

Watching the shield core
 Striking the basket, skidding across the floor
 Shows less and less of luck, and more and more

Of failure, spreading back up the arm
 Earlier and earlier, the unraised hand calm
 The apple unbiten in the palm. Philip Larkin (1960)¹

It may seem a little cruel to open an essay on Riegl with Larkin's great poem on failure, which ends with the Fall – especially as our protagonist did more than any other scholar in art history or Classical archaeology to fight the model of decline. But my interest here is less in Riegl as such than in the unravelling of his influence through a series of later receptions in the Roman side of Classical archaeology, going back “earlier and earlier” (as Larkin says) to a fundamental set of propositions that tend to have been as much accepted by the discipline as they have been unexamined. The recent revival in Riegl studies – a genuine “Riegl-Industrie” as it has been called – in art history and its cognate disciplines (such as conservation and monument studies) has been accompanied by almost no such notice among Classical archaeologists, despite what I take to be a wholesale and uncontested acceptance of his agenda and many of his methodological preoccupations. This paper will explore why and offer some reflections.

Art History and Classical Archaeology

The rediscovery of Riegl by art historians in the English-speaking world as a major early theorist and practitioner was supremely motivated by a perceived need to revive some aspects of formalism in the discipline during the 1980s and after. The sense of a need to return to formalism was itself in the wake of the demise of style art history (such as that

especially practiced by the Vienna School) in the second half of the twentieth century, and especially after the Second World War. That demise, in the English-speaking world at least, has its origins in the exile of a series of German- or Austrian-trained art historians mainly of Jewish origin in the 1930s and the dominance of the Warburgian agenda of such powerful figures in America and Britain as Erwin Panofsky, Ernst Gombrich and Edgar Wind in the 1950s and 60s. These scholars, and their followers, initiated a fundamental turn from issues of form and structure in art to questions of meaning;² and that turn was interestingly prompted in part, and certainly typified, by their specific reactions to Riegl and to everything his heritage could be made to stand for.³ This heritage included especially the controversial but brilliant figure of Hans Sedlmayr (Professor Ordinarius in Vienna from 1936 to 1945 and an active Nazi), whose essentialist development of Riegl's formalism and of the study of style in general as a theory of fundamental structure would effectively be surpassed by Panofskian Iconology because of the War and the discredited politics Sedlmayr's programme appeared to bolster.⁴ When the so-called “New Art History” attempted to

1 Larkin's poem “As Bad as a Mile” was published in *The Whitsun Weddings*, London, 1964, 32, and in *Collected Poems*, London, 1988, 125.

2 On the move to meaning, see esp. S. Alpers, “Style Is What You Make It: The Visual Arts Once Again” in B. Lang (ed.), *The Concept of Style*, Ithaca, NY, 1979, 137–62, esp. 148.

3 Especially – for early responses to Riegl – E. Panofsky, “Der Begriff des Kunstwollens” *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 14 (1920) 321–39 in *Deutschsprachige Aufsätze*, vol. 2, Berlin, 1998, 1019–34, translated by K. Northcott and J. Snyder as “The Concept of Artistic Volition” *Critical Inquiry* 8.1 (1981) 17–33 and E. Wind, “Zur Systematik der künstlerischen Probleme” *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 18 (1924) 438–86. For Gombrich, see e.g. E. Gombrich, “Kunstwissenschaft” in *Das Atlantis Buch der Kunst: Eine Enzyklopädie der bildenden Kunst*, Zürich, 1952, 653–64, esp. 658, and E. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, London, 1960, 14–18. For a defence of Riegl against these Warburgian attacks, see esp. O. Pächt, “Art Historians and Art Critics – VI: Alois Riegl” *Burlington Magazine* 105 (1963) 188–93 and O. Pächt, *The Practice of Art History: Reflections on Method*, London, 1999, 268–300.

