

From 'bad' to 'good': Baroque architecture through a century of art historiography and politics

Review of:

Evonne Levy, *Baroque and the Political Language of Formalism (1845-1945): Burckhardt, Wölfflin, Gurlitt, Brinckmann, Sedlmayr*, 400 pp., 42 ills, Basel: Schwabe, 2015. € 68, ISBN 978-3-7965-3396-9

Marco M. Mascolo

Among the theoretical patterns that shaped art history between the nineteenth and twentieth century, formalism has undoubtedly a central place, with the turning point of Heinrich Wölfflin's publication of the *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (Principles of Art History) in 1915, which offered practical tools to interpret works of art on the basis of the historical forms of sight.¹

One of the crucial contributions of early twentieth-century German formalist scholars was the creation of the conditions to reconcile modernity with the Baroque. Directing her attention to the architectural historiography of the Baroque from 1845 to 1945, Evonne Levy points out that 'political circumstances pressed those who studied the history of art to compare that epoch [i.e. the seventeenth century] to their own'.² The temporal frame defines a century that had, at its beginning, Jacob Burckhardt's entry 'Jesuitenstil' for the ninth edition of the *Conversations-Lexikon*³ (chapter one) and, at its end, the downfall of Hitler's Third Reich, with the consequent scrutiny on methods compromised with the National Socialist regime, as in the case of art-historical works of Albert Erick Brinckmann (chapter four) and the Austrian Hans Sedlmayr (chapter five).⁴ In the middle, the book follows the ideas of two of the most important baroqueists of the first half of the twentieth century: Heinrich Wölfflin (chapter two) and Cornelius Gurlitt (chapter three).

With this book the author offers the possibility to recuperate a political dimension of the formalist theories; in other words, to look at political influences shaping the positions of the art historians Levy analyses. To a certain extent, this means to offer a key to historicise formalism as well.

An important historical frame to understand the author's choice is offered by situation of the history of art at its beginnings as an academic discipline in Germany. German art history was indeed characterised by an important self-critical

¹ Heinrich Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Das Problem der Stilentwicklung in der neuen Kunst*, München: Bruckmann, 1915.

² Levy, *Introduction*, p. 15.

³ Jacob Burckhardt, *Jesuitenstil*, in *Allgemeine deutsche Real-Encyklopädie für die gebildeten Stände: Conversations-Lexikon*, Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1845, s. v.

⁴ Levy in the present volume, 360-61.

debate about the originality of German art⁵ and, as Levy argues, Baroque offered a way for architectural historians to resolve this long-debated problem. From the issue posed by nineteenth-century Romantics about cosmopolitanism in German culture against national character, through the recognition of the Baroque as an essentially German *Formgefühl* (feeling for form) around 1900, architectural historians faced inexorably the political implications of such views. This political declination of the concept of the Baroque assumed through the century examined implies, following Levy, that Baroque emerged as a landmark theme in particular moments and in particular places. But instead of facing problems posed by nationalism and national identity – of course, one of the main themes in the agenda of art historical debates at the turn of the twentieth century, that had also important effects on the concept of the Baroque – Levy chooses a slightly different approach, concentrating her interpretative efforts on the formal language shaped by the five Germanophone art historians she examines. If this could appear a way to sidestep a main theme of the art historical debate at the end it proves to be a rather prolific one, especially because it allows Levy make important considerations valid both for the general problem of the political language used to define Baroque and for the specific responses and strategies art historians choose to deal with the Baroque.

Burckhardt among the formalists

The place Burckhardt – the first scholar Levy deals with – occupies in this history could be considered as symptomatic. As a Swiss citizen and deeply involved in the fate of the Swiss federation around the 1840s, which was at that time divided by a stark contrast between liberals and conservative politics, for Burckhardt the crucial problem in defining the *Jesuitenstil* in 1845 was the question about the opportunity to allow Jesuits to teach in the Lucerne canton. In his view, Jesuits were 'insincere in their architecture'⁶, embracing completely the Italian architectural style, which means a Catholic style placed in Protestant cantons. Burckhardt's *Jesuitenstil* allowed him to consider the radicalization of the political situation in Switzerland and was regarded as the evil counterpart of the more 'sincere' Gothic style.

