

# Alexander Conze, 'Greek Relief Sculpture'

translated and edited by Karl Johns

## **Editor's introduction: *Alexander Conze: The Bureaucrat and Art-Historiography***

Like a number of his colleagues, Alexander Conze (Hanover December 10, 1831-Berlin July 19, 1914), came to classical archaeology after first studying law. His interests and gifts seem to have tended more toward curatorial and administrative work rather than lecturing, and he will be primarily remembered for his part in bringing the Pergamon Altar to the Berlin museums. It may therefore seem ironic that he nevertheless had a great influence as a teacher and probably the greatest influence in another field, which was only later to be defined and brought to fruition in academia by his students as 'the history of art.'

For the purposes of art historiography it is therefore significant that after nearly ten years at Halle as *Extraordinarius*, he was called to the University of Vienna as *Ordinarius*, taught from 1869 to 1877, where Franz Wickhoff, Alois Riegl, Emanuel Löwy and Julius Schlosser, among others, were influenced by his teachings. In the lectures given by Conze to the Prussian academy later in his career, it is not difficult to recognize a similarity to Schlosser in the binocular attraction of more abstract questions on the one hand and the aesthetic appeal of the individual object on the other. Conze also anticipated and presumably inspired the later studies made by Ernst Garger on the ground in relief sculpture and the historical place of the Monument of the Julii.

Conze's theoretical bent towards the origins and early developments of art must have been a primary feature of his lectures in Vienna. There was also an idealistic and bureaucratic aspect to his approach. At the time he was preparing his comprehensive edition of Attic stelae, whilst also inaugurating institutions and serving to sponsor further collective projects. It was during his years in Vienna that he set out on the excavation of Samothrace with two campaigns. Here and later at Pergamon, the ambition was to excavate all parts of a Greek city – something continued by the Austrian excavation of Ephesus. At the university in Vienna he co-founded the Archäologisch-Epigraphisches Seminar with Otto Hirschfeld in 1873 and was instrumental in publishing the *Archäologisch-epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Österreich-Ungarn* (continued by the *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes in Wien*). He was succeeded more briefly in this by Hirschfeld and then Eugen Bormann who also hosted the informal meetings of the 'Wiener Eranos' attended by Wickhoff and Riegl as well as publishing the *Eranos Vindobonensis* from

1893 onwards.<sup>1</sup> These meetings became a centre for the definition of objectivity in this and related disciplines. They were also informal and popular and inspired the relative flexibility which later attracted other students with different interests such as Fritz Saxl.<sup>2</sup>

When Conze returned to Berlin in 1877 to become director of the collection of antiquities in the Berlin museums, he became involved with the excavation of the monuments from Pergamon and was instrumental in their installation. They were something of a centrepiece for the Berlin museums and certainly felt to compare with the Elgin Marbles which had inspired him during his travels undertaken after the completion of his studies. At this moment in German political history, soon after the unification of the realm, the curatorial work of the museums was being done in conscious comparison with other national showpieces of various origins, primarily London and Paris, but also Vienna, St. Petersburg and others. The Berlin museums persisted as a centre for scholarship in a way that had not appeared self-evident elsewhere. While ancient Rome had a more natural symbolic resonance for the political undercurrents of the time, Conze stands out for his particular interest in Greece and might to his colleagues have recalled J. J. Winckelmann.

In 1887 Conze became secretary of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, but also had a hand in founding the Römisch-Germanische Kommission which further reflects his interests in prehistory, with the local traditions and to some degree national flavour. In a time when scholarly fields were narrowly defined and distinguished from one another, he was able to maintain a broader view and include questions transcending the pervasive pedantry – as we can see in a number of his other lectures.<sup>3</sup> He pioneered the study of the Geometric Style, repudiated Gottfried Semper, illuminated the Mycenaean and Minoan art that would later cause trouble to the theories of Riegl, and placed the role of plant ornament into a more critical perspective. A good overview of his publications and range of interests is available in the (incomplete) list in the catalogue of the library in the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On Conze, Hirschfeld, Benndorf, Bormann and the faculty active in the Archäologisch-Epigraphisches Seminar der Universität Wien, see Harald Wolf, 'Emanuel Löwy Leben und Werk eines vergessenen Pioniers', Friedrich Brein, ed., *Emanuel Löwy Ein vergessener Pionier*, Kataloge der archäologischen Sammlung der Universität Wien Sonderheft 1, Vienna: Club der Universität 1998, pp. 15-62, esp. pp. 48-51, notes 20, 23, 25, 29 et passim.

