

Lecture Two: 'The History of Art'¹

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What I undertake here is approximately the opposite of Erich Rothacker in his *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*, Tübingen: Mohr [Introduction to the Humanities] of 1920. He set out to summarize the methods brought forth in the various subjects during the nineteenth century, but I by contrast, proceed from personal experience in a single field, and hope on this basis to discover what is lacking in this area, and presumably in others as well. Since Rothacker also included 'the history of art' ('Kunstgeschichte') among his considerations (p. 151), I might start with his conclusions. This outsider seems to consider 'the history of art' rather marginal in comparison to the other disciplines, 'without a stabile centre leading to further ideas, and held together by something like a simple gap in the system of the sciences which might possibly yield a flow of new approaches but hardly an original development.' 'Energies streamed into the history of art no less randomly (than the history of literature) from aesthetics, connoisseurship, architecture, philology, archaeology, history and criticism; although the core of a scholarly tradition had formed here already earlier. We can reasonably answer the question of whether Karl Schnaase, Franz Kugler, Jacob Burckhardt, Anton Springer, Carl Justi or finally Franz Wickhoff and Alois Riegl were the first scholarly protagonists of their subject by saying that it was Schnaase. It is still essential today for art to be shown within the overall culture of a nation. Kugler is said to have been the first to introduce exclusively artistic aspects into the history of art. We would like to believe that Riegl was superior to Springer in historical meticulousness but without denying the achievements of the latter. The profound differences being disputed between the trends, directed more to cultural history and to history of styles, have long ago become internal processes within a single discipline with ambitions to be considered the vanguard of the humanities.' If the judgments of Rothacker in other fields are determined by the same randomness of impressions as here with the visual arts, then I can understand why his well-meaning essay has no purpose. Would the history of art have been the least independent if the goal had been to present the individual subjects in an overall picture, all of them more or less according to the same pattern? Does philosophy actually believe that it can provide a remedy in this way? What actually matters is for these subjects to be disengaged from the context of linguistic and historical studies and to make progress delving into the particular character of each and to learn to work with values and energies rather than incidents.

Except for those making comparative studies, philologists are limited to their language. They tend to see their subject as self-contained and to view it more in the direction of its own influence than as a part of a grand and living whole, as necessarily required of specialists. When they bind themselves to philology and history, we can see the result in the excellent personality of Riegl who was completely limited to the Latin regions and admitted only the Mediterranean without the east, although at the end of his life he countenanced

¹ Translated and edited by Karl Johns, originally published as 'Zweiter Vortrag. "Kunstgeschichte"' Josef Strzygowski, *Die Krisis der Geisteswissenschaften Vorgeführt am Beispiele der Forschung über bildende Kunst Ein grundsätzlicher Rahmenversuch*, Vienna: Schroll, 1923, 35-60.

Greek-eastern Rome.² A specialist cannot treat scholarly subjects without a knowledge of all linguistic areas. It is completely impossible for them to know all of the languages that might become relevant. Of course, they need to have a good knowledge of certain languages in order to assess facts in a given field relying on verifications from philologists, or to pursue such facts independently and properly assess them on the basis of experience. Yet to take it up with philologists while neglecting his own field would be to indulge in the same mistake of the philologists themselves in the desire to know and be capable of everything, while also neglecting the living elements above the dead in which they are rooted.

What we are saying about the philologists and the period related to antiquity is equally true of the historian and the more recent periods. Both have joined the academies, and if they are not grouped in the same faculty together with the natural sciences, they set the tone. This might be the primary explanation for the tension that inevitably arises as soon as a specialist attempts to pursue their own way independently of philology and history. It is only natural that somebody doing research in the visual arts would most forcefully confront the barriers that today seem to go without saying if they are dealing with a group of monuments long calling for treatment independent of philology and history, and if the study of art is ever to gain its own standing. As the names themselves reveal, the field devoted to studying the visual arts lends itself to a confrontation because the facts are not exclusively written on paper to be managed purely intellectually but are also visible and palpable as objects of nature. It is a shame that as far as I know, the natural scientists of our time have no interest in the problems of the humanities and prefer to make common cause with the humanists in all circumstances.

It strikes me that the best way of entering into the particular example of 'the history of art' is beginning this lecture in tracing the history of art studies. I do not of course wish to give individual vignettes in the manner of Wilhelm Waetzoldt, and also not limit myself to the German art historians, but would briefly prefer to discuss the trends that I consider to have been decisive in the development of the subject down to our own time.³

As it exists today, the history of art did not begin with the study of monuments to construct a science of essentials (*eine Wesenswissenschaft*) and study of developments by way of contemplating and comparing art. That would not have been possible in the incremental awakening of interest in artists and the visual arts originally on the local level. The history of art today is the result of an historical process. As long as this past still has its effect, it will labour with all of the mistakes of such a heritage and cannot be constructed according to its own character. A time is coming when the past and the present must be set aside somewhat in favour of the future. Since it is not possible to simply wipe away historical facts, this would be less of a pioneering deed and more of an adventurous attempt more troubling than useful – if the innovator were to enter the traditional armoury and critically assess what they must reject and what they still consider to be useful for the new circumstances in the immense mass of accrued studies. This makes it imperative to take a walk through the history of art as it has existed heretofore.

² Alois Riegl, 'Oströmische Beiträge', *Kunstgeschichtliche Beiträge Franz Wickhoff gewidmet von einem Kreise von Freunden und Schülern*, Vienna: Schroll, 1903, 1-11.

³ Wilhelm Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker von Sandrart bis Rumohr*, Leipzig: Seemann, 1921, Waetzoldt, *Bildnisse deutscher Kunsthistoriker*, Bibliothek der Kunstgeschichte 14, Leipzig: Seemann, 1921.

This could show that it is necessary to begin again from the ground up. I will proceed in dealing with the emergence of the subject in the centuries until Winckelmann as constituting the beginnings of the history of art, then take the period from Winckelmann to Burckhardt as a first efflorescence, and then follow with the history of art yesterday and today. Only then in the following lecture will I make my own basic comment, and call for the history of art in the future to be systematic and comparative. We must not imagine the situation to be so as if the history of art of yesterday had been put aside by that of today, and it can be expected that that of tomorrow will at some point displace both. To the contrary, experience shows that the common paths are always most attractive and that the wide road in the valley will still be frequented when some yearning for a wider purview might be looking toward the peaks.

1. Beginnings

I will leave aside the art historical studies that were taken to advanced stages by the Greeks, and Romans, and then by Chinese in the first millennium BC, and follow only the western European movement which ends with us ourselves. Here the history of art emerged from the discord among Italians over the primacy of which city actually spawned the creator of Italian painting. Florence stood in the first place ever since the brief reference by Dante to Cimabue and Giotto. Villani, Ghiberti and others reinforced the faith in this precedence, and in the two editions of his work in 1550 and 1568, Vasari led it to such a resounding affirmation as to arouse the jealousy of other cities. Mancini stood up for Siena, Ridolfi for Venice and Malvasia for Bologna. Baldinucci answered in favour of Florence. This purely outward animation for questions of the visual arts was accompanied by the influence of the biographies as literature.

While the history of art was also being written by artists in this early period, Vasari already additionally wished to give the impression of being completely abreast of the humanist literature and its ideas about art. L. B. Alberti had already pointed the way in that direction. That particular form of neo-classical aesthetics was therefore born at the same time as the history of art, and as we shall see, it still demands that scholars of art accept it as the guide in artistic questions. Otherwise, the history of art in this beginning period was a history of individual artists with the goal of providing biographies including judgments of taste and local opinions.