4 H. Sedlmayr, “Die Quintessenz der Lehren Riegls”, introduction to A. Riegl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Vienna, 1929, xii–xxiv, reprinted as “Kunstgeschichte als Stilgeschichte” in H. Sedlmayr, *Kunst und Wahrheit*, Mittenwald, 1978, 32–48, translated in R. Woodfield (ed.), *Framing Formalism: Riegl's Work*, Amsterdam, 2001, 11–31 and H. Sedlmayr, “Zu einer strengen Kunstwissenschaft”, *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen* 1 (1931), reprinted as “Kunstgeschichte als Kunstgeschichte” in Sedlmayr (1978) 49–80 and translated as H. Sedlmayr, “Towards a Rigorous Study of Art” in C. Wood, *The Vienna School Reader*, New York, 2000, 133–79.

overturn the post-War art-historical establishment, including the Warburgian ascendancy in all its iconographical and iconological dogmatics, formalism – whether borrowed from the linguistic turn of French (post-)structuralism or from the twin traditions of Riegl and Wölfflin – was one of the key intellectual paradigms brought back into action, and Riegl was frequently invoked.⁵

Although an understanding of *Kunstwollen* – Riegl's most controversial conceptual contribution – is ultimately to be prised out of Riegl's work, it is worth attempting a working definition or sketch at this stage.⁶ In my view, the genius of *Kunstwollen* lies in bridging the aesthetic, cultural and structural characteristics of any given object from any time (not only high art but any form of craft) with the broader cultural aesthetics of its time. *Kunstwollen* – although it could be defined by a rigorous formalist analysis of a given object or set of objects – was designed to take one from the particular object or group of objects to the big historical picture. On one level, *Kunstwollen* is narrowly encapsulated in the struggle between an artist and his limitations in the materials he works on and his own technical capacities. The work of art here shows “the result of a specific and consciously purposeful artistic will that comes through in a battle against function, raw material and technique”.⁷ This definition appears to apply equally to any given and individual work of art (as in all the specific examples Riegl adduces with such care throughout “Spätromische Kunstindustrie”), but also to the work of art in general (or art as a general proposition) and to the generality of works of art in any given period as

well. In principle, it applies beyond material culture to all other epiphenomena of an era – including religion, literature and law.⁸ Methodologically, this solves a fundamental problem in art history and archaeology, which is that every case we argue for can be seen as a special case. *Kunstwollen* – by reflecting a fundamental structure as true to the special case as to the typical examples – cuts through the problems of arguing from selective instances.⁹ It is, in other words, a generative assumption about the creation and appearance of all manifestations of culture, including works of art, which is either so transparent as to be “obvious” and need no further philosophical adumbration or is so obscure as to demand significant critical commentary. As it turned out in the years after 1920 the Classical archaeologists largely fell into the camp of those who saw *Kunstwollen* as right and unproblematic, while the art historians wanted further adumbration. Effectively, the gap between the Classical archaeologists and the art historians is that between those to whom *Kunstwollen* was obvious and needed no critique, on the one hand, and those on the other (from its severest critics like Panofsky, Wind and Gombrich to its most heartfelt apologists like Sedlmayr and Pächt) who felt the need to attack, extend, undermine or bolster its meanings and implications.¹⁰ Much has been written on the art-historical assault on *Kunstwollen* (a topic of genuine and fundamental critical interest in art history, not least since it was the philosophical whetstone on which the blades of the likes of Panofsky and Sedlmayr were sharpened), but nothing whatsoever on the consequences of failing to think about it at all, which is my topic here.

One particular aspect of Riegl's current popularity lies in his advocacy of art historical moments perceived as marginal (beside the normative dominance of Classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance, especially in the Warburg school) – such as the arts of Late Antiquity, Dutch painting, the Roman Baroque, not to speak of ornament in general – has been specially appealing in the last quarter century. Not only might it be said to resist dominant canons of art, but it specifically undermined dominant canons of art-historical writing. Strikingly, the interest in the marginal is marked not only in the rise of the Riegl-Industrie but also in which of Riegl's own works have become the most discussed. Among art historians, it is Riegl's shorter and more modern writings – especially the “Dutch Group Portrait” – which have garnered most attention.¹¹ Among those keen to find an early pioneer in the tangential disciplines of art