<sup>2</sup> Certain further details about Wickhoff and his pupils can be found in Karl Johns, 'Franz Wickhoff et ses élèves ou l'histoire de l'art au service de l'objectivité', *Austriaca Cahiers universitaires d'information sur l'Autriche* no. 72, juin 2011 *L'école viennoise d'histoire de l'art* ed., Céline Trautmann-Waller, pp. 117-149.

<sup>3</sup> Such as Alexander Conze, 'Über den Gesichtsausdruck in der Antike', *Preußische Jahrbücher*, vol. 33, pp. 29-42, or 'Über die Darstellung des menschlichen Auges in der antiken Skulptur', *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1892, 7, 12 pp.

<sup>4</sup> [http://alephdai.ub.hu-berlin.de/F/AVS55D7HQ3631YU8SMDRAGKXBLVVLXK3S7PL27L9LFEQAB4GJM-00023?func=find-b&request=conze&find\\_code=WRD&local\\_base=DAI01&x=29&y=9](http://alephdai.ub.hu-berlin.de/F/AVS55D7HQ3631YU8SMDRAGKXBLVVLXK3S7PL27L9LFEQAB4GJM-00023?func=find-b&request=conze&find_code=WRD&local_base=DAI01&x=29&y=9) (accessed 29 October 2012).

He remained an able administrator and theorist during the period when the students of Theodor Mommsen were completing the corpus of Roman inscriptions, Bormann had compiled the inscriptions from the Austrian *limes*, Karl Robert was producing the corpus of sarcophagi, and the publication of *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* set a milestone in the field. Since their territory did not include the prestigious excavations of France or Italy, and even in the more manageable field of numismatics they would probably never rival Paris or London, it might appear natural that the Prussian and Austrian scholars would look past the more famous monuments, including provincial documentation and concentrate on questions of method. It is interesting to observe the differences between Conze and Wickhoff in their approach to a synthesis in presenting provincial monuments as part of a grander span in the history of art - questions which still tend to be overlooked in more general surveys, but have always attracted the attention of some of the most gifted young students of their time.

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## Alexander Conze, 'Greek Relief Sculpture'<sup>5</sup>

Relief sculpture assumes a unique place among the forms of representation in the visual arts. It is an admitted fact that the Greeks made especially brilliant use of it. For this reason it might be worth considering the character of this genre, and devoting particular attention to how the Greeks employed it. Indeed, this is essential within the study of the ancient art in which it played such a significant part. Without going out of my way to do so, I have already been led to these observations on two separate occasions. The first was when I began collecting the Greek tomb sculpture for the Academy of Sciences in Vienna (and after ten years am unfortunately still not finished), but then also when the greatest discovery during the excavations led by Carl Humann in Pergamon unearthed the most powerful relief carving known to us, and placed it in my charge at the museums in Berlin. Aside from the largest section with the Gigantomachy, this also included the fragments of the smaller frieze of the Pergamon Altar – a most fascinating artefact for all those with an interest in these questions. Last year, the continuing excavations under the direction of Humann have brought forth another series of reliefs with images of weapons from the parapets of the colonnade. The surviving record of tomb sculpture documents the entire development of Greek art from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC to the first centuries AD. Yet there is a remarkable gap in the 5<sup>th</sup> century when Greek relief sculpture was acknowledged as the greatest genre of art. This is filled by the sufficiently familiar Parthenon frieze, while the greatest number of monuments date from the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the three Pergamon reliefs were made in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. A geographical as well as temporal link between these and the plentiful Greek reliefs of the Roman period seems to present itself in the four 'paintings in marble' as we might call them on the monument of the Julii in southern France at St. Remy. Friedrich Ritschl had called attention to them shortly after Heinrich Brunn, and I myself then also saw these in the original in 1866, and purchased rare photographs which I was able to use until finding plaster casts in the museum of St. Germain. Besides the carved Greek tombstones and the Pergamon sculpture, I would like to mention this personal confrontation with the reliefs in St. Remy as the third impulse leading me toward a more comprehensive consideration of Greek relief carving. Having seen these has saved me from several of the mistakes that haunt our secondary literature.

