

# New looks at old books: Emanuel Löwy, *Die Naturwiedergabe in der älteren griechischen Kunst*

A.A. Donohue

The case of Emanuel Löwy (1857-1938) is of considerable interest for the historiography of art. The course of his life and career illuminates both intellectual and institutional history, the content of his work is relevant to the general history of art as well as to the field of classical art and archaeology, and his critical fortunes are filled with contradictions. What is arguably his most significant work, *Die Naturwiedergabe in der älteren griechischen Kunst* (*The Rendering of Nature in Early Greek Art*), asks to be considered within a wider context than might at first be obvious.<sup>1</sup>

Löwy is sometimes left out of standard surveys of disciplinary histories<sup>2</sup> or receives minimal recognition.<sup>3</sup> The only extended treatment of his life and work did not appear until 1998.<sup>4</sup> There he is characterized as a ‘forgotten pioneer’, reflecting the contrast between his near invisibility in formal histories of his fields and the fact that his teaching and scholarship are often cited as fundamental and highly

<sup>1</sup> Emanuel Löwy, *Die Naturwiedergabe in der älteren griechischen Kunst*, Rome: Verlag von Loescher and Co. (Bretschneider and Regenberg), 1900; digital reprint on demand, University of Michigan University Library (it is not clear why several line drawings are missing); Emanuel Loewy, tr. John Fothergill, *The Rendering of Nature in Early Greek Art*, London: Duckworth and Co., 1907; reprint on demand, University of Toronto Libraries, Internet Archive.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Nancy Thomson de Grummond, ed., *An Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996 (he receives no entry, but is mentioned twice as a teacher of Pericle Ducati, 375, and Giulio Quirino Giglioli, 502); the omission is noted by a contributor, William M. Calder III, in ‘Walther Amelung to Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff on Emanuel Löwy: An unpublished letter’, *Noctes Atticae. 34 Articles on Graeco-Roman Antiquity and Its Nachleben*, ed. Bettina Amden, Pernille Flensted-Jensen, Thomas Heine Nielsen, Adam Schwartz, and Chr. Gorm Tortzen, Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 2002, 65 n. 9: ‘No one thought of him.’ The biographical entry in *Neue deutsche Biographie* 15. *Locherer-Maltza(h)n*, Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1987, 114-15 (Hedwig Kenner), gives the year of his death as 1918.

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Udo Kultermann, *Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte. Der Weg einer Wissenschaft*, Munich: Prestel-Verlag, second ed., 1990, 213-14: ‘Als Kunsthistoriker war er [Ernst H. Gombrich] Schüler Julius von Schlossers und Emanuel Loewys.’

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Brein, ed., *Emanuel Löwy. Ein vergessener Pionier, Kataloge der Archäologischen Sammlung der Universität Wien*, Sonderheft 1, Vienna: Verlag des Clubs der Universität Wien.

influential. He has never received the attention paid to other members of the generation who established the outlines of modern art-historical practice, to his old friend Sigmund Freud, whose debt to Löwy in life and work is clear, or to some of the scholars he taught, such as Ernst Kris and Ernst Gombrich.<sup>5</sup> Yet Gombrich placed him first – whether from esteem or simply because of the circumstance of birth order – among the three teachers to whom he dedicated *Art and Illusion*, and in his publications and reminiscences, he explicitly acknowledged his respect for and debt to him.<sup>6</sup> While Löwy has received more attention in recent years, it sometimes seems that his contributions are cited on the basis of general received opinion rather than of close attention to his works. The unevenness in Löwy's reception seems to echo, in a wider sense, Gombrich's remark about his institutional standing in Vienna during his later years: 'He was at that time somehow an outsider and was himself very conscious of it'.<sup>7</sup> It is a status that can perhaps be explained in terms of both personal and professional factors.

Löwy, born in Vienna 1857, was a member of a Jewish family.<sup>8</sup> He studied

<sup>5</sup> An exception is the survey of concepts of style by Meyer Schapiro, in which Löwy takes his place beside Heinrich Wölfflin and Alois Riegl: 'Style', *Anthropology Today: An Encyclopedic Inventory*, ed. Alfred Louis Kroeber, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953, 287-312; repr. Morris Philipson, ed., *Aesthetics Today*, Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1961, 99-100 and passim. For Löwy's long friendship with and influence on Freud, see Harald Wolf, 'Emanuel Löwy. Leben und Werk eines vergessenen Pioniers', Brein, *Löwy*, 15-62; Harald Wolf, 'Archäologische Freundschaften. Emanuel Löwys und Ludwig Pollaks Bedeutung für den Sammler Freud', Lydia Marinelli, ed., *Meine ... alten und dreckigen Götter: Aus Sigmund Freuds Sammlung*, Frankfurt/Main: Stroemfeld, 1998, 60-71; Richard H. Armstrong, 'The archaeology of Freud's archaeology: Recent work in the history of psychoanalysis', *International Review of Modernism* 3:1, 1999, 16-20; Louis Rose, *The Survival of Images. Art Historians, Psychoanalysts, and the Ancients*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001, 64-73 and passim; Jeffrey Schnapp, Michael Shanks, and Matthew Tiewes, 'Archaeology, modernism, modernity. Editors' introduction to "Archaeologies of the Modern", a special issue of *Modernism/Modernity*', *Modernism/Modernity* 11:1, January 2004, 5; Richard H. Armstrong, *A Compulsion for Antiquity: Freud and the Ancient World*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005, 117-120 and passim; Janine Burke, *The Sphinx on the Table. Sigmund Freud's Art Collection and the Development of Psychoanalysis*, New York: Walker and Company, 2006, 168-70, 199, 217, 262. The short film showing Löwy and Freud conversing and unaware of the camera is available on line: e.g., YouTube, 'Sigmund Freud – The last decade' (Moving Image Archive).

<sup>6</sup> E[rnst] H[ans] Gombrich, *Art and Illusion. A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts 1956, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Bollingen Series 35.5, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960, revised second ed., 1969, v; Harald Wolf, 'Sir Ernst Gombrich über seinen Lehrer Emanuel Löwy', Brein, *Löwy* 63-71.