- 5 For instance, Y.-A. Bois, “Susan Smith's Archeology” in S. Bann and W. Allen (eds.), *Interpreting Contemporary Art*, London, 1991, 102–23, esp. 121; M. Bal and N. Bryson, “Semiotics and Art History” *Art Bulletin* 73 (1991) 174–208, esp. 174.
- 6 Fundamental is M. Olin, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art*, University Park, 1992, 71–2, 129–53; also M. Iversen, *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory*, Cambridge, Mass., 1993, 6–16, 71–3, 76–83, 96–112; M. Gubser, *Time's Visible Surface: Alois Riegl and the Discourse on History and Temporality in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, Detroit, 2006, 153–61 on *Kunstwollen* and history; J. Elsner, “From Empirical Evidence to the Big Picture: Some Reflections on Riegl's Concept of *Kunstwollen*” *Critical Inquiry* 32 (Summer, 2006) 741–66.
- 7 A. Riegl, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*, Vienna, 1901, 5 = A. Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry* (translated R. Winkes), Rome, 1985, 9.
- 8 See Riegl (1901) 215 = Riegl (1985) 231, a position strikingly endorsed by Panofsky, one of Riegl's most incisive critics, in E. Panofsky, “Über das Verhältnis der Kunstgeschichte zur Kunsttheorie. Ein Beitrag der Erörterung über die Möglichkeit ‘kunstwissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe’” *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 18 (1924) 129–57, esp. 154–5.
- 9 This paragraph largely recapitulates Elsner (2006) 750.
- 10 On the art historians, see Elsner (2006) 756–64.
- 11 A. Riegl, *Das holländische Gruppenporträt*, Vienna, 1931 (translated as A. Riegl, *The Group Portraiture of Holland*, Los Angeles, 1999) with e.g. Olin (1992) 155–74; Iversen (1993) 93–122; B. Binstock, “Alois Riegl in the Presence of the Nightwatch” *October* 27 (1995) 36–44; F. Laarman, “Riegl and the Family Portrait, Or How to Deal with a Genre or Group of Art” in Woodfield (2001) 195–218; B. Binstock, “I've Got You Under My Skin: Rembrandt and the Will of Art History” in Woodfield (2001) 219–263. Cf. also A. Riegl, *Die Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom*, Vienna, 1907 with e.g. M. Rampley, “Subjectivity and Modernism: Riegl and the Rediscovery of the Baroque” in Woodfield (2001) 265–290.

history, interest has focused especially on the shorter works and essays (as indeed is proved by the majority of contributions to the conference out of which this celebratory volume was born). Modernists have found in Riegl an early champion of folk art,¹² a seminal theorist of monuments and their conservation,¹³ a significant advocate of the anthropology of art.¹⁴ The Riegl of these studies is an essayist, a contributor of brief, stimulating, suggestive aperçus – sometimes reflections only surviving in the learned reports of society proceedings from the late Habsburg era. In this reading Riegl becomes surprisingly like Walter Benjamin (who famously wrote about Riegl of course)¹⁵ – literary essayist, inspiring originator whose thoughts are surprisingly modern, prematurely deceased in tragic circumstances, the works surviving in numerous fragments . . . He becomes both a figure of his times, that most scintillating moment of late Habsburg cultural and intellectual innovation before the onset of World War I,¹⁶ and a prophet prefiguring current attitudes.¹⁷ Effectively, in common with the post-structuralist and deconstructionist tendencies that have become so influential in the human sciences, the works of Riegl which are marginal to his main oeuvre have become central to the discussion; the suggestive has become more significant than the systematic or the lengthy and carefully worked-out argument.

The works on which relatively less effort has been expended are the long and difficult ones – especially “Spätromische Kunstindustrie” and “Stilfragen” – which both happen to deal with non-modern, indeed ancient bodies of empirical evidence, carefully adumbrated and stylistically described at length. It is in these texts, and especially in “Spätromische Kunstindustrie”, that Riegl worked out – on the relatively narrow arena of a specifically interrelated and chronologically concentrated set of data – the great and controversial concept of *Kunstwollen*, which he bequeathed to art history,¹⁸ and beyond art history to sociology as a defining factor of *Weltanschauung*.¹⁹ Yet even the most recent book on *Kunstwollen* skims over any careful reading of these texts,²⁰ while the most recent monographic discussion of the decorative arts in English (despite a whole chapter on “touching and seeing” – Riegl’s famous “haptic” and

“optic”) fails even to mention Riegl’s name, let alone to cite either “Stilfragen” or “Spätromische Kunstindustrie”.²¹

Essential to what might be called the skirting of Riegl’s major works – his most scrupulously written, carefully conceived, longest and most systematic books which also happen to be the ancient-orientated works – is the collusion of the Classical archaeologists, especially in recent years (precisely those in which he was being rediscovered in Art History more broadly). If one takes, for example, the most recent “standard” scholarship among Classical archaeologists on the great series of Roman sarcophagi which Riegl uses in the second chapter of “Spätromische Kunstindustrie” to trace the development and transformation of the imperial Roman *Kunstwollen*, it is striking and symptomatic to see the process of oblivion at work. In pages 71–81 of

