘means’ by virtue of turning words into images. In *The Gothic Image* (first published in French in 1899) Emile Mâle had asserted in terms that ‘The art of the Middle Ages is first and foremost sacred writing of which every artist must learn the characters’. The idea of pictures as text indeed had medieval art largely on its side and is justified by Pope Gregory the Great’s dictum that art was ‘books for the illiterate’. But as an ‘expressionist’ at heart Peter knew that there was far more to the meaning of an image than its literal subject matter. Composition, colour, the handling of paint or pencil was what effected the reception and meaning of one picture of the Crucifixion as against another. And if that was true for imagery with a textual basis, how much truer might it be for a still-life, a landscape or a nude. Furthermore, words in manifestos, magazine articles or correspondence are in broad terms political or entrepreneurial. They do not suffice to explain everything that artists or their supporters thought they were doing, perhaps especially when that comprehended the expression of *Geist*, which ‘involves both the intellect and feeling, as well as “Spirit”.’

As noted above, Lasko’s research into German Expressionism was of long standing. Two of the illustrations in the book are photographs he took in 1953 of ‘landscapes’ which had been the subject of paintings by Erich Heckel in 1909 and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner in 1913. The point of the exercise was to show the extent to which Kirchner’s picture ‘assembles what he has in his mind’ of the scene rather than what can be viewed. The photographs, one taken in Dangast the other in Fehmarn, some 150 miles apart on the north German coast, were clearly part of a pilgrimage to places where the artists had worked in order to investigate their compositional methods. This is Lasko as an enquirer into the mechanisms of artmaking. At the time, this direct engagement with the creative process was unusual among academic historians. And, because of an ebullience (called ‘showmanship’ by one close friend) that concealed reticence, he became a prophet without much honour in some quarters.

Much of this memoir is necessarily anecdotal but it serves to characterise the man. In the mid-1990s Peter was diagnosed with cancer and began a course of chemotherapy. He hated it and pulled out after only one session. The doctors warned that the consequences could be fatal. Peter’s reply was ‘Frankly, I’d sooner be dead.’ His determination and energy pulled him though regardless. His presence remained invigorating and his ‘can-do’ approach inspiring. In May 1999 Peter stood as the Labour candidate in the North Norfolk Council elections, in his home ward of Hoveton. It was deeply Conservative territory – there was no chance of winning, but that was not the point. Folk memory has it that he gained six votes!

Around that time, with the Expressionism book ready for publication, Peter essayed a return to the Middle Ages and the artist whose career and methods of working and thinking are perhaps the least badly preserved: the metalworker Roger of Helmarshausen. This proposition depends on the identity of Roger with the 'Theophilus' who wrote the treatise *De diversis artibus*, the edition of which Lasko had helped Dodwell with decades earlier. The text is recipe book but also a manifesto in the sense that it grounds the work of the artist in reflexive and exegetical justification. Here was the potential to create a 'Kandinsky', a philosophising creative artist, for the 12th century. But for Roger's career there was only a handful of works and a bare documentary outline. Accordingly, this would have to be a piece of creative writing, as much imagination as it was history. There is no indication that he got very far with this biographical novel, but as so often in Peter's career it was the ambition that revealed the man.

Peter was as much a facilitator as he was a scholar. He created one university department and found a new home for another, and envisaged the vast corpus of Romanesque sculpture in Britain and Ireland as a digital resource potentially available to anyone with access to the Internet, well before that was widely available technology. Quite uncannily, Peter saw the future even though his heart was deep in the quandaries of what it meant to be a successful survivor who loved both the early Middle Ages and his own artistic formation in German Modernism. It was of continuing importance to him that the English-speaking world should not write off or just ignore German achievements in art on account of hostility through two world wars. In claiming, as his last book does, that the German contribution to Modernism has been underplayed by art historians, Lasko was no doubt in his own mind seeking to rehabilitate the culture of his youth. Peter spoke of none of this to my knowledge, but everything in his work suggests the desire to think in reparative terms. He clearly embraced the opportunity to include a chapter on the Anglo-Saxons in the second edition of *Ars Sacra*: written afresh *c.* 1990 with a comment that 'the fact that Britain is part of Europe is now wholeheartedly accepted'. That England was as much beholden to the Carolingians as it was to Scandinavia is writ through his new chapter. But the fundamental point is that the English should be seen and see themselves within a shared northern European heritage.

*Note on the author:* Sandy Heslop is Emeritus Professor of Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia.

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