<sup>7</sup> In the interview published in Wolf, 'Gombrich über Löwy', 65: "Wie war Löwys Stellung an der Universität und am Institut?" [Gombrich:] "Er war damals irgendwie ein Außenseiter und war sich dessen sehr bewußt."

<sup>8</sup> For a biographical summary, see Hedwig Kenner, s.v. 'Emanuel Löwy', Reinhard Lullies and Wolfgang Schiering, eds, *Archäologenbildnisse. Porträts und Kurzbiographien von Klassischen Archäologen deutscher Sprache*, Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1988, 120-21; for an extended account, see

classical archaeology in Vienna with two prominent scholars, Alexander Conze and Otto Bendorf, taking part in Conze's Archaeological-Epigraphical Seminar and, after receiving his doctorate in 1882, an expedition to Lycia, in southern Turkey, led by Benndorf. In 1889, just two years after his habilitation, he won a position at Rome, and from 1901 until he returned to Vienna in 1915, he was Professor of Archaeology and Ancient Art History at the University of Rome and the Italian School of Archaeology. His decision to leave Rome after slightly more than a quarter-century of expatriate life there followed the declaration of war by Italy against Austria-Hungary. Despite his Viennese credentials, his academic standing in Italy, and his reputation in the international scholarly community, he did not secure a position in Vienna until 1918 and remained there until his death in 1938.

The difficulty Löwy experienced in re-establishing himself in Vienna does not seem to have resulted simply from his long absence from its academic world. William M. Calder III has directed attention to anti-Semitism as the cause of the official delays in granting him an appointment, citing a frank letter of 1917 from Walther Amelung requesting help from the highly influential German classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff; Amelung blames opposition from 'antisemitic-clerical circles' for the failure of efforts on Löwy's behalf.<sup>9</sup> Calder argues that the same reason underlay the repeated refusals to admit him to membership in the Viennese Academy until 1929.<sup>10</sup>

Löwy's later work was not so well received as his earlier scholarship. Even though in a notice of 1927 congratulating Löwy on his seventieth birthday, Ludwig Curtius asserted that he had never written an insignificant line, it is the work Löwy published before his return to Vienna that was appreciated during his lifetime and on which his present reputation rests.<sup>11</sup> Hedwig Kenner's defense of the value of his late work on the apotropaic features of ancient art is not unconditional.<sup>12</sup> Antony

---

Wolf, 'Löwy', 18-23.

<sup>9</sup> Calder, 'Amelung', 61: 'Es wird Ihnen nicht unbekannt sein, dass man Loewy in Wien eine Ausnahms-Stellung hatte geben wollen, dass dieser Versuch aber an dem Widerstande antisemitisch-klerikaler Kreise gescheitert ist.'

<sup>10</sup> Calder, 'Amelung', 63; he also cites Gombrich's experiences of antisemitism at the university during the period 1928-1933, when Löwy taught there. It is not entirely clear whether Calder has proved (62-64) that Löwy was homosexual and thus that a second level of prejudice contributed to his professional difficulties after his return to Vienna.

<sup>11</sup> [Ludwig] C[urtius], untitled notice in *Gnomon* 3, 1927, 630: 'Löwy hat nie eine unwesentliche Zeile geschrieben.'

<sup>12</sup> Kenner, 'Löwy', 121: 'Trotz dieser mehr ästhetischen Gesamthaltung hat L. in seinen Wiener Vorlesungen der dreißiger Jahre immer wieder auf die ursprünglich unheilabwehrenden, apotropäischen Züge der antiken Kunst hingewiesen, worüber man zu seiner Zeit lächelte, womit er aber sicherlich bis zu einem gewissen Grad etwas Wahres aussprach.' See the lecture 'Ursprünge der bildenden Kunst', published in *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Almanach* 80, 1930, 275-95.

Raubitschek's review of two of Löwy's late studies (one in fact posthumously published) concerned with chronology grants the value of his early work but is dismissive of the papers before him, concluding, 'It seems clear to me that the author has not succeeded in making a true bill against the current chronology of the sixth and fifth centuries.'<sup>13</sup> Those works, in which Löwy by turns ignores or challenges what had emerged by then as a consensus on the absolute dates of a number of monuments and deposits that do duty as chronological fixed points for classical art, must indeed have seemed quixotic. Raubitschek writes as if offended that Löwy 'feels free to date the sculptures [of the temple of Aphaia on Aegina] after the Persian wars'; yet today, the suggestion of a post-Persian date seems reasonable.<sup>14</sup> Löwy's discussion of the chronology of the deposits on the Athenian Acropolis, particularly '[t]he strata on the north wall where the fourteen korai were found', is similarly found wanting in the light of the most recent conclusions then available; yet today, the questions associated with the stratigraphy of the Acropolis no longer seem so surely answered, and the deposit containing the korai remains problematic.<sup>15</sup> Curtius's judgement may indeed prove correct.

Löwy's published scholarship reflects both his training and the intellectual climate of his age.<sup>16</sup> Even today, it is common for young scholars to follow the path of their teachers before establishing their own focus of research. The link between Löwy's early publications and his work in epigraphy under Conze is especially clear in his collection of inscriptions with the names of Greek sculptors.<sup>17</sup> One of the fundamental challenges for the historian of classical art is the fragmentation of both the monumental and the documentary record; matching the extant works of art—for the most part, unsigned, undated, incomplete, and lacking helpful context—with the information offered by surviving literary sources was among the major tasks that scholars in the nineteenth century set themselves. Inscriptions, because they

<sup>13</sup> A.E. Raubitschek, review of Emanuel Loewy, *Zur Datierung attischer Inschriften* (1937) and *Der Beginn der rotfigurigen Vasenmalerei* (1938), *American Journal of Archaeology* 43:4, October-December 1939, 710-13.