- 12 See esp. A. Riegl, *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*, Berlin, 1894 with e.g. S. Muthesius, “Alois Riegl: Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie” in Woodfield (2001) 135–50 and G. Vasold, *Alois Riegl und die Kunstgeschichte als Kulturgeschichte*, Freiburg, 2004, 21–80.
- 13 See esp. A. Riegl, “Der moderne Denkmalkultus, sein Wesen, seine Entstehung” (1903) in *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Vienna, 1929 with e.g. M. Olin, “The Cult of Monuments as a State Religion in late Nineteenth Century Vienna” *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 38 (1985) 177–98; S. Scarroccchia, *Alois Riegl: Teoria e prassi della commisione dei monumenti*, Bologna, 1995; S. Scarroccchia, “I fondamenti delle teoria disciplinare della conservazione di Alois Riegl” *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 50 (1997) 41–74; I. Hlobil, “The Reception and First Criticism of Alois Riegl in the Czech Protection of Historical Monuments” in Woodfield (2001) 183–94; Gubser (2006) 141–9.
- 14 E.g. J. Masheck, “The Vital Skin: Riegl, the Maori and Loos” in Woodfield (2001) 151–82; Gubser (2006) 179–86.
- 15 See W. Benjamin, “Bücher, die lebendig geblieben sind” (1929) in *Gesammelte Schriften* III, Frankfurt am Main (1972–89) 169–71 and “The Rigorous Study of Art” (1931) in Wood (2000) 439–52, esp. 442–3, but also “Curriculum Vitae (III)” (1929) in *Selected Writings* 2.1, Cambridge Mass., 1999, 77–9; “Some Remarks on Folk Art” (1929) in Benjamin (1999) 278–9; with M. Jennings, *Dialectical Images: Walter Benjamin’s Theory of Literary Criticism*, Ithaca, 1987, 156–8; Iversen (1993) 14–16; G. Peacher, “Works That Have Lasted . . . Walter Benjamin Reading Alois Riegl” in Woodfield (2001) 291–301; Gubser (2006) 202–14 arguing that “Riegl’s work occupied a central place in Benjamin’s thought” (204).
- 16 See e.g. W. Sauerländer, “Alois Riegl und die Entstehung der autonomen Kunstgeschichte am Fin de Siècle” in R. Bauer et al. (eds.), *Fin de Siècle: Zu Literatur und Kunst der Jahrhundertwende*, Frankfurt am Main, 1977, 125–30; J. Oberhaidacher, “Riegls Idee einer theoretischen Einheit von Gegenstand und Betrachter und ihre Folgen für die Kunstgeschichte” *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 38 (1985) 199–218; Iversen (1993) 21–47; M. Olin, “Alois Riegl: The Late Roman Empire in the Late Hapsburg Empire” *Austrian Studies* 5 (1994) 107–20; D. Graham Reynolds, *Alois Riegl and the Politics of Art History: Intellectual Traditions and Austrian Identity in Fin-de-siècle Vienna*, PhD thesis, University of California, San Diego, 1997; A. Ballantyne, “Space, Grace and Stylistic Conformity: *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* and Architecture” in Woodfield (2001) 83–106, esp. 98–103; E. Lachnit, *Die Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte und die Kunst ihrer Zeit*, Vienna, 2005, 53–63, 72–5; Gubser (2006) for intellectual and educational contexts.
- 17 J. Elsner, “The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901” *Art History* 25 (2002) 358–79, esp. 359–61.
- 18 For example, see the specific engagements with this concept by some of the giants of the discipline in the twentieth century – Panofsky (1920); Wind (1924); Sedlmayr (1929). Note also the polemic surrounding Panofsky’s 1920 paper in A. Dörner, “Die Erkenntnis des Kunstwollens durch die Kunstgeschichte” *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 16 (1922) 216–22 and Panofsky’s riposte in Panofsky, (1924) esp. 158–61 in Panofsky (1998) 1035–63, esp. 1060–3.
- 19 K. Mannheim, *Beiträge zur Theorie der Weltanschauungsinterpretation*, Vienna, 1923 (= *Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 15 (1921–2) 236–74), translated as “On the Interpretation of Weltanschauung” in K. Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, New York, 1952, 33–83 and K. Mannheim, *From Karl Mannheim*, New York, 1971, 8–58.
- 20 A. Reichenberger, *Riegls “Kunstwollen”: Versuch einer Neubetrachtung*, Sankt Augustin, 2003.
- 21 D. Brett, *Rethinking Decoration: Pleasure and Ideology in the Visual Arts*, Cambridge, 2005.