If I turn to the subject of Greek relief carving, then nothing can be more remote from my intentions than to make any ultimate statement. This might become

<sup>5</sup> Originally published as 'Über das Relief bei den Griechen', *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Gesamtsitzung vom 25. Mai, 1882*, no. 26, pp. 1-15 (pp. 563-577). The original illustrations are available: <http://books.google.com/books?id=44MOAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA6-IA1&dq=conze+uber+das+relief+bei+den+griechen+sitzungsberichte>, accessed 2 November 2012.

possible at a later date, perhaps by one of those better familiar with the material than I. This demand has already been expressed earlier. Heinrich Brunn, in his *Geschichte der griechischen Künstler*, Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert of 1857 (vol. 1, p. 587), had stated that 'we still lack a history of Greek relief carving', referring not merely to an exhaustive history which will surely be written someday, but he misses even 'a clear and decisive account of the most basic questions surrounding this genre of art.' We might today at least attempt to properly pose the relevant questions.

Since we have recently been benefitting from an increasing amount of solid and fundamental information which has been emerging along with increasingly great and clear observations, it seems to me not even necessary to state any new claims, but instead to simply clarify what is already in the air. Any of those today who read the study 'Über das Basrelief', with which Ernst Heinrich Tölken was granted his Habilitation at the University of Berlin in 1815, will immediately see how greatly the main points have changed since then.

In defining relief sculpture, Tölken (p. 3) takes it for granted that one point is a lack of colour. This immediately reminds us of how differently we see things today, and those who work close to the excavations will attest to the contrary that the relief sculpture was normally painted and that this was also presumably true of reliefs on which no traces of paint have survived. I would refer to [Stephanos A.] Kumanudis, in particular, who found many painted reliefs during his work collecting inscriptions.

Tölken then sets out to define the rules of relief sculpture (p. 6) and expressly denies that the material techniques of carving had any effect (which in section 5 leads to a completely mistaken conception of the essential character of the relief as similar to hieroglyphs), then this is contradicted by Richard Schöne who states in his work on Greek reliefs [*Griechische Reliefs aus athenischen Sammlungen*, Leipzig, Breitkopf und Härtel, 1872] p. 22 that the technical aspect was decisive in Attic votive reliefs, and that this group is not an isolated phenomenon. Schöne defines the stone plate as the beginning material, with the figures designed onto it, with their contours carved with a chisel and the ground further hollowed out as required. When Tölken states that each figure must be worked individually against the ground, he is thinking of modern relief sculpture where the figures are prepared first in clay on slate or on a board, the ground being whatever is at hand, while in antiquity, the upper surface of the original stone provides the point of departure. When Tölken asserts a rule that the limbs of a figure must follow the surface and should project outwardly, he seems to be stating a directive that has remained current to the present day, but would only have been a natural limitation to the ancient Greeks. We might be quite surprised at how very simple the vaunted secret of Greek relief sculpture turns out to be. Considering the technical limitations, it is no secret at all, but varies according to the quality of the stone, types of stone and then those of metals each requiring special techniques unto themselves.

Tölken was writing when there was a reaction against the Neo-Classical style [Stil der sogenannten Zopfzeit]. At such a moment when relief sculpture was

conceived of as an art of drawing onto stone or metal and even trees and landscapes appeared odd, it seems natural that he would repudiate the painterly treatment of relief sculpture, and when in part 10 he is forced to admit that it nonetheless also existed in antiquity, he declares those examples to have been mistakes made when a painting was occasionally being copied. In a solid study, Theodor Schreiber, (Ludovisische Antiken I, *Archäologische Zeitung*, vol. 38, 1880, pp. 145-158, especially pp. 155 ff.) has correctly noted that ancient relief sculpture developed a painterly differentiation of numerous simultaneous levels of ground and that painterly reliefs were by no means universally copied from paintings, and Johannes A. Overbeck was able to profit from this insight in the new edition of his history of Greek sculpture. This particular point, recognizing a painterly trend of relief sculpture in later Greek and then Roman art, has been a comparatively recent advance beyond the views of Tölken. Since the monument at St. Remy was then largely unknown, and Pergamon had not yet been excavated, a preconception solidified against what might be called the richest development within Greek relief sculpture was increasingly decried as a fault of the Romans – as expressed by Adolf Philippi, in his publication about Roman triumphal reliefs and their role in the history of art, [*Über die römischen Triumphalreliefe und ihre Stellung in der Kunstgeschichte*], *Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Klasse der Königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, 6, 3] Leipzig: Hirzel 1872.