<sup>14</sup> Raubitschek, 'Review' 712. For a summary of the problems surrounding the chronology of the Aegina temple, see Andrew Stewart, 'The Persian and Carthaginian invasions of 480 B.C.E. and the beginning of the Classical style: Part 2, The finds from other sites in Athens, Attica, elsewhere in Greece, and on Sicily; Part 3, The Severe Style: Motivations and meaning', *American Journal of Archaeology* 112, 2008, 593-97, 601 Table 1. Löwy is not mentioned.

<sup>15</sup> See Andrew Stewart, 'The Persian and Carthaginian invasions of 480 B.C.E. and the beginning of the Classical style: Part 1, The Stratigraphy, chronology, and significance of the Acropolis deposits', *American Journal of Archaeology* 112, 2008, 377-412, esp. 381-85.

<sup>16</sup> For his bibliography, see Brein, *Löwy*, 9-14.

<sup>17</sup> Emanuel Loewy, *Inschriften griechischer Bildhauer*, Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1885; repr. Chicago: Ares Publishers Inc., 1976. Löwy's epigraphical work is also represented in several of his other early publications; Brein, *Löwy*, 9-10.

constitute primary documents rather than texts with perilously tenuous histories of transmission, have since antiquity enjoyed a privileged status as evidence. The post-antique collection of written documentation entered a new phase with the emergence of modern research universities, and the grand projects of corpora of texts and monuments undertaken by universities and academies, especially in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, remain fundamental resources and serve as models for continuing efforts to organize the ever-growing bodies of evidence. Löwy's collection displays the most advanced practices of its time with respect to the presentation of inscriptions; it is primarily the lack of photographic reproductions that differentiates it from current publications. While the corpus itself is incomplete, owing, for example, to subsequent discoveries of inscriptions and recognitions of joins, it has not been completely superseded and still repays consultation.<sup>18</sup> Today, faith in the possibility of recovering artistic personalities in classical art has eroded, but insofar as attempts continue to be made, Löwy's work retains importance.<sup>19</sup>

Löwy's participation in another project, the corpus of Attic grave reliefs directed by Conze that likewise remains today an indispensable source, was significant for his later interests.<sup>20</sup> His familiarity with these monuments is reflected in the discussion in *Naturwiedergabe* of Classical-era practices in the representation

<sup>18</sup> Jean Marcadé, *Recueil des signatures de sculpteurs grecs*, Paris: E. de Boccard, 1953, was intended to replace Löwy's *Inschriften*, but it, too, has to a certain extent been superseded, for inscriptions continue to be found, edited, and re-edited in the light of additional information and scholarship. Even the oldest publications can never be disregarded; for example, Loewy, *Inschriften*, 98, no. 123, furnishes a facsimile of the 'signature' of Sophocles that gives a fuller text than is printed (without illustration or commentary) by Marion Muller-Dufeu, ed., *La sculpture grecque. Sources littéraires et épigraphiques*, Paris: Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 2002, 566, no. 1675, combining three inscriptions; Wilhelm Dittenberger and Karl Purgold, *Olympia: Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabung 5. Die Inschriften*, Berlin: A. Asher and Co., 1896, no. 640, for now remains the publication of record. New epigraphical publications are collected regularly in the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, now available online.

<sup>19</sup> His work is listed, for example, in the database compiled by Andrew Stewart, *One Hundred Greek Sculptors, Their Careers and Extant Works*, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Stewart> sculpture. Note also Löwy's 'Untersuchungen zur griechischen Künstlergeschichte', *Abhandlungen des Archaeologisch-Epigraphischen Seminars* 4, 1883, which precedes the publication of his corpus.

<sup>20</sup> He receives title-page credit as a contributor to the project, sponsored by the Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien: Alexander Conze, ed., *Die attischen Grabreliefs*, Berlin and Leipzig: (successively) W. Spemann, Georg Reimer, and Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1893-1922. Neither Christoph W. Clairmont, *Classical Attic Tombstones*, Kilchberg: Akanthus, 1993, Supplementary Volume 1995, intended as a supplement to Conze, nor the electronic database compiled by Johannes Bergemann, *Datenbank der attischen Grabreliefs des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, Projekt Dyabola, Munich: Biering and Brinkmann, completely replaces Conze's corpus. Löwy also participated in a project to establish a photographic corpus of ancient sculpture; he is listed as author of the texts for Series 5 (1902), nos. 1212-1265 and 1274 in Paul Arndt and Walther Amelung, *Photographische Einzelaufnahmen antiker Sculpturen, Serien zur Vorbereitung eines Corpus statuarum*, Munich: Bruckmann, 1893-1939.

of figures in relief that, while less often cited than his observations on earlier phases of Greek art, is nonetheless an important to the argument of the book.

Löwy is so firmly linked with the study of classical art that his experience as a member of Benndorf's field project in Lycia tends to be overlooked.<sup>21</sup> While his work was largely focussed on topography and epigraphy, he also had the opportunity to see the friezes of the heroön at Gjölbashi-Trysa in situ, and in fact he shared the responsibility for their transport back to Vienna.<sup>22</sup> Several of the friezes, dated to the fourth century BC, are recognized as furnishing important evidence not only for Greek artistic practices in non-Greek contexts, but also, thanks to their striking treatment of figures in landscapes and architectural settings, for the Greek representation of space, the central focus of *Naturwiedergabe*.<sup>23</sup>

While Löwy published a number of studies of particular topics in classical art and archaeology, including treatments of individual works, types, and periods and interpretive accounts of artistic developments, as well as a general history of Greek sculpture that appeared in several editions and an Italian translation,<sup>24</sup> few of these works are cited today. It is his *Naturwiedergabe in der älteren griechischen Kunst* that continues to be cited. The original publication of 1900 was translated into English by John Fothergill; that volume, published in 1907, may be considered to represent a more fully developed stage of his thinking, as it was prepared in consultation with Löwy and contains updating and changes to the text (not all of which are signalled in the Translator's Preface). It also includes twenty additional illustrations. They are worth noting because Fothergill remarks that they were acquired with help from Eugénie Strong, whose importance in bringing German-language scholarship to the attention of the Anglophone world, long ignored, has

<sup>21</sup> Löwy's participation receives a full and lively discussion in Wolf, 'Löwy', 26-33.