Levy points out that Burckhardt was building up the concept of *Jesuitenstil* exactly in coincidence with the Gothic rebuilding of Cologne cathedral, and that this shaped profoundly Burckhardt's view of the Jesuits as constantly foreign to the German context, into which they acted as an extension of Catholic Counter-Reformation issues. Following the evolution of the concept in Burckhardt's writings and through his travels in Italy, Levy explains how the *Barockstyl* supplanted the former term to designate the style of the Roman Counter-Reformation: in fact in the *Cicerone*, first published in 1855, the *Jesuitenstil* is only a part of the more general *Barockstyl*.

And Levy goes further underlying that putting aside the former category, Burckhardt replaces it with the Baroque from the art-historical point of view which went hand in hand with the Counter-Reformation, a recently introduced classification in the historical field, to be intended as 'the Jesuit reconquest of

⁵ Hans Belting, *The Germans and Their Art: A Troubled Relationship*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

⁶ Burckhardt, *Jesuitenstil*, quoted in Levy, *Baroque*, 39

previously Reformed territories'.⁷ After his Italian voyages, particularly to Rome, where Burckhardt achieved a better comprehension of the Baroque, a gradual shift occurred: from a basic negative conception of the architectural style of the seventeenth century, to a recuperation of the Baroque as the last moment of a whole unified world. This shift, Levy argues, occurred in a completely transformed political situation. That was the moment when the historian elaborated his *Erinnerungen aus Rubens* (published only after Burckhardt's death)⁸, where the artist offers the precise will of expression of a new image of the world through his paintings. To follow Burckhardt and his different perspectives about Baroque, through different moments of his life, means to recuperate a sort of pre-history of the concept, and it is functional for Levy's narration, for Burckhardt's pupil Heinrich Wölfflin will develop his positions.

Wölfflin's political view

Together with the chapter about Cornelius Gurlitt and his three volumes on European Baroque, the analysis of Wölfflin's way to the recuperation and appreciation of the Baroque is the cornerstone of the book. And this is particularly functional for Levy to demonstrate, following Martin Warnke's insights about the political commitment of Wölfflin's *Principles*,⁹ how much and to what extent Wölfflin formalism was *also* shaped by political and philosophical points of view that had their origins in the German context between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁰

As in the case of the other scholars examined by Levy, Wölfflin's Baroque is particularly revealing of his political ideas, influenced by political philosophy proposed by Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, whose lectures Wölfflin heard in 1883 and, more important, Heinrich von Treitschke, whose courses Wölfflin followed in Berlin (1885-86).¹¹ The crucial theme debated at the time (and that recurs in Levy's chapter on the Swiss scholar) was the state and the form it should assumed and, as Levy points out on the basis of the analysis offered by Woodruff Smith,¹² this was not only an essential point of the history as a discipline taught in German universities, but also of the cultural science in the broader sense. Thanks to the analysis of Wölfflin's notebooks that were not published in Joseph Gantner edition¹³ Levy

⁷ Levy, here 66.

⁸ Jacob Burckhardt, *Erinnerungen aus Rubens*, ed. by Edith Strucholz and Martin Warnke, Basel: Schwabe and München: Beck, 2006 (vol. 11 of Burckhardt, *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*)

⁹ Martin Warnke, 'On Heinrich Wölfflin', *Representations*, 27, Summer 1989, 172-187.

¹⁰ On Wölfflin's commitments with philosophical theories see in particular Daniel Adler, 'Painterly Politics: Wölfflin, Formalism and German Academic Culture, 1888-1915', *Art History*, 27: 3, June 2004, 431-456.

¹¹ Levy, *Baroque and the Political Language*, especially 113-15. Heinrich von Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, 5 vols, Leipzig: Hirzel, 1879-94.