Vasari has correctly been said to have written the Bible of the art historians working in his mode, and still had an effect on the great artistic monographs of the nineteenth century. They are as inventive as they are lacking in method from the specialist point of view, and will only come into their own when we begin to detach them from their outward biographical context and pursue the artistic character of a master independently from their biography, and do so comparatively with the other emerging artistic values until they converge as a personal unity. For now, we are still far from such a goal, and the determination of a source or reference to a given monument is still the fundamental specialized fact for the majority of art historians. Compared to the humanist ancestors of this conception, all that has changed is that the method has been refined so that not everything is simply accepted or rejected according to the opinion of the author, but sources as well as the monuments are examined more closely for authenticity and reliability. In most cases, there is no systematic specialized study of the underlying level of data. Like Vasari, authors are satisfied with soothing introductions and afterwords, they spread occasional witty remarks about art and artists, and to make an impression of being universally well-read, they use a

language as far from purity as possible. The result is a way of writing history that is supposed to be far from any popular 'chauvinism', but in actuality, has no marrow in its bones. This trend is carried by that mediocre humanism with the incorrect historical construct on its conscience. It is also typical that such adductions are peppered with sayings from the Greek and Latin authors as well as popular classics that seem odd in the battle alongside diatribes and off-colour anecdotes.⁴

This sort of art historical writing in present day Europe pervaded by the German influence began with the well-known advance of Italian humanism in the fifteenth century against the north that was then also influencing southern Europe. To this very day, research has characteristically not extricated itself from that fact which places the entire development in an incorrect light, and it has not been able to exchange a false historical construct in favour of the decidedly new approach it needs. Since the Italian biographical authors from Ghiberti and the anonymous biographer of Brunelleschi on to Vasari followed written sources, all of them overlooked the impulses from the east, denied any from the north and saw salvation for the arts as following antiquity, something animating Vasari's entire idea of development, that incorrect construction emerged which we call the historical model, and which sees the south at work everywhere and as the only possible zenith of developments in attaining the mode of antiquity. This false approach and humanist goal explain all of the struggles that will be necessary against the humanists of our time in order to restore the east and the north to their proper place in the development of European art. Since they for instance are unable to deny the efflorescence of northern ecclesiastical art in the Gothic, they turn against any attempt to reveal the influence of native northern wood construction in that phenomenon. They tenaciously continue to associate the 'Gothic' with that eastern art of the west they would like to consider dependent on the south in using the term 'Romanesque' ('*romanisch*'). Nebulous theory and obstinate chauvinism are the terms of honour used by one of them against any effort to view the north in terms of its own strengths.⁵ I shall be returning to this in the course the lecture. It has only been necessary to mention this here because the history of art is not so much determined by the shift from a history of artists to art, as is always being said, as rather the fact that both groups cling to the wrong approach and goals. The common ideas about the origin and character of medieval or renaissance art or the dissemination of the baroque and such things only remain tenable as long as we continue with this misguided construction of history. Our field did not produce a Montesquieu. In future, the history of art will therefore be required to clean away obsolete doctrines from the ground up.

From the period of its origins, art history has also inherited the tendency to tell stories and base their specialised work on all sorts of sources and anecdotes instead of on the subject itself, as it can only be had from the monuments as works of art. It is the same phenomenon as political history written on the basis of back steps and social gossip rather than the actual treaties and their preparation.

⁴ [Julius von Schlosser, 'Offener Brief an Herrn Hofrat Professor Dr. J. Strzygowski in Wien', *Die graphischen Künste* herausgegeben von der Gesellschaft für vervielfältigende Kunst, 41, 1918, supplement, *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für vervielfältigende Kunst Beilage der 'Graphischen Künste'* 1918, 2/3, 48-49]

⁵ Compare Julius von Schlosser, 'Lorenzo Ghibertis Denkwürdigkeiten: Prolegomena zu einer künftigen Ausgabe', *Kunstgeschichtliches Jahrbuch der K K Zentral-Kommission für Erforschung und Erhaltung der kunst- und historischen Denkmale*, 4, 1910, 179.

Another characteristic of the common trends is a survival from the early period. It places the history of art in a regrettable state of dissolution in setting names and dates on the one hand, and seeking out origins and change in 'genetic development' on the other. In scholarship, a gulf of empty spaces opens between the two, recalling that which yawned between antiquity and the renaissance. There are some today who believe that this gap can only be filled with aesthetics. There are also authors in aesthetics who oblige art historians to commit themselves to the character and rules of art and do no thinking of their own. I mention only Hugo Spitzer who calls on the history of art to guard the aesthetic rules with the historical development of art.⁶ We shall be speaking more of this later on. In the meantime, even aesthetics has, to some degree overcome its phase of infancy.

2. Second Flowering from 1755 to 1855

A period beginning with Winckelmann and Lessing, and ending with such figures as Schnaase, Kugler and Burckhardt cannot be described as anything other than a flowering. While art historians of the past and present have complacently failed to do so, a future history of art will need to make every effort to regain the heights which these men attained in the basic questions in spite of their humanist tendencies. It was possible to sideline them in order to achieve a foundation for the more simple questions ordering the monuments, but they emerged again as soon as the discipline reflected on its tasks in the larger context. Their importance lies in recognizing the full scope of questions involved in the field and in every direction.

The history of art by the Saxon philologist Winckelmann is a product of the humanist trend, and with its adaptability to the perfected philological method allowed it to reach the undisputed height it had in its time. It is based on the sources, and since it uses the monuments more as evidence it could also not reach further than the purview of those sources. Since they were also almost exclusively Greek and Latin, we can see why the south was still crucial to Winckelmann, who converted to Catholicism in 1754, and just as later, Egypt or Mesopotamia might be mentioned beside those parts of Europe, but anything from the north was instinctively repelled. As humanists, Sandrart and Karel van Mander did little to change this Italian tradition in spite of being natives of northern Europe. This basic attitude persisted into the mature period of our first great efflorescence and into our own time. Winckelmann was able to make a living without spending time on any other subject and developed into the type of specialist in art as it then later thrived at German universities, first in the field of ancient art and then everything related to it. Northern and Eastern Europe have, to this day never been able to spawn an art historian so philologically and historically inclined. For some time to come, Winckelmann remained the only one, alongside the written sources, to allow the monuments themselves to have their affect on him and to assess them as works of art in their own right. The biography of Lessing was an exclusively literary matter. Winckelmann was of course also not unbiased. 'From a very few references from Paterculus and Quintilian, Winckelmann conceived the idea of an historical development of the arts, and he defined the characters, style-types and features of ancient monuments on that basis'.

Herder would have been able to inaugurate a change in the one-sided turn to the south, but had as little lasting influence on the study of art as Montesquieu. There were

⁶ Hugo Spitzer, *Hermann Hettner's kunstphilosophische Anfänge und Literaturästhetik*, Graz: Leuschner & Lubensky, 1903, 1, 119

initial attempts then to study humanity as a whole and write a world history of art about the entire earth, but the question of the significance of the locality and humanity of a given area remained more or less something relegated to poetic fancies of storm and stress as the Romantics later did, and studies of the visual arts did not take up the question with any seriousness. Goethe was the distinctive example of this attitude to the history of art which still saw the discipline as an artificial transplant from southern Europe. Its perfect scholarly example was provided by Rumohr. In his ground-breaking *Italienische Forschungen*, the art-historical study that fills the greatest part of the three volumes appearing 1827-1831 is prefaced by a general 'budget of the arts' (*Haushalt der Kunst*), but then based his so valuable study of the monuments on assumptions about the development conceived so narrowly that they crudely contradict the attitude of the flowering moment in the discipline. We must come to terms with it however since it then had a profound influence on the art history of yesterday with its philological-historical underpinnings.