<sup>22</sup> Wolf, 'Löwy' 32; 30 ill. 10 for a photograph of part of the frieze still in place during the work of documentation in 1882.

<sup>23</sup> See, e.g., William A.P. Childs, *The City-Reliefs of Lycia*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. Löwy refers to these reliefs only occasionally: in connection with Benndorf's discussion of Polygnotan painting (*Rendering*, 79-80, n. 3; reference added to those given in *Naturwiedergabe*, 45, n. 1) and with indications of perspectival renderings reflecting the 'old Oriental love of landscape' ('mit der alten Freude des Ostens an landschaftlicher Schilderung': *Naturwiedergabe*, 56; *Rendering*, 101-2).

<sup>24</sup> The importance of his treatment of figural types, animal and human, in Orientalizing and Archaic art is still sometimes acknowledged: 'Typenwanderung', *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen archäologischen Institutes*, 12, 1909, 243-304, and 'Typenwanderung II', in the same journal, 14, 1911, 1-34. His history of Greek sculpture, a profusely illustrated survey arranged for the most part around famous sculptors, is today rarely even listed in bibliographies: *Die griechische Plastik*, Leipzig: Klinkhardt and Biermann, 1911, second ed. 1916, third ed. 1920, fourth ed. 1924, all in two-volume format with the text separate from the plates; *La scultura greca*, Biblioteca d'arte, Turin: Società Tipografico-Editrice Nazionale, 1911, a single volume in which the illustrations appear in interleaved plates.

again been recognized.<sup>25</sup> The translation was unquestionably significant in securing the position of Löwy's most famous work outside the Continent.

The title of Löwy's book is somewhat misleading. In terms of chronology, it is not limited to the "early" periods, but includes Greek visual arts from the Bronze Age to Hellenistic times as well. Nor should 'the rendering of nature' be taken in the sense of surveying, for example, imagery of the natural world; it has a particular and striking significance in which it is the processes of the human mind that take precedence. Löwy states his project clearly. Taking the essentially representational nature of Greek art as given, he proposes to explore the relationship between the artistic representations and their models, stressing that 'it has seemed imperative to penetrate beyond the actual phenomena of art to the causes which gave them rise' (2). Briefly put, the book follows the development of Greek art as it moves from images conceived in terms of presenting features selected from remembered mental images through attempts to render natural appearances; specific formal and technical features of the art of later periods are interpreted as resulting from the persistent effect of earlier conceptions and limitations until they are overcome in the era of Lysippus.

While the discussion seems to be structured essentially chronologically, its chapters treat drawing, relief, and statuary (in the round) sequentially, an organization that recalls historico-typological schemes involving the relationship between two- and three-dimensional media. Discussions of the developmental relations among the media may be traced back ultimately to the ancient texts that set the course for art historiography in the West. A comparison may be drawn with Johann Joachim Winckelmann's introduction to his discussion of the earliest development of art. Whereas Winckelmann speculates that 'Art began with the simplest form, and probably with a kind of sculpture',<sup>26</sup> the first sentence in the

<sup>25</sup> Fothergill, in Loewy, *Rendering*, vii. For Strong's importance as a link between the British and Continental scholarly communities, see Mary Beard, 'Mrs. Arthur Strong, Morelli, and the troopers of Cortés', *Ancient Art and Its Historiography*, ed. A.A. Donohue and Mark D. Fullerton, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 148-70. Strong expressed her admiration for Löwy in an unpublished obituary quoted by Stephen L. Dyson, *Eugénie Sellers Strong: Portrait of an Archaeologist*, London: Duckworth, 2004, 125. Löwy engaged her scholarship directly in a response to her discussion of the well-known statue from Anzio in the collections of the Museo Nazionale Romano and today displayed at the Palazzo Massimo: Emanuel Loewy, 'On the Anzio statue', *Burlington Magazine* 19, 1911, 13-17. He had previously written on the statue ('La statua di Anzio', *Emporium-Bergamo* 1907, 3-19), but the essay of 1911 takes issue with the 'clever and original essay' (13) Strong had published in the same journal in 1910. The only review of a work in English that is credited to Löwy is of K. Jex-Blake, tr., and E. Sellers [Strong], *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art of 1896: Philologische Wochenschrift* [Berlin], 18, 1898, 1417-23. (The references in *Naturwiedergabe* and *Rendering* heavily favor Continental scholarship; works in English are noticeable only for work on ethnographic and children's art.)

<sup>26</sup> Johann Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, Dresden: Walthersche Hof-

section establishes the typological precedence of 'the arts deriving from drawing', a wide net that reflects contradictions among the disparate ancient traditions.<sup>27</sup> Winckelmann's explanation of the origins of art continues in the vein of ancient speculation: art began with the simplest of forms, probably some kind of sculpture, 'because even a child can give a distinct shape to a soft mass, though he cannot draw anything on a flat surface.... Art seems to have arisen in a similar way among all peoples who have practiced it'. The equation between children and other groups outside the circle of social and cultural privilege is today an ethical embarrassment, but it must be recognized that the role of naive makers of early forms of art is a topos of ancient theory, and children, early peoples, and non-Greeks were regularly called into service as examples demonstrating the equivalence of chronological, geographical, and developmental distance from the standard of familiar practices.<sup>28</sup> Löwy's argument follows a similar course. After enumerating seven characteristics of archaic Greek art—a limited repertory of typical shapes; linear, regular stylisations of single forms, reliance on outline, unmodulated colours, display of broadest aspect of figures, absence of overlapping, and absence of indications of the environment of represented action—he emphasizes that the features in question occur both in the art of ancient non-Greek cultures and 'in every primitive art of the present as well as of the past' (5-7; *Naturwiedergabe* 4).