I have emphasized three main points where there has been a striking advance in our knowledge of the character of Greek relief sculpture during this century of such an extraordinary increase in the known material. They have certainly still not become generally known, and I was reminded of this very recently. If I hope to characterize and propagate what I take to be the correct appraisal of Greek relief sculpture, I should reiterate in light of the contradictory tendency expressed by Tölken, that I see my task as an entirely historical one. My purpose is simply to demonstrate how Greek relief sculpture appeared and not to posit rules for the edification of artists or critics either today or in the future. If we honor the Greek pattern in this topic, then it is necessary to admit that so strict a rule as Tölken believed to have discovered by no means applies so well to the Greek treatment of relief as he would have it. Once the Greek relief is accepted as a model, it is liberating rather than normative and allows a subject to be treated one way or another depending on the material or the period. In this genre one can again see that Greek culture developed through all of the possible stages of evolution, so that they can all be studied but not easily imitated.

Relief art uses the surface to create movement in the surface. In the hands of the Greeks it was never such a unified genre as we conceive of it today, and not as isolated a phenomenon as we today conceive it.

I have already touched on the first point in referring to the dependence of the relief on technology. In Greek art the relief is something very distinct depending on whether it is made in stone or metal. Since metal is being primarily chased, and

stone is being cut into depth, even the simplest aspects of the process are in reverse to one another.

In a chased metal relief, the basic form is a convex round hump on the surface created by a punch, and not only do we abstract from it, but in the most primitive artefacts it indeed became the central source for ornamental motifs surviving in the original state in many examples. In this instance, movement in the surface is based from the very beginning on modelling in a high contrast.

The exact opposite occurs in stone carving. I have already alluded to the felicitous characterization of the Greek procedure given by Schöne. It consists of deepening the ground. In Egyptian relief carving it is universally described as 'a relief en creux' and treated as something unique. Yet the carved stone relief in Greek art is equally a relief 'en creux' with the simple difference that it is more differentiated.

This distinction between the metal and the stone relief can be illustrated with a particularly simple example. When the round protrusion produced by the punch for ornamental purposes in metal reliefs is viewed from above, it will appear the same as in stone, but from the side it will be round, while that which is carved in stone will be flat. We can see at the tomb in Mycenae how such an optical effect is created not by an active rounding out, but by removing material from the ground. In a nutshell, these two examples exemplify the two relief styles in Greek art.

Since we are presently interested less in pursuing the subject down to the smallest detail, but rather in establishing the proper foundations for later approaching the details, there is no reason now to dwell on the less tangible influence which other materials and techniques exert on relief work. The soft materials (such as clay or wax as used for seals) assume something of an intermediary place between the raised metal relief and the depressed stone relief when the forms can be pressed into the relief or the relief can be pressed into the forms.

In considering Greek relief sculpture, the more we speak of a Greek relief style, we refer primarily or unconsciously even exclusively to relief in stone and particularly marble relief sculpture, so that after characterizing this technique more or less as relief 'en creux', we shall limit our attention to it. Here again, it is more instructive to choose the simplest examples. This does not mean that the simplest examples necessarily reveal the earliest historical manifestation. I choose the Attic grave stele commemorating a certain Glaukias and presumably commissioned by his wife Eubule. The original was discovered in Piraeus and belongs to a private collector in Athens. Photographs have been made from a cast belonging to the royal museum (and reproduced following p. 6/568 [of the German original]). This ungainly work can form the centre of our observations. It was made in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, at a time when it is no longer possible to speak of relief sculpture as being in an early phase of its development, and all types of what we call high relief and bas relief already existed in sophisticated forms – particularly vividly in Athens, and this burgeoning activity was continually spawning new ideas beside the

traditional ones. The stele of Glaukias and Eubule and others like it provide us with an example of such a young seed flourishing beside the full blown forms of tomb sculptures such as those of Demetria and Pamphile, or Dexileos the son of Lysanias. We choose that of Glaukias because the cast is available.

