

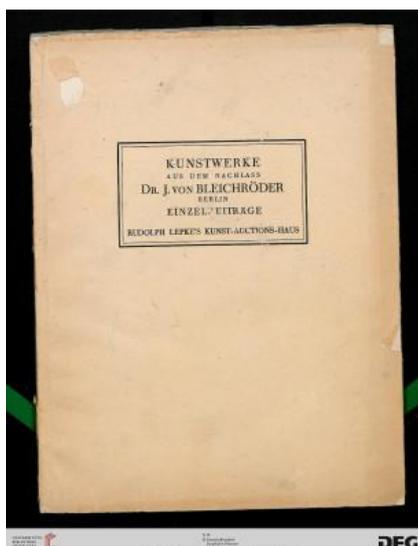


THE RESTITUTION OF *THE RAISING OF LAZARUS* TO THE HEIRS OF JAMES VON BLEICHRÖDER

HOW THE PAINTING ENDED UP IN THE COLLECTION OF THE PINAKOTHEK

The painting originally formed part of the collection of James von Bleichröder, and after his death in 1938 it was sold through the Lepke auction house, where it was acquired by Kunsthandlung Böhler, Munich, and then sold shortly afterwards to Hermann Göring. It formed part of Hermann Göring's art collection until 1945, was then transferred to the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen in 1961 by the trusteeship, as a "transfer from state ownership".

In 2006, the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen entered the work into the [Lost Art Database](#), as the fact that it had been in Hermann Göring's possession gave good reason to suspect that the painting had been wrongfully expropriated. Despite extensive research, it was impossible to determine who had consigned the painting to Lepke, nor whether Bleichröder's heirs had received any of the proceeds of the auction. The restitution took place in 2017, on the basis of the [Washington Declaration](#) and in accordance with the federal states' recommendations regarding the implementation of the "[Common Statement](#)" on the return of cultural property seized as a result of Nazi persecution, especially Jewish property.



Auction catalogue Lepke 1938 © UB Heidelberg

Arbeitskreis
PROVENIENZforschung e.V.
#TagderProvenienzforschung

TAG DER
PROVENIENZFORSCHUNG

THE PAINTING: *THE RAISING OF LAZARUS*, CREATED BY AN UNKNOWN SWABIAN MASTER AROUND 1530–40

The painting depicts several scenes from the Gospel of John (11:1–44), which take place in the middle ground and the foreground in continuous narrative: Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, has fallen ill. In hopes that he can be healed, they send for Jesus. By the time Jesus arrives in Bethany with his disciples, Lazarus has already died. Mary (Magdalene) prostrates herself before Christ and reproaches him. Stricken with sorrow, Christ makes the grave open, and by crying “come forth”, restores Lazarus to life.



The Raising of Lazarus, South German Master, around 1530–1540 Coniferous wood (Abies alba), 107 x 160.2 cm. From the estate of James von Bleichröder (1859–1937), Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Staatsgalerie in Johannisburg Palace, Aschaffenburg, inventory no. 13269, photo: Bavarian State Painting Collections, Sibylle Forster

PROVENANCE

n.d., prior to 1906, whereabouts unknown

n.d., from 1906 at the latest, H. Hildebrandt of Mannheim

1931–1937, James von Bleichröder, Berlin

31 May 1938, auction house of Rudolph Lepke, Berlin; auction from the estate of Bleichröder, Berlin, cat. 2123, ill. 155, plate 33

1938, Kunsthandlung Julius Böhler, Munich, acquired from Lepke

14 October 1938–1945, Hermann Göring, acquired from Böhler

1945–1961, Central Collecting Point Munich, CCP no. 5688, confiscated from the collection of Hermann Göring

1961, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, transferred by the trusteeship

2017, restitution to the community of heirs of Bleichröder, Munich and San Diego

2017, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, acquired from the community of heirs of Dr James Bleichröder by the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen



Arbeitskreis
PROVENIENZforschung e.V.
#TagderProvenienzforschung

TAG DER
PROVENIENZFORSCHUNG

THE FATE OF THE BLEICHRÖDER FAMILY



Dr James von Bleichröder in his apartment in Berlin with his wife Harriet and singing teacher Mathilde de Castrone-Marchesi (in the middle), 1908; photo: R. Siegert

Dr James von Bleichröder (14 October 1859, Berlin–28 April 1937, Berlin), a Royal Prussian *Rittmeister* of the *Landwehr* and doctor of law, was a shareholder in the S. Bleichröder Bank in Berlin. An enthusiastic racing driver, he was a patron of motor racing. Along with valuable antiques, he possessed almost 200 paintings by artists such as Mihály von Munkácsy, Adolph Menzel, Max Liebermann, Antoine Pesne and David Teniers. When he died in 1937 of natural causes, Berlin was already in the grip of the Nazis and the exploitation and persecution of its Jewish citizens in full swing. The boycott of Jewish businesses and structural “Aryanisation” led to the gradual liquidation of the Bleichröder Bank. In circumstances that are still somewhat unclear, the works in Bleichröder’s collection were auctioned in 1938 at the Berlin Lepke auction house as the “Estate of Dr J. von Bleichröder”; the coherence of the collection was lost forever.

James’s first marriage was to Harriet von Bleichröder (née Alexander) (1869–1946), which lasted until 1902. They had four children: Curt, Edgar, Ellie and Harriet. In 1917, James von Bleichröder remarried to Maria Soydt (who was Protestant, not Jewish). The second marriage produced a son in 1918: Wolfgang Maria von Bleichröder (1918–1984).

DEPORTATION OF BLEICHRÖDERS DAUGHTER

However, the family would lose not only their wealth and social standing, but also their lives.

Bleichröder’s daughters who remained in Berlin were hit by the full force of Nazi persecution:

Anita Wilhelmine Sammy Harriet Freifrau von Campe, née von Bleichröder, was arrested by the Gestapo on 22 July 1942 in her apartment on Kurfürstendamm and taken to the collection camp at the synagogue on Levetzowstrasse, then brought to the Moabit freight station on 15 August 1942.



TAG DER
PROVENIENZFORSCHUNG

Arbeitskreis
PROVENIENZforschung e.V.
#TagderProvenienzforschung

Along with almost 1,000 people, including 57 children under 10, she was forced to board a special train of the German Reichsbahn, which arrived at Riga-Skirotava station three days later. With the exception of one woman, everyone deported on this death train was shot in the Bikernieki forest and buried in mass graves.



Stumbling block for Harriet von Campe
Photo: Wolfgang Knoll © Bezirksamt Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf von Berlin

FURTHER FATES OF THE FAMILY

Ellie Maria Friederike Julie von Bleichröder was held prisoner in Theresienstadt from July 1942. She was liberated in May of 1945, having suffered serious injuries, and was taken to the Deggendorf reception camp. She died in Munich in 1989.

The second wife Maria von Bleichröder (died 1981) and her son Wolfgang were expelled from Hirschberg Castle near Weilheim by the SS in 1943. Classified as “half-Jewish” under the Nazis’ racial laws, Wolfgang von Bleichröder was put in a forced labour camp, from which he was able to escape by giving himself jaundice. He died in San Diego in 1987. The two sons from Bleichröder’s first marriage, Curt and Edgar von Bleichröder, managed to emigrate to Switzerland in 1942, allowing them to survive the Holocaust.

Apart from Hitler, Hermann Göring, High Commander of the Air Force from 1935, was the Nazi Party’s biggest art collector, and amassed countless artworks through the 1930s and early 1940s, most of them stolen Jewish property. At Carinhall, his country residence in Schorfheide near Berlin, the pictures were hung in rows of three or four.

The General Field Marshal’s collection focused on old German painting [Lazarus] and the Renaissance, with a predilection for female nudes. Today, researchers regard provenance from the “Sammlung Göring” as a prime indicator that a work of art may have been looted [[link to Lost Art Meldungen aus dem Bestand Göring](#)].