Löwy makes no reference in his discussion of the universal origins and principles of early art either to Winckelmann or to ancient texts. He instead relies on current studies in ethnography and children's art to furnish primary material and

---

Buchhandlung, 1764, 4: 'Die Kunst hat mit der einfältigsten Gestaltung, und vermuthlich mit einer Art von Bildhauerey angefangen'. Text: Adolf H. Borbein, Thomas W. Gaethgens, Johannes Irmscher, and Max Kunze, eds, *Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, Text. Erste Auflage Dresden 1764. Zweite Auflage Wien 1776, Johann Joachim Winckelmann. *Schriften und Nachlaß* 4.1. *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*. Text, Mainz am Rhein, Philipp von Zabern, 2002, 6. Translation by Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Johann Joachim Winckelmann, History of the Art of Antiquity*, Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006, 111.

<sup>27</sup> Winckelmann, *Geschichte* 1764, 3, Borbein, *Winckelmann*, 4; 'Die Künste, welche von der Zeichnung abhängen'; translation Mallgrave, *Winckelmann* 111. Cf. the accounts of the invention of painting and relief offered by Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 35.15 (outlining of a man's shadow) and 35.151 (daughter of the potter Boutades in Sicyon draws the outline of her lover's face; father fills in the outline with clay). Other traditions, particularly those arising in the context of iconoclastic polemic, find the origins of art in early attempts to make (sculptural) images of the gods: A.A. Donohue, *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture*, *American Classical Studies* 15, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988, 175-229.

<sup>28</sup> Winckelmann, *Geschichte* 1764, 4, Borbein, *Winckelmann*, 6: 'denn auch ein Kind kann einer weichen Masse eine gewisse Form geben, aber es kann nichts auf einer Fläche zeichnen'; 'Die Kunst scheint unter allen Völkern, welche dieselbe geübet haben, auf gleiche Art entsprungen zu seyn'; translation Mallgrave, *Winckelmann*, 111. For children and other naive makers of art in ancient explanations, see Donohue, *Xoana* 121-50.

on current studies in psychology to elucidate it.<sup>29</sup> In accounting for the formal similarities among the artistic products (specifically drawings) of ‘persons artistically untrained, not merely in those of children and savages’ (17), he cites the work of Julius Lange on primitive art (7-8) and then introduces the concept of the ‘memory-picture’ (Erinnerungsbild), for which he gives credit to Ernst Brücke, and which he considers as ‘only one, though certainly an important, element in a psychical process the discussion of which may, I think, help to explain much else in art’ (10-11).<sup>30</sup> It is in connection with these attempts to explain artistic features in terms of universal principles of psychology that the most intriguing inconsistencies in his critical fortunes appear.

Löwy never claimed credit for inventing the concept of the ‘memory-picture’. He explicitly names Ernst Brücke as the first writer whom he knows to have treated the idea (in 1881).<sup>31</sup> While some summaries of Löwy’s work recognize Brücke’s contribution, others do not.

That Gombrich was fully aware of the origin of ‘the psychological notion of the ‘memory image’’ is not to be doubted; for instance, in referring to Löwy’s book while reminiscing about the interest in psychology among art historians during his university days in Vienna, he gives the credit to Brücke.<sup>32</sup> Yet in *Art and Illusion*, he speaks only of the influence on Löwy of Adolf von Hildebrand, who, ‘like other critics of his period, ... had attributed the peculiarities of child art to a reliance on vague memory images.’<sup>33</sup> Gombrich’s summary of Löwy’s ideas in that publication

<sup>29</sup> The extent to which Löwy’s knowledge of ethnographic, children’s, and otherwise non-standard art was derived from publications and how far it also encompassed first-hand familiarity with examples might be worth examining, especially in connection with his analysis of representations of and in two and three dimensions.

<sup>30</sup> *Naturwiedergabe*, 9, 4, 5-6. It is not clear why Mary Bergstein, ‘Gradiva medica: Freud’s model female analyst as Lizard-slayer’, *American Imago*, 60:3, 2003, 294-95, suggests the influence of Freud in this connection: ‘There may have been an exchange of thoughts on the topic [sc. lizard-slaying] between Löwy and Freud, who seem to have worked out various theories together in the late 1890s, leading up to Löwy’s book (1900) on the evolution of Greek art, which stated that statues of the Archaic period were made to be visualized in the mind of the beholder as “memory-pictures”’.

<sup>31</sup> Löwy, *Naturwiedergabe*, 5, n. 4; *Rendering* 10, n. 9. The reference is to Brücke’s article ‘Die Darstellung der Bewegung durch die bildenden Künste’, *Deutsche Rundschau* 26, January-March 1881, 39-54.

<sup>32</sup> Ernst H. Gombrich, ‘Kunstwissenschaft und Psychologie vor fünfzig Jahren’, Stefan Krenn and Martinia Pippal, eds, *Wien und die Entwicklung der kunsthistorischen Methode, Akten des XXV. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte, Wien, 4.-10. September 1983*, 1.1, Vienna, Cologne, and Graz: Hermann Böhlau Nachf., 1984, 100; translation by Gombrich: ‘Art History and Psychology in Vienna Fifty Years Ago’, *Art Journal*, 44, Summer 1984, 162.