Rumohr treated the fundamental intention in the history of art in deriving the style of the Italians from the attempts of the Christians in the style of ancient classical art, and ultimately through a number of mediating elements from this early Christian art so that certain habits in arranging and composing are traced from the Christian incunabula down to the works of Raphael. Such a development was also not limited to Italian and to representative art. In an appendix about 'the common origin of the medieval architectural schools', Rumohr opined that 'we can assume that the Greeks and Romans were destined to fulfill the victory of the spirit in thoroughly subduing the material aspect of art'. 'In deriving the various medieval architectural schools we would certainly have no need to go further back than that. Considering that the critical eclectic spirit of our own time is by necessity completely absent from it, the inventions, the tenets, even the moods of the architects of higher and highest antiquity could only be transmitted to the subsequent architectural schools through the medium of Greco-Roman architecture'. It seems to me that this is still literally the creed of art historians. While Rumohr had Western Europe in mind, we have but to read Wickhoff's essay 'Über die historische Einheitlichkeit' of 1898, where vacuous analogies appear to extend the range to eastern Asia.⁷ Upon closer examination, it is surprising in fact to see that Rumohr is still today tacitly influential in the Wickhoff-school. We can see an example of this if we compare Kallab in his essay about Tuscan landscape painting, particularly to the distinction made by Rumohr between suggestive and representative painting.⁸ The tragic effort of Riegl to save conventional beliefs was also rooted in this influence from Rumohr. If we consider Rumohr, 'all works of art from the Lombard period mentioned by authors of the time or somewhat later are most of them Roman or early Christian subjects except incomparably cruder and more formless than the

⁷ Franz Wickhoff, "Über die historische Einheitlichkeit der gesamten Kunstentwicklung," *Festgabe zu Ehren Max Büdinger's von seinen Freunden und Schülern*, Innsbruck: Wagner 1898, 459-469, and reprinted in Franz Wickhoff, *Abhandlungen, Vorträge und Anzeigen Die Schriften Franz Wickhoff* herausgegeben von Max Dvořák, Zweiter Band, Berlin: Meyer & Jessen, 1913, 81-91.

⁸ Wolfgang Kallab, "Die toscanische Landschaftsmalerei im XIV und XV Jahrhundert, ihre Entstehung und Entwicklung," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, vol. 21, 1900, p. 6 and Rumohr, *Italienische Forschungen*, 1, Berlin: Nicolai, 1827, 164 'Betrachtungen über den Ursprung der neueren Kunst'.

previous period governed by the Goths'.⁹ The byword of 'Kunstwollen' which Riegl introduced also has its traces in Rumohr.¹⁰

Rumohr's one-sided effort to fill the yawning gap left by Vasari between antiquity and the renaissance was not the only achievement of the first efflorescence in the discipline. Efforts from this time to establish northern Europe in its own right against the south extended to the development as well, but lost their force with the custom of the time in referring to the style known as 'Byzantine' as 'romance' or 'romanic' according to French conventions in linguistics beginning in 1821 – in the belief that the northern cultures then joined the south as an organic unity. Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1842, also prepared the way for this conviction in Germany. It is clear how strongly he was influenced by the Romantic mindscape from the very fact that he subsumed later art including early Christian, Byzantine and Islamic under the rubric romance art ('*romantische Kunst*') 'to the extent that it zealously, deeply and in a diverse way creates the antithesis to the still simplicity and clear isolation of classical art'. By the insertion of this analogy to the Romanesque style (*des romanischen Stiles*) to linguistic changes, northern art, specifically the Gothic, was robbed of its foundations. As justifiable as it might be, the designation as 'Germanic' aroused such objections from the French as to preclude any sort of agreement. Today, after eighty years, we have finally arrived at a point where it can be resumed where it was left off – discoveries in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Iran and in the north make it possible to attempt a resolution.

Hegel and his school determined the shift in treating the visual arts much as neo-classicism and romanticism did so for the overall conception of architecture. Problems of meaning, the object and content, came so much to the fore that it became necessary in the last decade of the nineteenth century to rediscover the questions surrounding the phenomena, such as figure and form. Hegel then lit the way, however with dogmatic one-sidedness that was decisive for some scholars of art.

The first grand efflorescence of the discipline found its actual support among the significant geographers of the time. They were the ones who, like Kugler and others had the courage to contemplate the entirety of the world, extend the purview of those who had been bound to Rome and Paris as it is difficult for us to imagine again today. A circle arose in Berlin who would have been capable of also consistently pointing the way for studies of art. Regrettably, Paris and Vienna very quickly responded with a counterstroke that led the history of art backward from the flowering of yesterday. We will be returning to this.

The first of these great figures was Alexander von Humboldt. His scholarly journeys to South America and the region of the Urals provided him with a view onto the entirety of the world expressed in his book, *Kosmos*, 1845-1848. He did not leave things with the bare facts, but pursued what I would call an essential analysis, entering into its inner values, opening the way to a history of the development attending to forces not stopping at historical identifications in the realm of monuments. This places him far ahead of Karl Ritter, the second geographer of the time. For studying the monuments, this figure provides a point of departure for us today. His *Erdkunde* has laid the imperishable foundations for Asia and Africa and the areas decisive to the development of southern art (*Südkunst*).

The men who motivated the earliest scholarly research into the visual arts themselves believed to have thought two things through before turning to the specific

⁹ Rumohr (note 8), 1, 195.

¹⁰ Rumohr (note 8), 1, 119, 127.

subjects. These were the character of art in general and the various parts of the world related to it. Karl Schnaase, *Geschichte der bildenden Künste* began appearing in 1843, and the author lived just long enough (dying 1873) to himself direct the second edition arranged geographically and extending to the beginnings of the renaissance. It is necessary to look through the bibliographical references in order to marvel at the devotion which led them to include the entire earth in their art historical study based on travel reports. It was only then beginning in the 1870s that it became customary for research in art to find a small cocoon, preferably limited to a part of Europe, and today it seems almost unscientific to do otherwise. Museum work and the local commissions of monuments have gained the upper hand, and both demand special knowledge and a full command of the linguistic and historical details of the region or parts of the museum at their disposal. This has led to the purview being narrowed to such an extent as to seriously endanger the entire field in its historical development as well. Schnaase had already dealt very thoroughly with historical explanations of art in their interplay with the elements of life.

Figures such as Bötticher and Semper also belong to the pale of the first efflorescence of the discipline, artists who intervened decisively into research without themselves writing history, but pursuing questions of essential qualities and developments, the former guided by the idea that certain things were unworthy of the Greek spirit and should be eliminated, and the latter by his experience of Roman art which he valued above all else and placed 'requirements' above all else. Because of the wrong approach this led Bötticher and Semper to make, the salubrious aspect of their artistic sense has been overlooked.