The flat stone plate shows the contours of the figures scored in, and we can recognize the faint beginnings, primarily around the contours, of the scraping technique for modelling the ground for a greater optical emphasis on the figures. We are here seeing the genesis of Greek marble relief sculpture. The enhancement of the contour is nothing more than this. In fact, it is the same as that done to a figure on a bright clay surface with a brush loaded with black ink as was customary among the Greek vase painters before filling in the remainder of the ground in black. A very instructive example of this procedure can be seen in the unfinished Attic tomb relief of two Aphidnaeans discovered in the excavation of Agia Triada (Ludwig von Sybel [*Katalog der Skulpturen zu Athen Kentrikon Mouseion, Barbakeion Lykeion, Hagia Trias, Theseion, Stoa des Hadrian, Ephoria, Südabhang der Akropolis, Akropolis Mit systematischer Übersicht und epigraphischem Index*, Marburg: Elwert 1881] no. 2253). A high relief figure in the Capitoline Museum, chosen from among many other possible examples (Carl Ottfried Müller and Friedrich Wieseler, *Denkmäler der alten Kunst*, Göttingen: Dieterich, vol. 2, no. 817), includes the figure indicated by a deepened contour and modeling, and shows us how the same principle persisted from the most subtle distinction of the relief ground in the Glaukias monument to the deepest reliefs from the latest periods. This is where the principle of caricature comes about.

A next step was taken in a number of Attic reliefs from the same period as the Glaukias stele, and the entire ground is chiselled away from the surroundings of the figure out to the rectangular and often tectonically characterized border, which is then left at the same height as the figure within its contours. This is the purest form of the so-called relief 'en creux.' In other examples, the ground was carved away from the entire stone or else as far as the flat boss originally made at the tectonic surface, as on marble tomb vases. This is where the common phenomenon of relief 'en creux' then vanished. In those reliefs not intended to remain clearly discernible from a distance in bad illumination such as the Parthenon frieze (Michaelis, *op. cit.*, pp. 203 ff.) with deep straight carving of the contours, the ever deeper carving of the ground meant an increasing differentiation in the modelling of figures from the height to the depth. Since the figures were increasingly modelled more thoroughly and less of the plane of the stone remained it did survive as the highest spots of the relief form.

On the other hand, the procedure of carving away the ground did not stop with a consistent and flat surface to the rear with only two levels as in Egyptian sculpture. Instead, the Greeks had a goal of using the differential depth to generate an appearance of greater abundance with figures behind others, a disappearance of the material surface, and in a word, a more picturesque or painterly trend. In Greek

relief carving, the unevenness of the ground is not the exception as Heinrich von Brunn states, but the rule (Brunn, *Kunstlergeschichte*, op. cit., vol. 1, 587).

Before continuing onto the results of this procedure in relief technique, I would like to at least mention that the custom of placing sculpture in the round direct before a background, as became common on 5<sup>th</sup> century pediments, might have had its effect on the process of the relief figure liberating itself from the ground of the relief. A type of relief sculpture emerged in Athens during the 4<sup>th</sup> century that struck a marvellous balance between freestanding and relief sculpture, and flourished most particularly in the large scale tomb sculpture which then disappeared again after that century. It seems to have overcome the decisive influence of technological constraints, to make a mockery of all rules and including figures most notably in profile with vivid moving heads protruding beyond the tectonic frames and attaining a state comparable to sculpture in the round. These examples reveal a merger of sculptural and painterly principles unmatched anywhere else. One can assume that the pediment sculpture of Phidias must have had an influence on this type of relief sculpture. We are unfortunately not able to reconstruct the development of painting that might have influenced this development or at any rate ran parallel to it.

Since our present observations will not allow us to return to the question of the contact between relief art with free standing sculpture we must now mention the various instances of a relief providing a less expensive surrogate for free standing figures before a background. It defines the character of most Greek tomb sculpture in the Hellenistic and Roman period.