“Spätromische Kunstindustrie”, Riegl argues that the “best material on which to research the development of reliefs in the middle empire is Roman sarcophagi” and he adduces six objects (dating from the Severan period to the early fourth century) – each enumerated, given an isolated and specific analytic description and illustrated with a fine black and white plate placed beside Riegl’s account – which he subjects to rigorous, indeed virtuoso, stylistic analysis.²² The modern literature on these is characterised by the hefty volumes of the “Antike Sarkophagreliefs” series published by the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin. Riegl’s items 1 and 4, sarcophagi showing Achilles and Penthesilea, on the one hand, and Adonis on the other, are published by Dagmar Grassinger in “Die Mythologischen Sarkophage: Teil 1: Achill bis Amazonen” (1999) as numbers 127 and 67 respectively.²³ Although Grassinger gives a “complete” bibliography for each item, going back to Carl Robert’s fundamental publication of the Roman sarcophagi from the 1890s and including references to Walther Amelung’s Vatican catalogue from 1903 and Salomon Reinach’s “Répertoire de reliefs grecs et romains” (1909–1912), she makes no reference to Riegl’s frankly classic formal descriptions in “Spätromische Kunstindustrie”. Likewise, in the newest discussion of Riegl’s item 1, in Björn Ewald’s appendix to the most recent and lavish account of Roman sarcophagi as a cultural and artistic phenomenon by himself and Paul Zanker, the lengthy bibliography entirely excludes “Spätromische Kunstindustrie”.²⁴ Riegl’s item 2 – an Attic rather than Roman Achilles sarcophagus from the Capitoline Museum – appears in Sabine Rogge’s “Die Attischen Sarkophage: Erster Teil: Achill und Hippolytos” (1995).²⁵ Again Rogge gives

a “complete” bibliography reaching back via Henry Stuart Jones’ Capitoline catalogue of 1912 and an article by Thomas Ashby from 1907 to Carl Robert in 1890, but she finds no space for, nor makes any mention of, Riegl’s discussion at “Spätromische Kunstindustrie”. Riegl’s item 3, showing Meleager hunting the Calydonian Boar, and item 5, the right side of a Muse sarcophagus in the Villa Mattei in Riegl’s day but now in the Museo Nazionale in Rome, appear respectively in publications by scholars of earlier generations – Guntram Koch’s “Die Mythologischen Sarkophage. Teil 6: Meleager” (1975), no. 67 and Max Wegner’s “Die Musensarkophage” (1966), no. 128.²⁶ Both of these *do* cite Riegl, Wegner the original 1901 edition of “Spätromische Kunstindustrie” and Koch the 1927 reprint. Riegl’s sixth item – a Hippolytus sarcophagus found in Salona and subsequently in Split – has not yet been published in the German sarcophagus series since “Die Mythologischen Sarkophage” has not yet advanced in its alphabetical series beyond ‘G’ for ‘Grazien’, apart from Koch’s stand alone volume on Meleager.²⁷

The upshot of this is fairly clear. Just as after the 1970s we find a rapid revival and reintegration of Riegl’s work and ideas in mainstream (non-ancient) art history, the same period sees a squeezing out of what had remained a living tradition of referring to (dare one also imagine this actually extended to reading?) Riegl in Classical Archaeology up until the advent of the 1980s. But after the 1980s, the new generation of specialists (here represented by Grassinger, Rogge and Ewald) – assiduous though they are (by contrast with colleagues in later disciplines) in their bibliographic command over a particularly long and linguistically diverse historiography – have managed to forget

Riegl. Certainly the more general accounts of sarcophagi, beyond the great series of catalogues, have consigned Riegl’s intervention to oblivion.²⁸

The Reception of Riegl in early to mid Twentieth Century Classical Archaeology

The current position in Classical archaeology must be compared with the past. Unlike post-Classical art history’s shift away from style and form to meaning after the 1940s, the study of ancient art never fell under the iconographic, iconological and interpretative spell of the Warburgian ascendancy. It never rejected formalism or stylistic analysis but rather continued on the route of creating catalogues of objects by category and type – each entry care-