<sup>33</sup> Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, 22. He mentions Brücke only in connection with the difficulties connected with painting sunlit scenes: 49 and 406 ad loc. Löwy cites Hildebrand’s *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst* of 1893 in connection with the observation that naive drawings ‘do not copy a given aspect of reality’: *Naturwiedergabe*, 9, n. 1; *Rendering*, 17, n. 15.

has been particularly influential, but it was not the only place in which he allowed too much credit to be shifted to Löwy. For example, in a press statement of 1995 on his book *The Story of Art*, Gombrich observes that in the very late nineteenth century, art historians 'explain[ed] the character of children's drawings or what was known as primitive art as based on the so-called conceptual image or memory image.' He then acknowledges, 'I cannot claim that I developed this approach all of my own. As early as 1900 the archeologist, Emanuel Lowy, had published a seminal book called *The Imitation of Nature in Greek Art*, and I was so lucky in my student days in the '30s, still to attend the lectures and seminars of this immensely lovable scholar. It was Lowy who demonstrated how the schematic images of archaic Greek Art gradually approximated to nature in the course of centuries without ever quite losing the traces of their origin in the Egyptian method.'<sup>34</sup> The authority of Gombrich may have helped to blur the history of the concept not only in the popular mind, but even in the work of experts. For example, Louis Rose, in a study of the links between art history and psychoanalysis in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, devotes a chapter to 'mental images and visual art' without mentioning Brücke, asserting simply that Löwy's 'interest in the psychological meaning of art led him to an interpretation of primal mental processes and their persistence in image-making.'<sup>35</sup>

It should be noted that one difficulty in tracing the history of the concept of the 'memory-image' is that, as shown by Gombrich's remark reported in the press release, it is sometimes conflated with types of images for which no special connection with memory is asserted, but that simply constitute a rendering of (let us say) some thing on the basis of the artist's knowledge of its qualities rather than on its visual appearance. The issue, as Gombrich puts it, is '[t]he contrast between *seeing and knowing*.'<sup>36</sup> Because such a 'conceptual' mode of representation shares certain features with modes of image-making believed to be founded explicitly on the processes of memory, both terminology and the often subtle interplay among the various conceptions tend to confuse the course of the development of particular arguments.

<sup>34</sup> E.H. Gombrich, 'Press statement on *The Story of Art*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 22nd September, 1995'. The Gombrich Archive [www.gombrich.co.uk]. Spelling as in the original.

<sup>35</sup> Rose, *Survival of Images*, 64-65. Rose introduces his discussion of Löwy there by mentioning that in *Art and Illusion*, 'Gombrich drew attention to his teacher's masterwork'.

<sup>36</sup> Gombrich, 'Press statement'. His remarks there do not reflect a modification he had offered in a lecture, 'Visual discovery through art', given and first published in 1965 and republished in Gombrich, *The Image and the Eye. Further Studies in the Psychology of Visual Representation*, Oxford: Phaidon, 1982, 16: 'An older psychological art theory, including that of my teacher Emanuel Loewy, described these schematic images as "memory images". I now think that this description confuses cause and effect. It is not likely that anybody ever remembers reality in precisely that way, but images of this schematic kind admirably serve as codes that are aids in memorizing.'

That the notion of a link between a conceptually based system of representation and the processes of memory were 'in the air' during the late nineteenth century is beyond question. In fact the idea appears in another book Löwy cites, but without mentioning that the concept appears there. At the time Löwy was writing, the study of children's art had attracted great interest, and he was not the only student of ancient art who found it relevant. He mentions a publication of 1887 that had attracted considerable notice and is today regarded as a significant contribution to the field. Corrado Ricci's *L'arte dei bambini* is notable for its sincere and sympathetic attempt to explain and, more, to understand how and why children produce their pictures; Ricci saw these images not as defective, but as expressions of a set of quite orderly principles that made perfect sense in light of children's experience of the world.<sup>37</sup> Löwy several times refers to Ricci's study in *Naturwiedergabe* in a discussion of the 'mental images' (Gedankenbilder) that are composed from 'the spontaneous memory-pictures' (Erinnerungsbilder), which he believes are themselves already selective (*Naturwiedergabe*, 6-10; *Rendering*, 12-20). The references, however, are only to illustrations, and he does not note Ricci's conclusion: 'The examples have proved that children at first do not artistically represent an object, but describe it according as the memory of it is more or less complete, and suggests to them while drawing the different parts of the object.'<sup>38</sup> Ricci essentially proposes Löwy's theory of selective memory, but to explain only the art of children, and not a universal range of images known from historical and ethnographic contexts.

Löwy could have given more credit to Ricci's explanations, but in other cases he is scrupulous in acknowledging the work of others. For example, he carefully rehearses the chronology of the publications in which he and Julius Lange presented similar points, stating that he had written *Naturwiedergabe* before the German translation of Lange's work allowed him to appreciate it fully.<sup>39</sup>

Löwy has not received sufficient recognition for one idea he advanced in *Naturwiedergabe*. It is Gombrich who is widely credited with providing a well-known, if controversial, explanation for the development of Greek art towards more naturalistic renderings. Gombrich observes in *Art and Illusion*, 'As a description of

<sup>37</sup> Corrado Ricci, *L'arte dei bambini*, Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1887, reprint on demand, Lexington: BiblioLife. Parts of the book were translated into English by Louise Maitland, 'The art of little children', *Pedagogical Seminary* 3:2, 1894, 302-07; translations into German (*Die Kinderkunst*, Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1906) and Russian (1911) appeared later.

<sup>38</sup> Ricci, *L'arte dei bambini* 78: 'Gli esempi hanno provato che il bambino dapprima non riproduce artisticamente un oggetto, ma lo descrive a seconda che la memoria più o meno compiutamente gli suggerisce, mentre disegna, le parti dell' oggetto stesso.' Translation Maitland, 'Art of little children', 306.

<sup>39</sup> *Naturwiedergabe*, 2 and n. 3; *Rendering*, 3-4 and n. 3.

what happened, Loewy's account still seems to me unsurpassed. But in itself it explains little. For why was it that this process started comparatively so late in the history of mankind?<sup>40</sup> The answer he proposes involves a specific occurrence at a specific point in history: the emergence of narrative in the form of the Homeric poems. In so doing, he reversed 'the hypothesis implied by the specialist on Greek art in the Chicago symposium [on narration in ancient art], Professor Hanfmann, who succinctly sums up the prevailing view: "When classical sculptors and painters discovered a convincing method of representing the human body, they set up a chain reaction which transformed the character of Greek narration." As the reader may have guessed, I feel prompted to put forward the opposite hypothesis: when classical sculptors and painters discovered the character of Greek narration, they set up a chain reaction which transformed the methods of representing the human body.'<sup>41</sup> Gombrich does specify that Hanfmann's hypothesis is 'implied'. What he does not say is that Hanfmann's remark stands at the beginning of a paragraph specifically on the nature of Greek narrative images, or that the link between Homeric narratives and the images in Geometric art that seem generally to appear at or near the time of their emergence had long been controversial within the field of ancient art history. Indeed, Gombrich's proposal does not figure in the continuing debate within classical fields.<sup>42</sup> What Gombrich also does not say is that Löwy had proposed a fundamentally like explanation: 'In the effort to tell a story graphically there will be things to be represented for which the memory-pictures are entirely wanting. Such experiences would urge the draughtsman endowed with artistic energy to direct or indirect recourse to nature.'<sup>43</sup> Löwy is almost never given credit for his proposal.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, 118.