¹² Woodruff D. Smith, *Politics and the Science of Culture in Germany 1840-1920*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

¹³ Joseph Gantner, ed., *Heinrich Wölfflin 1864-1945: Autobiographie, Tagebücher und Briefe*, rev. ed., Basel: Schwabe 1984. Wölfflin's notebooks and papers are preserved in Basel, Universitätsbibliothek.

reconstructs the interest the scholar had in problems concerning the political form of the state and its history within the relationship it had with 'a history as psychic development, which functions according to laws not only in the realm of the state, but also in that of art, of philosophy, and so on'.¹⁴ This sheds a light, also, on Wölfflin's preoccupation with understanding his present, a condition he judged crucial to gain a comprehension of the past.¹⁵

All these complex and coherent concepts had a profound influence on *Renaissance und Barock* (1888), which shows the traces of the debates of the 1880s upon the relationship between the individual and the state.¹⁶ So the categories of *grosser Style* (grand style), of *Massigkeit* (massiveness), Wölfflin used to describe the overwhelming effect of the totality of architecture upon its individual elements (columns, for example) becomes a trace of the political thought of the author. The passage from *Renaissance und Barock* to the *Klassische Kunst* (1899)¹⁷ is marked by the shift from the attention to the state and the relations that governed part and the whole of the social structure.

The 'social turn', as Levy defines it,¹⁸ was induced by the political situation of the 1890s, marked by the rise of socialism. The analysis of *Klassische Kunst*, where Wölfflin concentrates his hermeneutic efforts on the art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, may seem a topic out of the scope of the book. But its inclusion in a Baroque-focused research helps to understand the politicization of these themes, and to explain how Wölfflin passed from a substantially negative conception of the whole architectural mass as 'oppressive' to a positive conception of the whole as a unifying element; an element, which he will individuate as typical of the Baroque. The eye and the vision, which became 'thinking organ', drove this shift. Shortly, *Klassische Kunst* appears as the fundamental passage to the formal analysis, avoiding historical and cultural explanations.¹⁹ Of course an in-depth analysis is devoted to the pilaster of Wölfflin's formalist system: the above-mentioned *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*.²⁰ What emerged are the connections with the themes Wölfflin started

¹⁴ Wölfflin, Notebooks 15 (1887-88), fol. 19, Wölfflin Nachlass, quoted in Levy, 114, with the original text in German, 161-2, note 83.

¹⁵ This point is particularly evident from the passages Levy quotes from the scholar's notebooks: 115.

¹⁶ Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock: Eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien*, München: Ackermann, 1888. About this book and its reception in the context on National Socialism see the important contribution by Arnold Witte, "An appendix of manageable proportions". Heinrich Wölfflin and Hans Rose between Baroque studies and National-Socialism', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 14, June 2016.

¹⁷ Heinrich Wölfflin, *Die Klassische Kunst. Eine Einführung in die Italienische Renaissance*, München: Bruckmann, 1899.

¹⁸ Levy, 120.

¹⁹ About this point see Maurizio Ghelardi, 'Il cavaliere e il Bodensee. Heinrich Wölfflin e il Sentimento tedesco della forma', in Claudia Cieri Via, Elizabeth Kieven, Alessandro Nova, eds, *L'Italia e l'arte straniera: la Storia dell'arte e le sue frontiere. A cento anni dal X Congresso Internazionale di Storia dell'arte in Roma (1912). Un bilancio storiografico e una riflessione del presente*, Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2015, 53-64, especially 58.

²⁰ In the book Levy expands the considerations anticipated in the introductory essay in the 2015 English edition of the *Grundbegriffe*: Levy, *Wölfflin's Principles of Art History (1915-2015): A Prolegomenon for Its Second Century*, in Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History. The Problem of the Development of Style in Early Modern Art. One Hundredth Anniversary Edition*,

to develop in the *Klassische Kunst* and, to a certain extent, their radicalization. In this work Baroque is interpreted as the moment when the formation of the modern sensibility arose and took a recognizable form. Levy tries to detect the political nuances crouched in the pages of this landmark book to give them too a recognizable form investigating some of the fundamental differences between what is detectable as a 'classic' style and a 'baroque' one, differentiated among them, for example, from the point of view of the concept of 'unity' (*Einheit*).²¹

The final part of Levy's considerations on Wölfflin is devoted to his book of 1931, *Die Kunst der Renaissance: Italien und das deutsche Formgefühl*, which deals with national differences. The point was a fundamental one, which Wölfflin has been thinking since at least his arrival at Berlin University in 1901.²² From that moment onward he began to think about the Italian Renaissance and the role it had for German art. An intermediate stage of the development of the book was the monograph Wölfflin devoted to Dürer in 1905,²³ which offered the example of the role Southern art had for a Northern artist. Levy analyses the positions expressed in the book through the theories of Wilhelm Wundt's *Völkerpsychologie* and Friedrich Meinecke's book about cosmopolitanism published in 1908.²⁴ The description of Wölfflin's political thought in terms of evolution from one step to another is of course functional to the exposition, but it is important to underline that many themes had multifaceted aspects, and the shift from one to another was not so clearly stated as it could appear from some passages of the book.