The conclusion of this first efflorescence also includes the movement that is only today having repercussions in the history of art, the great revaluation of questions surrounding development in the natural sciences. Lamarck had explained direct adaptation on the basis of activity. Development and progress had already become catch phrases in society when Buckle declared in 1857 that history was based on the conditions of soil, surroundings and technology, and Darwin in 1859 pointed out the changeability of species and the expedient adaptation in the struggle for survival. No impulse of this reached the history of art. It is true that Lübke took up the idea of development but had very little to say about northern Europe or America, then returning to the traditional genealogy of art beginning with Egypt. The disputes in the natural sciences did indeed have their effect on anthropology, a discipline then rising to such a level of scholarship that art historians today can learn from it. The period around 1860 was also a sort of heroic age for research in prehistory. Significantly, Germany did not participate, while all of the countries to the north and west did, including Switzerland. Germans were almost exclusively interested in things related to antiquity and the south. Somebody setting out to study northern Europe on its own will need to begin with the works in prehistory that have not liberated themselves from the circles of the south. Carl Schuchardt is alone in providing a recent exception. In refining his own methods, Montelius was to some degree directly inspired by Darwin.

When Rothacker, p. VI, says that 'the structure of the humanities today is still based on the grand foundations of late romantic science and its followers', he is completely correct as to research in the visual arts. They were the source responsible for dividing the history of European art into given 'stylistic periods'.

As we distinguish them, 'styles' are artistic currents whose names have become so popularly accepted that research feels it proper to maintain them for the sake of simplicity although their linguistic meanings have no scientific value – unless we consider the viewer rather than the art, and extrapolate from the name to the judgment of the time. Names such

as gothic, baroque, rococo or 'Zopf' are justified by their origin as negative judgments from a successive generation. Rinascimento, the name of the renaissance was introduced by the conscious creators of the humanist trend themselves. 'Romanisch', 'romance' or Romanesque is the only rubric of style to have been invented by scholars at a later date. It was also not a result of objective reflection, and this means that we are again eliminating a concept that has been adopted by the language in a fixed way and will be causing endless disputes.

In all of these instances, the designation for the style and the word 'style' itself would be better avoided. Since Buffon pronounced the dictum in 1753 that 'le style est l'homme même' the style makes the man, first Sulzer and Winckelmann, and then Rumohr and Semper made extensive use of it, and it has become adopted in German usage. If we pay a bit of attention to the matter, explanations will seem so manifold that it would be better to find an apt German word instead.¹¹ Vasari used the term maniera. It was Winckelmann in any case who invested the concept of 'style' with the measures of antiquity: Both in pose and expression, noble simplicity and quiet grandeur originally meant style to him. This meant that the baroque was without style and Raphael was a paragon. The research that set in after Winckelmann on the Christian period primarily filled the great medieval gap, baroque was to Winckelmann what the Gothic had been to Vasari, and the 'Romanesque' was distinguished from the 'Gothic'. The decision was made when French scholars of the 1820s united in positing a 'style romane' as prerequisite to the 'style ogivale' and then Burckhardt inserted the renaissance between what had then been considered the two late styles. We can read Winckelmann for a taste of things before these distinctions were drawn. The catchwords introduced during the first great efflorescence of the discipline have for the sake of simplicity persisted to the present day, and what neo-classicism and romanticism assumed for clarity eventually become a fettering factor. We discuss this further in the appendix ('Fundamental Errors in Historical Research') to the fourth lecture of this series.

3. The History of Art of Yesterday

The first great efflorescence of the discipline was followed by a period of workmanlike definitions of the subject within the context of general history. Until that point, distinguished individual spirits had turned to the history of art as the result of a personal urge. It now became possible for anyone who had mastered the individual western European method and passed the compulsory examinations. Aptitude was no longer very important. The result was that a scholar could become a leader with a knowledge of anything other than art. They tend to be very capable in the philological and historical handicraft, inundated the world with publications that seem conscientious in collecting the material, but they become useless to the field in the moment that they embrace aesthetics to gain some sort of understanding of art.

The historical method was that of the history of art of yesterday. As a matter of schooling, this trend was set with the founding of the *École des Chartes* in Paris in 1821, and the *Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* in Vienna in 1854, which Theodor von Sickel brought to great heights in the years following 1867. Since this school devoted to historical auxiliary sciences is alone in disposing over the means and assistive elements for dealing with the Christian period and has by now accrued a bountiful experience, it is only

¹¹ For the development of the term style, see Eduard Castle, *Germanisch-romanische Wochenschrift*, 1914, 153-4.

natural to have reached a routine able to train people by the dozens as well as the individuals who might later come up with innovations. It is often described as the French method and has become standard in approaching European medieval art.

The trend emerged in the second decade of the nineteenth century when Caumont devoted his energies to historical preservation, Didron to iconographical research and Lenoir studied the monastic movements. It thrives today in the work of Molinier, Lasteyrie, Brutails, Diehl, Enlart, Omont and others. They work primarily with source materials and the auxiliary sciences. The handbooks published by Alphonse Picard on the subjects of diplomatics, paleography, medieval art, history and historical bibliography originated in the circle of the *École des Chartes*. They are remarkable at least as much for their general approach as for their content. Grautoff feels that the arrangement of French books parallel to dramatic literature, the simple and clear structure, the limitation to essential and avoidance of excess to be the result of the teachings of the *École des Chartes*.¹² Such work was possible because the students were not first subjected to lectures with general surveys, but immediately exposed to the essential aspects which form the axis of all scholarship – first defining their topic clearly and distinctly. They were then shown the [written] sources and admonished to lay the foundations. The tectonics of their own discoveries, essays, comparisons and explanations then rise from that secure substructure. The construction is then crowned by the 'conclusion'. Every good French book is based on this method. In 1882, Courajod transferred this method to the administration of the *École du Louvre*, the academy devoted to the later history of art to compensate the *École des Chartes* roughly as the *Faculté des lettres* relates to the *École normale supérieure*. Brutails' *L'Archéologie du moyen-âge et ses méthodes* and Molinier's introduction to the fifth volume of *Les Sources de l'Histoire de France* are usually cited as basic and authoritative for the spirit and significance of the *École des Chartes*.¹³

Brutails is the most pronounced proponent of this genre in the history of art and in Austria it is Julius Schlosser. They study monuments on the basis of documents and are professional historians. A summary of everything achieved by the French school has been published in 1913 by their most faithful student, Hans Tietze.¹⁴ We must not be deceived by the model found in Bernheim's text book of historical method.¹⁵ While the arrangement was taken from those sources, the frames were characteristically filled with the French mode of thinking. This has been clearly recognized by Grautoff: in France, where the history of art was given form by the *École des Chartes*, the principles proposed by Tietze have long ago been recognized as the basis for all studies about the arts. In light of how meticulous Tietze has been, I might have spared myself my entire fourth lecture on the approach to artistic monuments if it were not so necessary to object resolutely to the structure and emphasize how completely unprofessional (*unfachmännisch*) it is to base such an essay about the history of art primarily on sources, and to point out the natural guidelines for creating the initial overview in a given subject for research in the arts.

¹² Otto Grautoff, 'Die Ecole des Chartes', *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft*, 7, 12, 1914, 398-399.

¹³ Brutails, *L'Archéologie du moyen-âge et ses méthodes*, Paris: Picard, 1900, Auguste Molinier, *Les Sources de l'Histoire de France des origines aux guerres d'Italie* (1494), *Manuels de bibliographie historiques*, 5, Paris: Picard, 1904.

¹⁴ Hans Tietze, *Die Methode der Kunstgeschichte Ein Versuch*, Leipzig: Seemann, 1913.

¹⁵ Ernst Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode und der Geschichtsphilosophie*, 5th and 6th revised ed., Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1908.