<sup>41</sup> Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* 129. The reference is to George M.A. Hanfmann, 'Narration in Greek Art', *American Journal of Archaeology* 61, 1957, 74; his paper is one of those included in the publication (43-91) of 'Narration in ancient art. A symposium', given at the 57th General Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in Chicago in December 1955.

<sup>42</sup> The controversy is discussed by Hanfmann. For continuing objections to linking Homeric narrative and narrative scenes in early Greek art, see, e.g., Anthony Snodgrass, *Homer and the Artists. Text and Picture in Early Greek Art*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. For a recent discussion of general problems in identifying early narrative scenes at all, see Jeffrey M. Hurwit, 'The shipwreck of Odysseus: Strong and weak imagery in Late Geometric art', *American Journal of Archaeology* 115:1, 2011, 1-18.

<sup>43</sup> *Rendering* 20; *Naturwiedergabe* 10: 'Im Drange, bildlich zu erzählen, wollen Dinge dargestellt sein, für welche die Erinnerungsbilder gänzlich versagen. Solche und ähnliche Erfahrungen drängen, wo künstlerische Energie vorhanden, zu — directer oder indirecter — Befragung der Natur.'

<sup>44</sup> A rare exception is the remark by Nigel Spivey in an omnibus review of books on classical art and archaeology: 'For the special nexus there [in *Art and Illusion*] claimed by Gombrich (in turn following his teacher at Vienna, Emmanuel [sic] Loewy), between the descriptive quality of Homeric saga and the development of illusionistic images, is by no means an exhausted area of research.' *Greece*

Admittedly, Löwy did not emphasize the proposed link between narrative and naturalism. What is odd is that points he did emphasize have similarly all but vanished from awareness. His contemporary reviewers took seriously the main thrust of *Naturwiedergabe*: the exploration of the relationship between two- and three-dimensional representations.<sup>45</sup> The subject had interested Löwy for some time; he had treated it earlier in connection with the sculpture of Lysippus, whom he considered crucial in the development from 'unifacial' to 'plurifacial' renderings through his having overcome the limitations imposed by the nature of the old memory-pictures. In *Naturwiedergabe*, he characterizes the achievement of Lysippus thus: 'So with this the specific perfection of statuary is achieved; the direct contact with nature has been reached in all essentials.'<sup>46</sup> As new concerns have taken the place of topics that were once intensively studied, far more attention has been paid to the earlier sections of *Naturwiedergabe*, and the memory-pictures and mental images have proved to have the strongest 'legs'.<sup>47</sup> To some extent, the imbalance may be related to an inclination to construe the 'rendering of nature' in terms of accurate renderings of natural forms rather than formal problems of representation. One explanation for the tendency may be the influence of Gisela Richter's highly influential establishment of the chronology of Archaic sculpture through tracing the development of the kouros, the statuary type of the standing nude youth. Much of her study rests on the assumption of progressive realism in the rendering of anatomical details, which are easier to appreciate in photographs than the spatial disposition of the statues. As it is known that Löwy's lectures in Rome inspired her to devote her life to the study of classical archaeology, it is possible that Richter's preoccupations shaped the later appreciation of Löwy's work.<sup>48</sup>

---

*and Rome*, 47:2, 2000, 254.

<sup>45</sup> E.g., Heinrich Bulle, *Berliner philologische Wochenschrift* 945 (no. 30), 27 July 1901, 945-51; Eugénie Strong, *Classical Review* 15:3, April 1901, 185-87 (together with a review of Julius Lange, *Darstellung des Menschen in der älteren griechischen Kunst*).

<sup>46</sup> *Lysipp und seine Stellung in der griechischen Plastik, Sammlung gemeinwissenschaftlicher Vorträge*, N.F. 6, 127, Hamburg, 1891. *Rendering* 88; cf. *Naturwiedergabe* 49: 'Somit ist auch in der Rundplastik der Kampf entschieden, in Allem, was für sie wesentlich ist, der unmittelbare Anschluss an die Natur erreicht.' The notion of 'einansichtig' composition survives most notably in connection with Hellenistic groups and attempt to establish a chronology for Hellenistic sculpture, through the study by Gerhard Kraemer, 'Die einansichtige Gruppe und die späthellenistische Kunst', *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse* 1927, 53-91, which is usually treated as the beginning of the trail: e.g., J.J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 268-69.

<sup>47</sup> Recognition of the primary focus of *Naturwiedergabe* may now be reviving; e.g., Richard Neer, *The Emergence of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 71-72, on the interest in the 'suggestion of movement in three dimensions' in late-nineteenth-century scholarship.