We return to the process of the relief ground extending into a greater depth. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, with the Parthenon frieze as the prime example (Michaelis op. cit.), we can already observe various planes inserted into the relief ground in order to generate a sense of depth. When it is done conspicuously crudely as in the case of some of the early Spartan reliefs, we are tempted to identify it as a quality peculiar to a local artistic tradition such as an imitation of earlier wood carving techniques (*Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Institutes in Athen*, vol. 2, 1877, p. 252), but I see no justification for such an assumption. It is remarkable to see how a 4<sup>th</sup> century Attic tomb relief later received an additional figure when one such plane was removed (Sybel, op. cit., no. 2635), as Pervanoglu has correctly observed. When the handiwork is as rough as in Sparta, or in the peculiar case of an Attic relief being altered, one can clearly recognize the procedure of carving toward the ground of the relief. The Greeks fully exploited the possibilities of the trend to go beyond what we customarily call the relief style of carving predominantly with silhouettes with enough space to isolate individual figures, by causing the ground to incrementally disappear and introduce an increased number of figures as if in free space with an illusion of spatial depth. The essays we have mentioned at the beginning attributing this development to Roman artists are based on an unfamiliarity with the material. Even before the excavation of the reliefs in Pergamon, it was plain to see in the reliefs on the monument of the Julii in St. Remy which Friedrich Ritschl had already

shown to date from the transition between the Republic and the Empire (*Priscae latinitatis epigraphice, supplementum 5 opuscula 4, Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*, [1,3,1] Bonn: Georgi 1864, pp. 557 ff.). This monument nonetheless remained nearly completely unknown in spite of the report by Heinrich Brunn to the philological congress in (*Verhandlungen der dreiundzwanzigsten Versammlung der deutschen Philologen und Schulmänner in Hannover vom 27. zum 30. September 1864*, Leipzig: Teubner 1865, p. 184) Hanover in 1864, and the essay by L. Lohde, [Das Denkmal der Julier zu St. Remy] *Jahrbücher des Vereins von Alterthumsfreunden im Rheinlande*, Heft 43, 1867, pp. 133-146, 143. Each of the four sides of the lower part contains a relief composition [Reliefgemälde] comparable to their manner and placement at Pergamon. Pictorial relief might be a felicitous expression. The image of the boar hunt might be the most successful in giving a sense of the densely crowded forms in an open space. Horses prance into the spatial depth as well as out of it. The foremost figures extend beyond the frame in deep relief with their protruding parts damaged, and are followed by one, two, three levels of figures descending in depth with the last visible only in a faint contour actually bordering on the effect of aerial perspective. This presents a final phase to us, but one that Greek relief sculpture had long been approaching. Lohde had a correct impression and a remarkable explanation. It reminded him of painterly reliefs on late Etruscan sarcophagi and he suggested that Tuscan artists might have collaborated on these reliefs. The latter suggestion cannot be taken seriously. Compared to this painterly swarm of figures where silhouettes have almost lost their function, even the known Roman imperial reliefs appear like the return to a simpler manner, but not as the beginning of a trend that reached its apogee earlier.

It has not been conceivable to see the sculpture at St. Remy as anything other than a final pole in the development of Greek relief carving. Those who might have previously interpreted this as a peculiar artistic urge that did not manifest itself until the final century of the Roman republic should have learned from the discovery of the Pergamon monuments that this was a mistake. The painterly character of the Pergamon reliefs is obvious to all. I would like to emphasize the eminently painterly character of the one balustrade relief from the hall of Athena going beyond even that of the frieze with the Gigantomachy and the so-called small frieze from the altar structure. This is the relief that was only partially and rather poorly illustrated in my interim report, and also lacking the flanking columns, their entablature and bases, as it has now been properly fitted in the museum ([Alexander Conze, *Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen zu Pergamon Die Einzelfunde, Jahrbuch der Königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1882, pp. 78-90] plate IV). Only once it was displayed in this way could we be surprised by its painterly effect. Only the relief at St. Remy has comparably eliminated the surface so completely. It is as if we are looking into an open space with a pile of weapons inside. As confusing as this might be, it is necessary to argue on the basis of the overall impression. In simply confirming that the artists have been successful in arraying

the layers of depth, it is impossible to express the one important thing – this being their mastery of the problem.