It was also the art history of yesterday that created a dogma when Kugler in his *Handbuch* first saw the Germanic Gothic as following the Romanesque (*romanisch*) and Burckhardt then supplemented it with catchwords renaissance and baroque for the fifteenth and the following centuries. This mythology has entered the flesh and blood to such a degree that it is today considered to be cohesive, definitely immanent, and even generalised in discussions of the development as if they were fixed concepts. Distinctions such as geographical and intellectual conditions, society and time all recede entirely behind the stylistic period. Together with the limitation of the vision that had existed in the first efflorescence of the discipline, this rigid adherence to a single assumption has reduced the standing of art research to historicist schoolmasterly pedantry and reduced it to an auxiliary science. This is what makes it difficult to advance the subject again as a whole. When it constantly evokes its precise and meticulous methods, which actually only benefit the cataloguing of monuments, it is itself to blame for its current state of absent-mindedness. Those were necessary reflections at the beginning, but with the obstinate lopsidedness of some protagonists, it has since become an obstacle. It is regrettable that figures such as A. Springer who had originally been pure historians, were attracted by the subject in essential matters independent of aesthetics but were so quickly pushed aside by the school working historically-philologically.

In the mean time, the leading spirits among the historical sciences have gone down the road of confrontation on the question of their principles and goals. We cannot unfortunately expect any resolution as long as the 'philosophy of history' participates in the discussion and there is no clear distinction of subjects and general historians do not continue to have the word. Solid ground will only be found for the historical sciences to build on when descriptions, assessments and comparisons of the relevant things are done in the framework of every individual practical maxim and a clear distinction of observer studies (*Beschauerforschung*) from material culture studies (*Sachforschung*). When Bernheim published *Geschichtsforschung und Geschichtsphilosophie* in [Göttingen: Peppmüller] 1880, the path into the fateful error had already been taken, and makes it doubly difficult to fully untangle the confusing heap of polemics it has produced. In order to elude the methods of the natural sciences, Bernheim preferred to embrace philosophy and endorsed standards and convictions that had already been introduced by Hegel and are still adhered to by Tröltzsch and others. He overlooked the fact that aside from historical facts there are also essential facts that can only be discerned on the basis of specialised research, in the manner of the natural sciences, and form the transition to the goals of historical studies, the questions of developments. They can also not involve any attitudes or convictions but only facts objectively established by procedures of their own. Purposeful clarity cannot be found in a combination of ideal-philosophical with socialistic-natural scientific methods, but only by keeping material studies separate from all of philosophy. Bernheim suffered from the innate defect of his thinking throughout his life and through all of the editions of his textbook about historical method and the philosophy of history.

Such study of written sources for the monuments as objective sources and disengagement of the observer studies (*Beschauerforschung*) as a blind trend leads to the childish dispute between historians, anthropologists and cultural historians as we have discussed it in the first lecture of this series. Ratzel's essay about history, anthropology and

the historical perspective was published in 1904.¹⁶ We can read a response from Seeliger asserting that historians should still maintain their European approach.¹⁷ By now we can see that even political historians are able to work with such a narrow perspective. Lamprecht did more harm to a good thing by not specialising in any particular direction and believing that it was possible to cover everything in cultural history with a single approach. Art historians should read his introduction to historical thought from 1912 to convince themselves that such a 'truly frightful' survey of the stages of culture with examples from book illumination is certainly unacceptable.¹⁸

It is absurd to imagine that in facing the monuments, research can hope to find clear answers from unsullied written sources.¹⁹ A field that has not yet learned to draw conclusions on the basis of its own material is still in its infancy. Studies of art have in fact not developed much beyond that stage and philologists and historians for this reason believe that they can easily master the subject. There was a time when attention was devoted to the whole and to the essence. It ended with the cultivation of historical-philological specialisation which brought local historic preservation and museum work to the fore. For the most part, the university chairs did homage to those exigencies and for this reason, scholarly research into the visual arts developed breadth rather than depth. Both historians and philologists gained control in this way so that somebody today viewing the one-sidedly over used routes is likely not to be understood any longer.

From the example of how the history of art has constructed its image of European art of the Christian period, we can easily see how far the sources can lead astray, and that research that does not begin from the monuments themselves and considers their gaps necessarily leads to a state of blindness. It has produced a distorted image reducing serious scholars to children playing a guessing game and degrading the entire value of the subject. After overrating the south, remaining completely ignorant of the east and misunderstanding the west, the history of art in an odd form of suicide explicable only by the bias of the sources, has treated its own native north so peripherally that the guild devoted to collecting and only very superficially classifying the material, guarding their own form of service to power, possessions and humanism, can only consider a scholar with a broader purview to be an irrational visionary. Those scholars who began with the monuments, contemplating the forms of the visual arts and constructing sequences of developments, were again unable to make progress because they worked within too narrow a sphere of material and had no way of assessing the European objects beyond that sphere.

I have spent decades attempting to integrate the shifting role of the east in the style of early Christian art, the migration period and subsequent styles down to the renaissance.²⁰ This very naturally led to northern Europe. That is where the actual roots lie of European art

¹⁶ Friedrich Ratzel, 'Geschichte, Völkerkunde und historische Perspektive', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 93, 1, 1904, 1-46.

¹⁷ Gerhard Seeliger, 'Geschichte und Völkerkunde', *Historische Vierteljahrsschrift*, 8, 1905, 115-124.

¹⁸ Karl Lamprecht, *Einführung in das historische Denken*, Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1912.

¹⁹ See Manfred Bühlmann, *Die Entstehung der Kreuzkuppelkirche*, Heidelberg: Winter, 1914, response by Strzygowski, 'Die Entstehung der Kreuzkuppelkirche', *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Architektur*, 7, 1914-1919, 51-77.

²⁰ Most recently, Strzygowski, *Ursprung der christlichen Kirchenkunst*, Leipzig: Hinrichs 1920, with an appendix listing publications since 1903, 196-200 [*Origin of Christian Church Art*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1923].

of the Christian period. With the church, the state and humanism, the eastern and southern regions were able to bend its strong trunk quite far. We can only hope that the year 1918 has finally brought liberation and will allow a development that can do justice to the north.

Historical science is composed of individual subjects. It is inevitable that history on a general level without preparatory work must necessarily rely on assumptions, conceptions and convictions rather than facts. The latter can only be culled by specialists from the monuments and never from the contents of sources. As long as the preparation of the material is the main consideration and processing it is secondary, then philologists and historians can have great say with their valuable auxiliary services, declare the study of written sources to be the up and down, and feel justified. As soon as we reflect on what constitutes a 'field of study', it is to be hoped that the advocates of the philological and historical primacy will see reason. In his book mentioned above, Brutails, p. 31, took a remarkable step for instance in refusing to conclude 'tel fait historique a dû faire dévier la marche de l'art; donc il l'a fait réellement dévier'. In spite of that, he only too often draws historical conclusions about facts surrounding developments such as in the case of Périgueux and the Aquitainian domes, p. 95: since there are none in Byzantium, they must be native to France. Brutails should have looked around the east a bit more. He would have discovered a third possibility. It is necessary to read the passage he wrote to guess how Brutails might feel about my publication of Armenian art.²¹ It strikes me that similar missteps in evidence occur when humanistically inclined scholars such as Julius Schlosser introduce coins or Wiegand Corinthian capitals in terms of innovations.