Gurlitt and the European Baroque

The chapter devoted to Gurlitt, as said, is the other pillar of the book. Under focus is Gurlitt's monumental work on the *Geschichte des Barockstiles und des Rococo*, a series of three volumes devoted to the Baroque and Rococo in Europe published in Stuttgart from 1887 to 1889.²⁵ Gurlitt, as Alina Payne puts it 'is one of those figure who straddled the disciplines and in whose work a lot of threads came together – art history, architecture, *Kunstgewerbe*'²⁶. He was an architect, a journalist, a

translation by Jonathan Blower and essays by Evonne Levy and Tristan Weddigen, Los Angeles 2015, 1-46. On this new edition see also Arnold Witte, 'Wölfflin's Grundbegriffe as a psychological palimpsest?' in *Journal of Art Historiography*, 13, December 2015.

²¹ See especially 142-3.

²² As for the 1931 book and its importance for Wölfflin see Nikolaus Meier, 'Italien und das deutsche Formgefühl', in Helmut Pfotenhauer, ed., *Kunsthistorie als Italienerfahrung*, Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991, 306-27; Ghelardi, 'Il cavaliere e il Bodensee', 53-64.

²³ Heinrich Wölfflin, *Die Kunst Albrecht Dürers*, München: Bruckmann, 1905.

²⁴ Friedrich Meinecke, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat. Studien zur Genesis des deutschen Nationalstaats*, München and Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1908.

²⁵ Cornelius Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles und des Rococo in Italien*, Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1887; Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles und des Rococo und des Kalssicismus in Belgien, Holland, Frankreich, England*, Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1888; Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles und des Rococo in Deutschland*, Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1889.

²⁶ Alina Payne, *From Ornament to Object. Genealogies of Architectural Modernism*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012: 187.

professor at the Technische Hochschule in Dresden, and had a crucial role in proposing Neo-Baroque architectural style as highly representative for Germany.²⁷

When investigating Gurlitt's family, particularly the influence his father, Louis, had on the young Cornelius, Levy individuates Gurlitt's Protestantism as a central aspect in his interpretation of the Baroque. This is particularly evident in the third of his volumes, devoted solely to German Baroque art. The confessional forces in the field – Jesuit, Huguenot, Protestant, and Catholic – contribute to shape the formal qualities of the Baroque. Gurlitt's complex positioning of the Jesuit style and of the Catholic Baroque is extensively clarified by Levy, and the contrast between them is individuated as one of the core themes of the book on German Baroque.

The *milieu* to which Levy leads Gurlitt's positions is the one that emerged in the 1870s, when the pope demanded Catholics to be loyal to Rome with the syllabus of 1870. This complex political and historical moment reverberated into Gurlitt's art-historical work and Levy follows this path around three main themes that, she argues, Gurlitt inherited from Treitschke's *Deutsche Geschichte*²⁸: the confessional freedom, the unity of the state and – as it was for Wölfflin – the relation of the individual to the state.²⁹ Gurlitt individuated the modern Italian states of the Roman Church and the Tuscan court in the seventeenth century as the places where the conditions for the Baroque were created, or, in other words, the condition of an absolute power that subsume the individuality under the whole.

Gurlitt's analysis of the Italian Baroque is to some extent functional to prove that when architecture in the Italian style began to appear in Germany, it was 'not for lack of imagination or ideas of their own, nor because Germany was overrun by Italians, but out of kinship. The end of the Italian Baroque was already Germany'.³⁰ The diffusion of the Baroque across Europe – the theme of the second book of the Baroque trilogy – shows how political and confessional problems shaped Gurlitt's vision of the Baroque. So, for example, French and English architecture is interpreted on the basis of their political history, which was marked by the conquest of political unity long before Germany.