As far as the artistic intentions and successes of painterly effect are concerned, this balustrade relief is nearly matched by the so-called small frieze from the altar. We are struck by forms above and behind one another, figures and landscape backgrounds as we otherwise expect them only in paintings. I find the success of the painterly approach to be most apparent in certain details such as the upper female figures in the scene of shipbuilding. In their semi-finished state they assume a quality similar to aerial perspective like the contour figures in the background of the reliefs at St. Remy.

Considering the completely different subject matter and the monumental effect with the more distant viewing point of the large frieze in comparison to the smaller format of the others, the relief of the Gigantomachy is made without a background. I am waiting to see whether others will follow Overbeck in the latest edition of his history of Greek sculpture (p. 257) and describe the Gigantomachy as deriving from earlier models with a truer relief style. A closer examination prevents me from doing so. I have overheard very well informed colleagues from this field observing that this is the most radical example of negating the ground from behind the figures and carrying the silhouette to its most extreme possible function. They said that we could imagine the ground of the Parthenon frieze being gilded, and the figures rising from it with sharp contours while a particular colour behind the reliefs of the Gigantomachy would produce nothing more than a flickering effect.

I believe that I have sufficiently demonstrated that the Greeks achieved a painterly effect that went hand in hand with their particular technique of deepening the ground in carved relief sculpture. We should also bear in mind that in spite of the rounded modelling of the figures, Greek relief sculpture retained an even tranquil quality since it began from the flat surface of a marble block and a consideration for matching the tectonic surfaces where the reliefs were installed. We might recall this characteristic again in considering the technical processes of Greek relief carving more deeply than had been previously done. If the Greek workshops had used models made of malleable materials, either smaller or of the same size as the final version in stone, then the character of the stone technique would not have dominated stone carving in relief to the degree that it in fact did. When Reinhard Kekulé (*Die Gruppe des Künstlers Menelaos in Villa Ludovisi Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der griechischen Kunst*, Leipzig: Engelmann 1870, p. 19) admitted that a preparatory drawing on the marble surface might have been the entire extent of the preparatory work for a relief, then I would like to assume that the entire character of Greek relief carving suggests that this was the rule, and that finished reliefs were not installed in architecture, but that they were finished on the site. Aside from what Michaelis has said on the subject (*Parthenon*, op. cit., p. 205), we now have all the indications from the sculpture of Pergamon that the final execution was almost certainly only done when the relief blocks had already been installed in the architectural setting.

As I have already mentioned, it is not my intention to address the unique conditions and limitations of relief sculpture in metal, wood or clay, nor of further particular types of stone such as cameos, etc., for the simple reason that I have made less observations in these areas. I must in conclusion limit myself to either confirming or modifying what we have already been discussing.

Our observation that within its technical limitations, Greek relief sculpture developed in a painterly direction, and ultimately achieved that goal itself, does indeed confirm that the Greeks did not feel this genre to be as strictly isolated from the others and especially painting, as it is commonly supposed. It seems to have been more equivalent to painting than is usually admitted, and might even be more properly seen as a particular branch of painting, so that we could speak of a painterly quality of Greek sculpture as much as we do of the relief qualities of its painting. This is our intention.

We must admit that Greek art did not distinguish sculpture and painting as rigorously as we do today both in theory and practice between imagery with and without colour. It should not surprise us to find imagery based on both form and colour simultaneously, emphasizing or excluding either one or the other, but developing in a unified way.