It was unfortunate that the first discipline to work in history was devoted to secular, political power. Since humanism came to serve court and ecclesiastical society, a general situation emerged similar to that of the history of art, in that de Vogüé chose Syria to begin his laudable research in the east.²² Since cupolas played no part in the architecture there, that 'feat' was taken to be a considerable achievement of the west. Historical sciences fell into a similar error by beginning their studies with politics and written sources. Disputes about the character of history and the methods of historical science would have been resolved long ago if they had begun with some other field with tangible monuments or even if the distinction between direct and indirectly relevant source material had been applied more rigorously in the sense of objective- and observer studies (*Beschauerforschung*).

In its guise from yesterday, the history of art thrived in the shadows of power with great assistance from the courts and led to the phenomenon of art collecting as it is emphasised today and guided by well-known museum officials. It runs so rampant in the heads of some of those enraptured by the trappings of power and possessions, that the field has become completely diluted by such a wide latitude instead of first defining itself in depth.

When Leopold von Ranke first proposed the idea of a history of the humanities in Germany to King Maximilian II of Bavaria in 1858 and the following year presented an outline to the historical commission of the Bavarian academy, the visual arts were completely absent, other than possibly being subsumed together with music in the rubric of aesthetics, – the list included philosophy, aesthetics, classical philology, Germanic philology

²¹ [Josef Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst der Armenier in Europa Ergebnisse einer vom kunsthistorischen Institut der Universität Wien 1913 durchgeführten Forschungsreise*, planmäßig bearbeitet von Josef Strzygowski, 2 vols. Vienna: Schroll, 1918]

²² [Charles-Jean-Melchior de Vogüé, *Syrie centrale*, Paris: Baudry, 1865-1877.]

and antiquities, oriental philology and comparative linguistics, history, military history etc.²³ The art history of yesterday did not achieve a scholarly definition of studies in the visual arts any more than the first great efflorescence that went before.

4. The History of Art Today

The decisive element in the opposition against the exclusively philological and historical trend was a turn to the artistic aspects. Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone*, had made the first step in this but not continued, and Justi had no followers. Very naturally, movement did not come from the historical sciences but instead from natural sciences, artists and others with artistic gifts. The first led the way inspired when art turned away from the rules of beauty established by humanist aesthetics on the basis of ancient and renaissance forms. Naturalism made a break from that. It was no longer fussy in choosing its models, the figures were no longer the 'beautiful form' in itself but any form and the emphasis was no longer on that so much as on the mode of the form, on how it appears as mass, space, tone and colour. This aroused objections from those who begin the study of the human body and expect art to display its perfection. The leader was the physiologist Brücke, and along with other physicians they urged art to adhere to the ideal. The struggle began to justify unbeautiful objects and was strongly helped along by the choices of new subject matter and significance taken from the realm of the poor and the sick. Independent of that, the studies in the arts continued on the road of observation with Morelli, Julius Lange, Volkmann and others leading the way. All of these considerations dealt essentially with values of form, but another powerful impulse in a different direction came from artists.

We might first say a word about scholarly research on the question of 'the field'. It did not begin of its own accord, and in no way methodically, but was instead inspired by ideas from aesthetics that had become obsolete long ago and assumed a stance either in favour or against. Since then, some of the specialist exponents of 'the history of art' dispute with the 'study of art' (*Kunstwissenschaft*) with historians claiming the art studies should be left to aesthetics or general art studies (*Ästhetik oder allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*) and that the history of art must apply their conclusions. On the other hand, the protagonists of art studies either work closely with aesthetics or general art studies or individual stylistic groups (*Stilgruppen*) in an effort to discover the so-called fundamental principles (*Grundbegriffe*) through a process of generalisation or else proceeding along both ways – as with Schmarsow and his circle. Leaders of that sort train entire groups of students who aimlessly pursue history and aesthetics alongside one another and never make an effort to get a sense of the entire field. Since they do not see the whole or the general qualities, their comparisons are tainted and involve aesthetic convictions, possibly congenital, and they seek to confirm them through education in history. They like to hunt out laws through avenues such as psycho-physical research, and since prominent personalities tend to get in the way they prefer to write the history of art without names (*Kunstgeschichte ohne Namen*). They are nonchalant in taking on any question without having examined the foundations of the field and use stylistic concepts that had been introduced during the first efflorescence of the subject as safeguards. They seem to feel that such common hardened ideas of styles are rounded out physical phenomena immutably valid for all times and must remain at the centre of attention. In doing this, all they see is Europe, Egypt, at best something of Mesopotamia, and

²³ Johann Caspar Bluntschli, *Geschichte des allgemeinen Staatsrechts und der Politik: seit dem sechzehnten Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., 1867 and supplement *Historische Zeitschrift* 1, 54 f., and 2, 119 f.

believe that no natural streams of art existed since Greece and Rome. We have seen that this narrow range of attention is based in the early development of the history of art and its reliance on historical studies.

While this rational work was remarkable for the observer studies (*Beschauerforschung*), a second trend arrived and felt like fresh air. Like all of the humanities, the history of art had started from the written sources. Its visual material does however have a value for the present along with its age value, and this slowly led to works of the past being assessed according to values of the present. When the catch phrases of changing tastes, such as naturalism, illusionism, impressionism and now expressionism etc., were applied to 'antiquity' and the 'Gothic' and the former was retired to the sacred precinct of quiet simplicity and grandeur, an artistic scale eventually emerged beside the historical and the aesthetic. Although there was still a soulful search for the land of the Greeks or of some other group, the objects were no longer accepted simply in the humanist sense, and the observer as such at least could remain rationally cool. This opened a way that eventually allowed a diversion from the written sources, verifying their evidence free of aesthetic preconceptions and leading from the monument to the work of art as a repository of more elevated facts. That alone should of course have brought about a revision of the procedure, but it would have completely undermined the history of art in its first great scholarly efflorescence and the time was not yet ripe for such a thing.

In its one aspect, the impulse came from classical archaeology. The subtle mind of Heinrich von Brunn had like Winckelmann been trained by the works in Italy and those brought to Munich to see things not in terms of philology, but to make comparisons artistically. He trained a school that from the outset worked with more than just the sources. Original visual experience before the works of art assumed a place beside the written documentation of the monuments and stylistic criticism began to verify, correct and augment the preliminary philological work. When Furtwängler published his *Meisterwerke* in 1893, the ground had already been prepared to such an extent that in spite of certain weaknesses, the new approach could be certain of complete success.²⁴ Until today though, there have still been none to methodically apply essential analysis (*Wesensforschung*) to the field of ancient art. As it was planned, the *Handbuch der Archäologie*, Munich 1913 reveals a complete uncertainty about treating the 'Objects and Aids in Archaeological Research', in the first volume, and then instead of providing the foundations for it in the 'systematic study of monuments' placed that in the fourth volume following the second and third containing 'the history of ancient art'.²⁵

In the field of later art, the movement set in during the 1890's with the book by an artist about his own mode, Adolf Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form* in 1893, followed shortly in 1895 by Franz Wickhoff, *Die Wiener Genesis*, where the catch phrases from the visual arts of the time were unabashedly applied to late antiquity.²⁶ My own book, *Das Werden des*

²⁴ Adolf Furtwängler, *Meisterwerke der griechischen Plastik*, Leipzig: Giesecke & Devrient, 1893.

²⁵ Heinrich Bulle ed., *Handbuch der Archäologie*, Munich: Beck, 1913.

