Johan Huizinga and Max Dvořák on images

A shared interest in medieval images in and around 1919

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Huizinga's contribution to the understanding of late medieval artistic cultures can be productively compared with the treatise Idealismus und Naturalismus in der gotischen Skulptur und Malerei, published in 1918 by the famous Viennese art historian Max Dvořák. My paper will focus on the polarity between naturalism/realism vs. idealism/symbolism clearly present in both texts. My comparison will focus on the following questions: 1. What was the exact meaning of the concepts? 2. How had they been rooted in various philosophical traditions? 3. How do they appear in the light of recent criticism?
Johan Huizinga (Dutch pronunciation: [ˈjoːɦən ˈɦœy̯zɪŋaː]; Groningen, December 7, 1872 – De Steeg, February 1, 1945) was a Dutch historian and one of the founders of modern cultural history. Born in Groningen as the son of Dirck Huizinga, a professor of physiology, and Jacoba Tonkens, who died two years after his birth, he started out as a student of Indo-European languages, earning his degree in 1895. He then studied comparative linguistics, gaining a good command of Sanskrit. He wrote his doctoral thesis on the role of the jester in Johan Huizinga. Succeeding his predecessor, Jacob Burckhardt of the nineteenth century, Huizinga approached history not only from a political perspective, but from a cultural one. The Autumn of the Middle Ages (1919), a masterpiece of cultural history which fused images and concepts, literature and history, and religion and philosophy, established Huizinga as the major cultural historian of the twentieth century, comparable with Burckhardt. Later in his life, Huizinga published Home Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture (1938).