The practical equivalence of painting and relief sculpture is nowhere as apparent as in the Attic tomb reliefs. This became clear to me while collecting the latter for the project sponsored by the academy of sciences in Vienna, and those two to three thousand examples have certainly influenced my judgment. After earlier references had been ignored, painted pictures on marble grave stele were published by L. Ross from Piraeus, it was considered to be no more than a curiosity. I have not gone back to count how many grave stele we have now with only painted decoration, but it must be in the hundreds, and those that are flat with no decoration presumably originally belonged to this group. We can and we must assume that these were originally painted even if we will only rarely discover enough traces to reconstruct the original design – as Loeschke and Thiersch so brilliantly discovered on the Lycas Stele after it had for decades been considered to be blank. As much as coloured and carved contours provided a parallel technique (and we are reminded of inscriptions, preparatory scratching by vase painters and Pompeian wall painters), there are also stelae with deeply carved contours around the figures and ornament where everything else was exclusively painted and not carved. It became more common to chisel away the ground around the contours as in the stele of Glaukias and Eubule where we have seen the genesis of the relief technique as a delicate sculptural emphasis within a painted image. There might never have been an origin of relief sculpture independent of painting, but the relief aspect undoubtedly became increasingly dominant and probably completely displaced the colour in many cases. It is noteworthy that no traces of colour have been found in the reliefs from Pergamon where the forms themselves generate the painterly effect so exclusively. Such traces of paint would have survived most easily in the particularly deep spots of these reliefs that were largely sheltered within the

fortified wall. It seems to have occurred that when the so-called true relief style arose, its emphasis on the silhouette usually used colour and the reliefs themselves became more painterly, so that the colour itself was used more sparingly. It is not possible to draw a clear distinction here. Pictorial imagery presumably emphasized or applied either the one or the other. There are particularly interesting examples in which the important elements are emphasized as sculpture, and the subsidiary forms only painted. These are also to be found among the grave stelae, and the [Prussian] royal museums possess an unusually strident example (Griechisches Cabinet, no. 232A). Another that is often cited is the grave stele of Demokleites in the Archaeological Society in Athens (Sybel no. 95). This manner of sporadic heightening of forms with painting together with simple painted parts also has its instructive parallel in vase painting, where the main figures are at times painted with brighter colours, and the subsidiary figures treated in the more customary technique (of clay ground on black). An example of this is the vase with *Thetis* from Rhodos in the British Museum (*The Fine Arts Quarterly Review*, 1864, reproduction to pp. 1 ff.). The analogy is more explicit still with the vase by Xenophantos in St. Petersburg where the main figures are colourful and elevated (Ludolf Stephani, *Die Vasensammlung der Kaiserlichen Ermitage*, St. Petersburg: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften 1869, no. 1790).

Once we realize that such a practice of relief paintings was common in Greek art, we can then properly understand many of the relief images from later Greek art with landscape backgrounds as listed by Wolfgang Helbig (*Untersuchungen über die campanische Wandmalerei*, Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel 1873, p. 360, note 7) and Karl Woermann (*Die Landschaft in der Kunst der alten Völker*, Munich: Ackermann 1876, pp. 296 ff.) – which have frequently been attributed to Roman artists by those drawing too narrow a distinction. Tölken already considered them to be copies after paintings, and such translations from one artistic genre into another were considered to have then been taken up in Rome. It was believed that entire groups of reliefs could be explained in this way, as Philippi has of the triumphal reliefs. We have already mentioned that it is the merit of Schreiber (*Archäologische Zeitung*, 38, 155 f.), even without knowing the monuments of St. Remy or Pergamon, to have correctly recognized and noted that such painterly relief sculpture was devised specifically as a relief, that it was not translated from another medium and that it dates back to the Hellenistic period. Overbeck has recently agreed. It goes without saying that when paintings and relief sculptures were distinguished so little from one another, imitations of a painting in the sculptural medium were in fact all the more likely to occur. It should not be denied that reproductions from a pictorial composition such as the mosaic of *The Battle of Alexander* would be found on Etruscan tomb sculpture, that *Orestes Among the Taurians* would be taken from a famous painting and used on sarcophagi.

Our conclusions from this are as follows. While today we consider relief sculpture and painting to constitute two separate artistic media, among the Greeks they developed along exactly the same lines. We would consider earlier Greek

painting to appear 'relief-like', related or even nearly identical to relief sculpture while the later Greek relief developed toward a painterly character which in painting was itself only achieved incrementally and later by figures such as Polygnotos from Apollodorus to Zeuxis and Apelles. Relief sculpture was severely limited in its technical range, but stone relief carving continued to provide a more significant parallel to wall painting and panel painting than did vase painting, which dealt with natural limits of its own. There were no innovations left for Roman art to make.