²⁶ Adolf von Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst*, Strasbourg: Heitz, 1893 [Remarks on the Problem of Form, New York: College Art Association, 1952]. Wickhoff (mit W. v. Hartel). *Die Wiener Genesis*, Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses, Beilage: vol. 15 and 16, 1895, reprinted as Franz Wickhoff, *Römische Kunst (Die Wiener Genesis)* Die Schriften Franz Wickhoff herausgegeben von Max Dvořák, Dritter Band, Berlin: Meyer & Jessen 1912, and Soest: Davaco 1974. [*Roman Art*, London: Heinemann, 1900.]

Barock, and Wölfflin's *Klassische Kunst* appeared in 1898, and Riegl concluded this first phase with his *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* in 1901 and his *Dutch Group Portraiture* in 1902.²⁷ One could expect that these advances might have been adequate in finally raising research above the level of narrow philological and historical concerns and directing attentions to artistic matters. In spite of this, a student of Wickhoff and Riegl undertook it in the book *Die Methode der Kunstgeschichte*, to return the field to its bearings from before the year 1890.²⁸ This might have been because none of those we have mentioned had come around to methodically laying out their approach. Such an undertaking still required an expansion of our study of the monuments, an extension of our purview in place and time – it is impossible to perform essential research (*Wesensforschung*) and less so the history of developments on the sole basis of individual European stylistic sequences.

Art historical procedure of the present tends to be described as 'stylistic criticism' (*das stilkritische*). It seems rather unclear what this means. Following Riegl, the monuments are addressed in terms of their artistic volition, *Kunstwollen*, and after Wölfflin according to the development of the visual forms. As if that is what matters. All too often, the development of its art does not express the desires of a period but instead impedes it. When Wölfflin presents certain polarities as resounding in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he did not study to see whether they were vehicles of the development or rather simple expressions of the forces making themselves felt across all of Europe. The latter seems to be likely since these tensions were already apparent between the seminal masters at the beginning of the sixteenth century – above all Michelangelo and Correggio, as I have attempted to demonstrate in my *Werden des Barock*.²⁹ It was an overtly simple explanation to interpret art as a product of formal values. This was a trend begun in Germany by an artist, A. R. Mengs about whom Waetzoldt has written.³⁰

²⁷ Strzygowski, *Das Werden des Barock bei Raphael und Correggio. Nebst einem Anhang über Rembrandt*, Straßburg: J. H. Ed. Heitz, 1898, Heinrich Wölfflin, *Klassische Kunst Eine Einführung in die italienische Renaissance*, Munich: Bruckmann, 1899, Alois Riegl, *Die spätromische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn im Zusammenhange mit der Gesamtentwicklung der Bildenden Künste bei den Mittelmeervölkern*, Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1901. [Reprinted ed Otto Pächt as *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*, Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckeri, 1927. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973, 1987. Facsimile of 1927 ed, with an afterword by Wolfgang Kemp, Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 2000. Italian translation by Bruna Forlati Tamaro and Maria Teresa Ronga Leoni with an introduction by Sergio Bettini, *Industria artistica tardoromana*, Contributi alla storia della Civiltà europea, Florence: Sansoni, 1953, reprinted Milan: Ghibli, 2013. English translation by Rolf Winkes, *Late Roman Art Industry*, Rome: Brettschneider, 1985. Selection from 1927 ed, pp. 389-405, Christopher S. Wood ed, *The Vienna School Reader Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930's*, New York: Zone, 2000, 87-103. French translation by Marielène Weber, Augustine Terence and Sophie Yersin Legrand, *L'industrie d'art romaine tardive*, Paris: Macula 2014, 470 pp.] Riegl, 'Das holländische Gruppenporträt', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, vol. 23, 1902, 71-278 [reprinted in 2 vols., ed Karl Maria Swoboda, Vienna: Staatsdruckerei, 1931. Vienna: Wiener Universitäts-Verlag, 1997. Excerpts in English translation by Benjamin Binstock, 'The Dutch Group Portrait', *October*, no. 74, 1995, 3-35. English translation by Evelyn M. Kain and David Britt with an introduction by Wolfgang Kemp, *The Group Portraiture of Holland*, Los Angeles: Getty, 1999. French translation by Aurélie Duthoo and Etienne Jollet, *Le Portrait de Groupe hollandaise*, Paris: Hazan, 2008.]

²⁸ Hans Tietze, *Die Methode der Kunstgeschichte Ein Versuch*, (note 14).

²⁹ Strzygowski, *Das Werden des Barock* (note 24).

³⁰ Wilhelm Waetzoldt, 'Mengs als Kunsthistoriker', *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, 54, 1919, 126.

Today, the best-known advocate for this genre in the history of art is Wölfflin. His *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* nonetheless reveals that it is not possible to revive monuments historically and conceive an art work as present, and to consider 'the problem of stylistic development in the visual arts' it is first necessary to understand the nature of art and to gain a knowledge of the monuments necessary for drawing any conclusions in a given field.³¹ For now, Wölfflin combines such a one-sided attitude toward the questions of form together with the pervasive narrow purview that we can almost consider the spirit of Hegel to have been reborn with the difference that the questions surrounding form have replaced those about content.

In spite of the short history behind the history of art, we can already see relapses to earlier tendencies that seem to be obsolete related to the humanistic, and later philological, historical and aesthetic trends which had grown strong in the nineteenth in relation to the eighteenth century. Goethe provides the best example. The stormy appreciation of the Strasbourg cathedral could never have passed the lips of the Olympian in Weimar. Similar things can be seen with Burckhardt. His rigidified fixation on the renaissance was a matter of his mature years. Nothing of the kind is discernible while he was collaborating with the open-minded Kugler. Once Burckhardt turned completely to source work in the field of antiquity and the renaissance, he ceased to be an art scholar (*Kunstforscher*). It would have been possible to provide inspiration circuitously through cultural history but that was not strong enough against the humanistic current. The last attempt to reach the history of art from an aesthetic and psychological schooling has come from Hamann.³²

Since it retained the periodisation from the first great efflorescence of the discipline and simply filled out the frame with the results from the intervening monuments research, the history of art today gives a strange impression as if the succession of styles in Western Europe had been a natural result of the visual arts themselves. By the process of generalisation, it might even like to assume that this 'immanent' development could even apply to the visual arts altogether and generically. Of course, this was only possible for some of those who cocooned themselves comfortably in Europe or even in limited stylistic circles of Western Europe, and felt that the history of art could be studied objectively without attention to circumstances outside of Europe and beyond the arts themselves. One could have supposed that my own publications and even the advances made by Schnaase and Taine might have prevented such one-sidedness. Presumably, the traditional academic spirit that accounted for this, explicable by a certain arrogance of aestheticians and historians as far as they were present in the narrow space of the average humanist. We can never expect the field to recover along those lines because scholars of this stripe have no idea how much ignorance and unscholarly lopsidedness are involved in this approach.

We would now like to show how the history of art might transform itself. By way of introduction I quote a few sentences from my essay 'new paths of research in the visual arts'.³³ They consciously revert to the first great efflorescence of the discipline. 'Today we should recall the movement that began nearly a century ago with Rumohr, *Italienische*

³¹ Heinrich Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe Das Problem der Stilentwicklung in der neueren Kunst*, Munich: Bruckmann, 1915.

³² Richard Hamann, 'Die Methode der Kunstgeschichte und die allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft', *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft*, 9, 2, 1916, 64-78.

³³ Strzygowski, 'Neue Bahnen der Forschung über Bildende Kunst', *Österreichische Rundschau*, 62, 1, January-March 1920, 33-38, especially 37-38.