At the end of the chapter Levy offers a brief overview of the reception of Gurlitt's books, by concentrating especially on Wilhelm Pinder's interpretation of Gurlitt, a symptomatic exception to the general superficial reception the trilogy had had.

Brinckmann and Sedlmayr: the explicit politicization of the Baroque

The last two chapters of the book are devoted to Albert E. Brinckmann and Hans Sedlmayr. But the path followed here is, to some extent, different from the one Levy adopted for the first ones. The analysis now concentrates on two scholars deeply committed to National Socialism who gave (although from different perspectives) similar responses to the crucial questions about the political and historical problems of their time.

²⁷ See also Payne, *From Ornament to Object*, 187-93.

²⁸ See note 11 above.

²⁹ For Levy's analysis of Treitschke influence on Gurlitt: 189-92.

³⁰ Levy, here 197.

To Brinckmann, for example, the pivotal experience was his enrolment in the propagandist service in The Hague during World War I. Faced with the necessity to recuperate Germany's reputation after the destruction of Belgian and French monuments, Brinckmann's activity was profoundly shaped by this experience up to the 1940s. The core analysis is devoted to *Geist der Nationen: Italiener – Franzosen – Deutsche*,³¹ published for the first time in 1938, a book that proposed an interpretation of the art of the three nations from the unified perspective of the national art and the national spirit (*Volkgeist*). The national *Geist* was a crucial concept for Brinckmann, the core concept underlying his analysis.

Brinckmann gave a strong racial declination to his theories, an aspect that divided the reviewers of the book at the time of its publication.³² Levy analyses the differences between the 1938 edition and the 1948 one, showing how Brinckmann modified some passages of the book to obtain a slightly different effect by eliminating, for example, all passages that pointed out the necessity of the superiority of Germany over Europe, or the introduction of artists unpopular in Nazi's Germany. Levy's account of Brinckmann goes on analysing his highly autobiographical book *Geist im Wandel: Rebellion und Ordnung* of 1946³³ to demonstrate Brinckmann's intention to identify himself as a victim of the Nazis.

Sedlmayr's complex theoretical patterns are the argument of the last chapter. Levy outlines the art historian training in Vienna, where he studied with Max Dvorák until 1921, highlighting Sedlmayr's Catholicism as one of the principal concerns of his political conservatism. After characterising his rejection of historicism through the Gestalt theories, Levy concentrates on Sedlmayr's most engaged works on the Baroque, but instead of proceeding as in the previous chapters analysing single works step by step, Levy offers here an overview of the different positions Sedlmayr adopted through his career facing the Baroque. Sedlmayr's 1930 book, *Die Architektur Borrominis*, rightly occupies the central place among the analysis of Sedlmayr's works,³⁴ but as Levy herself concludes '[t]he extent to which Sedlmayr's Baroque was shaped by his political beliefs prior to *Reichsstil* essay stubbornly resists a definitive answer'.³⁵ The essay she refers is a contribution to a volume edited by two of Sedlmayr's colleagues at Vienna University,³⁶ and into which Sedlmayr acted a consistent change from Gestalt

³¹ Albert E. Brinckmann, *Geist der Nationen: Italiener – Franzosen – Deutsche*, Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1938.

³² See especially: 275-76.

³³ Albert E. Brinckmann, *Geist im Wandel: Rebellion und Ordnung*, Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1946.

³⁴ Hans Sedlmayr, *Die Architektur Borrominis*, München: Piper, 1930. See the english translation by Karl Johns, *Journal of Art Historiography*, 14, June 2016. Recently the introduction Marco Pogacnik published in the Italian edition of Sedlmayr's book (*L'architettura di Borromini*, Milan: Electa, 1996, 7-22) was translated in English: 'Beyond the Vienna School: Sedlmayr and Borromini', in Andrew Leach, John Macarthur and Maarten Delbeke, eds, *The Baroque in Architectural Culture 1880-1980*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015, 97-108.

³⁵ Levy, 343.