<sup>48</sup> Gisela M.A. Richter, *Kouroi. Archaic Greek Youths. A Study of the Development of the Kouros Type in*

It may be asked whether Löwy's works are still instructive or can be relegated to purely historical interest—in other words, has he been thoroughly superseded? How much conscious awareness is due him in the day-to-day business of interpreting works of classical art? To a surprising extent, the controversies of his time are still current. Löwy was aware that in some respects his ideas were out of step with interpretive trends that were well established in the scholarship of his time on classical art, such as those stressing technique and material, that have taken on new life today, and so his arguments are to some extent still in play, in general terms if not in details.<sup>49</sup> The Geometric style in Greek pottery, for example, still resists explanation. It is again possible to find well-reasoned arguments accounting for the forms of Geometric painted figures in terms of the dependence of the style on work in textiles—an overall approach that gained currency with the work of Gottfried Semper and found specific application in Conze's pioneering work on Geometric pottery.<sup>50</sup> The similarity between children's drawings and Geometric images was flatly denied in 1939 by Bruno Snell, not an art historian, who pointed to formal differences in the schemata in the course of arguing that the strong articulation of the parts of Geometric figures of humans reflected a similar lack in Homeric thought of an overall conception of a unified human entity.<sup>51</sup> Yet the conceptual image, too, lives on: 'It is almost as if the artist had been more concerned to convey what he was aware of intellectually than what he saw.'<sup>52</sup> Is it a question of Löwy's—and everyone else's—ideas in their original form, or versions of them

---

*Greek Sculpture*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1942; third edition, London and New York: Phaidon Press, 1970, 17-25 for the 'anatomical analyses'; 11-12 for discussion of the 'procedure' of carving the kouroi, in which she refers to Hildebrand's *Problem der Form* for 'the emancipation of the figure from the block', but not to Löwy's work. Richter, *My Memoirs*, Rome: privately printed, 1972, 8 for her attending the lectures 'by the great Professor E. Loewy' in Rome at the age of about fourteen [around 1896] and her consequent decision to become an archaeologist.

<sup>49</sup> E.g., *Naturwiedergabe*, 33-36; *Rendering*, 59-65; he does not rule out interpretations of form that consider material or technique, but he challenges the primacy of those considerations.

<sup>50</sup> E.g., the very persuasive arguments advanced by Elizabeth J.W. Barber, *Prehistoric Textiles. The Development of Cloth in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages with Special Reference to the Aegean*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, 365-66. Barber draws on her own experiences in making and studying textiles, and her arguments recognize but do not rely on consideration of theories about the material determination of style; see A.A. Donohue, *Greek Sculpture and the Problem of Description*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 77.

<sup>51</sup> Citing work by Gerhard Kraemer: Bruno Snell, "Die Sprache Homers als Ausdruck seiner Gedankenwelt", *Neue Jahrbücher für Antike und deutsche Bildung*, 2, 1939, 393-410; reprinted as 'Die Auffassung des Menschen bei Homer', *Die Entdeckung des Geistes. Studien zur Entstehung des europäischen Denkens bei den Griechen*, Hamburg, 1946; fifth ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1980, 17-18, with ills. 1 and 2.

<sup>52</sup> William R. Biers, *The Archaeology of Greece. An Introduction*, second ed., Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1980, 1996, 123. Cf. John Griffiths Pedley, *Greek Art and Archaeology*, fifth ed., Boston: Prentice Hall, 2012, 117: 'The artist paints not what is visible but what he thinks is there.'

transmitted in publications or classroom instruction, or simply of notions that have passed into 'the air'? In 1905, Heinrich Gomperz asserted that '[a]n art without any trace of convention, i.e. with an absolute similarity between the subject and object of the representation, is as inconceivable as an art consisting exclusively in conventions, i.e. one with an absolute dissimilarity between those two'; what is the relationship of the contention to Löwy's statement that the goal of naturalistic representation 'can indeed in reality never be reached, for, having reached it, art itself would be brought to a finish'?<sup>53</sup>

Löwy's thought is very much in harmony with his times, when the task of collecting and organizing the corpus of art-historical materials was lightened by the exhilaration of exploring the new paths to interpretation opened by emerging disciplines like psychology, the excitement of incorporating the knowledge of unfamiliar traditions of art gained by Western adventurism, and the sincere and confident hope of finding universally valid explanations for a wide range of phenomena. It is probably not possible now to enter fully into the spirit of his times, to care in the same way or to the same degree about the burning issues of his day, or to forget all that has been discovered and learned since then. Many of the issues and arguments in Löwy's work do seem both dated and outdated, and in the absence of a specific thread to pursue, reading him can be heavy work. Yet there is no better way to uncover ideas that are invisibly present in current thought than to meet them in other contexts, and in that respect, historiographic research is more than a mere filing of dead letters. Löwy himself pointed to methodological concerns that remain current; he was aware of the uncertainties inherent in 'reconstructing origins', for example, and he questioned the assumption that a given quality can be explained by appeal to ethnic or regional factors, citing the case of a relief from Pharsalos in which the stylistic peculiarities had been attributed to its Northern Greek origin but seemed to him instead to be consistent with early Greek relief in general.<sup>54</sup> Even if it is no longer possible to engage with Löwy on his own terms, Curtius's verdict on the value of his work seems also true in historiographic terms, and *Naturwiedergabe* continues to merit reading.

**A.A. Donohue** is the Rhys Carpenter Professor of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology at Bryn Mawr College. Her research focusses on the history and historiography of classical art. She is the author of *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture* and *Greek Sculpture and the Problem of Description* and is presently writing

<sup>53</sup> Translation by Karl Johns, Heinrich Gomperz, 'Ueber einige psychologische Voraussetzungen der naturalistischen Kunst', Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung, 1905, no. 161, 15 July, 100. Cf. Löwy, *Naturwiedergabe* 17; *Rendering* 33.

<sup>54</sup> For the reconstruction of origins, *Naturwiedergabe*, 19; *Rendering*, 36; for the relief from Pharsalos: *Naturwiedergabe*, 20; *Rendering*, 38.

A.A. Donohue

New looks at old books:

Emanuel Löwy, *Die Naturwiedergabe in der älteren griechischen Kunst*

on historiographic structures in the study of classical art and on naturalism in Greek art.

A.A. Donohue

Rhys Carpenter Professor of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology

Bryn Mawr College

101 North Merion Avenue

Bryn Mawr, PA 19010-2899 USA

[adonohue@brynmawr.edu](mailto:adonohue@brynmawr.edu)