Forschungen, first with preliminary archival work. It was shrewdly applied by Kugler to a global survey of monuments and then by Schnaase into close relations to the natural, ethical and religious conditions of the visual arts. Schnaase, *Geschichte der bildenden Künste*, first edition, 1843, says that the arts are an expression of the physical and spiritual, sensual and intellectual qualities of a given nation, already closer to an explanation in terms of a historical development, while today we would like to create the foundations for a specialised construction of scholarly work about the visual arts as a study in essentials (*Wesensforschung*). What we aspire to today is closer to what Semper once said, 'I believe that the time is not far away when linguistic studies will interactively approach those dealing with artistic forms and inevitably provide most remarkable reciprocal insights for both fields'.³⁴ When the philological-historical trend arose shortly thereafter it threw everything off track. Today it is necessary for us to begin again with what Rumohr once called for in his introduction, 'Haushalt der Kunst', and has until now been lazily left to aesthetics. Continuously, and in Vienna for the first time in my inaugural lecture and then again in *Altai-Iran*, I have called for 'a new mentality – a necessity' that we cannot avoid a new direction in scholarship that would begin by deconstructing and then systematically comparing the art work and then place the artistic essence and values at the centre of our specialised study of the monuments – involving the materials, the craft, the purpose or function, figure, form and content as a whole. Formal or spatial questions are inadequate in isolation, and as with the chronological and local disposition we are here dealing with the whole.³⁵ I believe that research in art has by now reached a point that it can intrepidly face this general aspect of its endeavours in all directions. Plenty of topics would then remain to be dealt with incrementally by trial and error, involving historical developments our ultimate goal, the questions surrounding the beholders requiring an agreement with aesthetics, and the many problems arising from the way we deal with historical monuments, our misguided museum administrations and then introducing the visual arts at the various levels of general education. For now there should be no doubt about the necessity of a systematic essential analysis (*Wesensforschung*) based on visual experience before works of art'.

'Historical development is also a form of research based in facts, or must become so to survive. The situation will be different however, once we have answers to the questions surrounding development in the form of firm and confirmed facts. For the time being we must remain content in having framed the problem. Even the seeds of a resolution can only be expected after research has directed its attention to the entire circle of the earth so as to eliminate the distinction between historic and prehistoric periods, and all social levels are treated equally so as to expand and deepen the method of essential comparisons (*Methode des Wesensvergleichs*)'.³⁶ For the time being, French scholarship following Taine in figures such as Berr have made advances in questions surrounding developments.

Art historians today have ignored my own work. This is striking in W. Waetzoldt's *Bildnisse deutscher Kunsthistoriker*.³⁷ He makes no reference to my studies of the Near East

³⁴ Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten*, 1, p. 7.

³⁵ Josef Strzygowski, *Altai-Iran und Völkerwanderung Ziergeschichtliche Untersuchungen über den Eintritt der Wander- und Nordvölker in die Treibhäuser geistigen Lebens anknüpfend an einen Schatzfund in Albanien*, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1917, 302.

³⁶ Strzygowski, 'Neue Bahnen' (note 30) 37-38.

³⁷ Wilhelm Waetzoldt, *Bildnisse deutscher Kunsthistoriker*, (note 3).

which had already provided an impetus to Wickhoff and Riegl. It goes without saying that reactions have been the same to the studies of northern European art to say nothing of our works about method. There has been some action in Berlin. There is a publication about Islam within universal cultural history by the present secretary of state, C. H. Becker and my response.³⁸ I hope to live long enough to see the disappearance of this systematic political attitude of Vogel-Strauß as well as Rothacker.

Is the history of art faring any better than my own publications? Perhaps the deafening silence is due to the fact that historians feel uncertain about the conclusions of the history of art, not so much because they understand so little of the character of the visual arts and the idiosyncrasies of this sort of research, but more because they could ultimately never completely believe in the scholarly seriousness of such ventures. How could anybody in the outside ever believe in it when the subject does not even believe in itself but instead simply participates in the usual historical, philological and philosophical rot?

5. Art Studies of Tomorrow

The plan and the method of this shall be presented in this book and distinguish itself from the previous mode by securing the history of art from yesterday in its scholarly core, essentially a study of monuments with a touch of philosophy of history, and then transform the art history of today with systematic comparison into a general study of essences (*Wesenswissenschaft*) as a firm scholarly foundation and then to ultimately work out the plan and method for a study of development (*Entwicklungsforschung*). By keeping these three trends strictly apart and first discussing the field of object research more thoroughly, we believe that we, for a certain length of time at least, have brought about the element of historical science within research in the arts. This book has no bearing on a philosophy of the visual arts or of the beholder who writes about them entirely as an artist.

In retrospect, the movement seems to have begun with my book, *Orient oder Rom*, 1901, with an introduction tracing the 'development' of art in the first three centuries AD, then in a comparative way against Wickhoff and now also Falke, in the essay on Egyptian silk fabrics in the Berlin museums, subtitled 'late-antique interactions between China, Persia and Syria', and followed then in 1903 by the call for a study of essences (*Wesensforschung*).³⁹ This laid out the path that I now look back upon after twenty years. Their complete silence shows how little the history of art and the humanities have troubled themselves about this shift. Members of those professions are incapable of breaking the humanistic spell and prefer to consider a serious career to be a fraud than take the trouble of adjusting.

Such a reorientation however moves in two directions, first to developing a comparative method on a systematic basis, and then also to pushing back the border between the object and its violation by the observer who is developing into a beholder. Our factual material must expand both in value and number, quality and quantity, in a way that

³⁸ C H Becker, 'Der Islam im Rahmen einer allgemeinen Kulturgeschichte', *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 76, 1922, 18-35, Josef Strzygowski, *Das Erwachen der Nordforschung in der Kunstgeschichte*, Åbo Akademi: Acta Academiae Aboensis / A; 4,6, 1-45.

³⁹ Josef Strzygowski, *Orient oder Rom Beiträge zur Geschichte der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst*, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901. Strzygowski, 'Seidenstoffe aus Ägypten im Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Wechselwirkungen zwischen China, Persien und Syrien in spätantiker Zeit', *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 24, 2, 1903, 147-178. 'Die Zukunft der Kunstwissenschaft', *Beilage der Allgemeinen Zeitung München*, vol. 55, March 9, 1903.

has not been intuited by the individual fields of the humanities. Is it not worth pursuing the facts? Has humanity not produced more in this regard than any scholar can imagine? Leave the 'interpretations' of philosophy and of artists alone. They create far greater things in their inner lives than we scholarly grocers could ever assemble in our incomplete states. We have yet to discover a world of facts of which the 'data' accrued historically and philologically only provides the lowest level. A construction of facts of value in studying essences, and developmental facts of force or power can only be assembled above that. In assembling the factual materials, there are also still the observer studies (*Beschauerforschung*). As scholars, we are austere in our connoisseurship. Students of the arts are needed by the scholars in other fields of the humanities to point out where the artist is present. If somebody today finds the new path toward factual research (*Tatsachenforschung*) and reaches unexpected conclusions they will not be believed by their colleagues. If the facts are considered in all possible directions, then scholarship at the minimum level is also neither ineffective nor tedious. In my contribution to the volume, *Die Kunstwissenschaft der Gegenwart*, I have made comparisons of the fundamental and the factual element.⁴⁰

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⁴⁰ Josef Strzygowski, 'Grundsätzliches und Tatsächliches', Johannes Jahn ed., *Kunstwissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*, Leipzig: Meiner, 1924, 157-181.