³⁶ Hans Sedlmayr, 'Österreichs bildende Kunst', in Josef Nadler and Heinrich von Srbik, eds, *Österreich. Erbe und Sendung im deutschen Raum*, Salzburg: Pustet, 1936, 329-46. About Sedlmayr see also the important article by Ian Verstegen, 'Sedlmayr's Borromini', *Journal of*

theories to embrace a political determined historical vision, according to the German expansion that ended with the 1938 Anschluss. What emerged are the different paths that Sedlmayr crossed to get different approaches to formalism, particularly with his turn, after 1930s, to an overtly politicised art historical criticism.

The chapter offers, undoubtedly, useful insights into Sedlmayr's theories toward his career, but seems mostly a thematic insight about the Second Vienna School³⁷ and the complex relation Sedlmayr had with Alois Riegl and his legacy.

Conclusion

The purpose of Levy's book is certainly ambitious, but although her analysis of the single art historians is compelling, the general theoretical frame into which they are included poses some problems. For example, to place Burckhardt among the formalists seems to force the boundaries of the category (or to force Burckhardt positions). But, on the other hand, its inclusion is functional to drive attention to the influence he had on Wölfflin and on his formalism.

An aspect that Levy poses clearly in her introduction is important: the necessity to study and to examine the 'biographical element'³⁸ to understand how the scholars she examines reacted to the historical circumstances they lived. This approach is adapted to the object of the analysis, so in the case of Brinckmann and Sedlmayr, Levy insists more about a horizontal view that embraced all their careers as art historians than she does in the cases, for example, of Gurlitt and Burckhardt, where she offers an in-depth analysis of single works, although she investigates the historical circumstances that shaped them.

At the end, one may wonder why Alois Riegl was not included in the book. Riegl's interest in the Baroque occupied his last years, and his late works could be also examined by the point of view adopted in the book under review.³⁹

The problem posed by Levy, the possibility to detect a political element behind formalist theories about the Baroque, occurs in a general flow of attention to that historical period which seems to have its momentum in recent years.⁴⁰ Only after 1945 the theoretical frame established at the beginnings of the twentieth century changed suddenly, but the Baroque remained a central question of art historical investigation. Maybe because, as Giulio Carlo Argan (1909-1992) wrote in 1986, introducing a volume of his writings about the Baroque, 'art historians of my

Art Historiography, 14, June 2016. In the same number of the *Journal* was published a translation of Sedlmayr's *Borromini* by Karl Johns.

³⁷ About the Second Vienna School see especially Christopher S. Wood, ed., *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s*, New York: Zone Books, 2003.

³⁸ Levy, here 24.

³⁹ About Riegl and the Baroque see Alois Riegl, *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome*, edited and translated by Andrew Hopkins and Arnold Witte, with essays by Alina Payne, Arnold Witte and Andrew Hopkins, Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2010; Evonne Levy, 'Riegl and Wölfflin in Dialogue on the Baroque', in Andrew Leach, John Macarthur, Maarten Delbeke, eds, *The Baroque in Architectural Culture, 1880-1980*, London-New York: Ashgate, 2015, 87-96.

⁴⁰ See for example *Baroque in the Architectural Culture*, and Riegl, *The Origins of Baroque Art*; but also the expected work by Ute Engels, *Stil und Nation. Barockforschung und deutsche Kunstgeschichte (ca. 1830 bis 1933)*, Berlin: Wilhelm Fink.

generation saw the birth of the question of the Baroque exactly in the crucial moment of their education. They carried it with them their whole life'.⁴¹

Marco M. Mascolo studied at the University of Siena and at the Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, where he obtained his PhD in 2014. He is currently preparing a book about Wilhelm R. Valentiner (1880-1958), which will be published at the beginning of 2017. Mascolo's current areas of research include the relationships between American and German museums between the two World Wars; American collections of Dutch Art; private and public collections in America during the 1920s and 1930s, especially in the field of Italian sculpture. His work is published in the journals *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, *Studi di Memofonte* and *Prospettiva*.

marcomascolo@gmail.com



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

⁴¹ Giulio Carlo Argan, 'Prefazione', in Bruno Contardi, ed., Giulio Carlo Argan, *Immagine e Percezione. Saggi sul barocco*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1986, VII: 'Gli storici dell'arte della mia generazione la questione del barocco l'hanno veduta nascere, proprio nel momento decisivo della loro formazione. Se la sono portata dietro tutta la vita'.