- 22 Riegl (1901) 71–81 = Riegl (1985) 82–90. On this passage in *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*, see Elsner (2006) 743–6.
- 23 D. Grassinger, *Die Mythologischen Sarkophage: Teil 1: Achill bis Amazonen*, Berlin, 1999, no. 127, pp. 250–1, and no. 67, p. 220.
- 24 P. Zanker and B. Ewald, *Mit Mythen leben: Die Bilderwelt der römischen Sarkophage*, Munich, 2004, no. 3, pp. 285–8.
- 25 S. Rogge, *Die Attischen Sarkophage: Erster Teil: Achill und Hippolytos*, Berlin, 1995, no. 24, 44–5, 136–8. It might be said that here, according to modern notions of object-classification, the inclusion of this sarcophagus (made in Athens of Pentelic marble and carved on all four sides unlike the Roman sarcophagi which were only carved on the front and the two ends) is a fundamental category mistake – the comparison of an orange with a series of apples. Its seamless inclusion in Riegl’s stylistic litany of formal descriptions ignores differences of provenance and object-type. On the Attic sarcophagi, see for example, B. Ewald, “Men, Muscle and Myth: Attic Sarcophagi in the Cultural Context of the Second Sophistic” in B. Borg (ed.), *Paideia in the World of the Second Sophistic*, Berlin, 2004, 229–76.
- 26 G. Koch *Die Mythologischen Sarkophage. Teil 6: Meleager*, Berlin, 1975, no. 67, 24–5 and 102–3; M. Wegner, *Die Musensarkophage*, Berlin, 1966, no. 128, pp. 50–53.
- 27 Riegl’s discussion of the Split sarcophagus is not mentioned by N. Cambi, “Die stadtrömischen Sarkophage in Dalmatien” *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1977) 444–59, no. 9, 453–4, but is referred to earlier by E. Reschke, “Römische Sarkophagkunst zwischen Gallienus und Konstantin dem Großen” in F. Altheim and R. Stehl, *Die Araber in den Alten Welt III*, Berlin, 1966, 307–416 at 308, no. 4.
- 28 E.g. G. Koch and H. Sichtermann, *Römische Sarkophage*, Munich, 1982; Zanker and Ewald (2004).

fully dated by style and morphology, as in the examples of sarcophagus catalogues cited above. In the development of this discipline not only was Riegl not forgotten, but his legacy – in particular, the specific historical questions arising from “Spätromische Kunstindustrie” as well as from Riegl’s highly innovative take on those questions – has proved central both to the way the study of Roman art has developed and to its self-description and historiography, in such works as Otto Brendel’s “Prolegomena”.²⁹

In the controversial article that assaulted *Kunstwollen* and ultimately spelt its demise in post-ancient art history, Erwin Panofsky (with characteristic incisiveness, for he always knew his true enemy) selected Gerhart Rodenwaldt as one of his prime targets. The aim was true, since Rodenwaldt would prove to be the most influential Classical archaeologist of the period before the Second World War, rising to being General Secretary of the German Archaeological Institute from 1922 to 1932 and then the principal professor of Classical Archaeology in Berlin, as well as director of its Archaeological Institute during the 30s and 40s.³⁰ Specifically attacking a passage in a conceptual paper on the meaning of the Classical in art where Rodenwaldt turns to the question of Will (*Wollen*),³¹ Panofsky strikes directly:

What has been said recently is just as untenable historically as it is philosophically: “In art history there is no question of being-able-to, only a question of Will . . . Polyclitus could have sculpted a Borghese Gladiator, and Polygnotus could have painted a naturalistic landscape, but they did not do so because they would not have found them beautiful.” Such a statement is wrong because a “Will” can only be directed toward something which is already known and because by the same token it makes no sense to talk of a “non-will” in the psychological sense of denial . . . where a possibility which diverges from what is “willed” is inconceivable to the subject in question.³²

He returns to the attack again in the same paper in the note to page 330: “To take Rodenwaldt’s example we would say in this terminology: ‘Polygnotus can neither have willed nor been capable of the representa-

tion of a naturalistic landscape since such a representation would have contradicted the immanent meaning (*Sinn*) of fifth-century Greek art”.³³ Note that here, thinking in terms of the specific example and against Rodenwaldt’s chosen emphasis on *Wollen*, Panofsky has characteristically transferred the issue to a question of *meaning*, *Sinn*. Panofsky returns to the fray for a third time in a later paper, published in 1924, which begins explicitly where his 1920 essay left off (i.e. a farewell to *Kunstwollen*)³⁴ and ends with a response to a “polemic” against his 1920 critique of *Kunstwollen* published by Alexander Dörner.³⁵ Here, without referring to Rodenwaldt explicitly but footnoting and indeed quoting in the text both

29 See O. Brendel, *Prolegomena to the Study of Roman Art*, New Haven, 1979, 25–68 on Riegl, Wickhoff and their successors. On the teleological challenge posed by *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* to the succeeding generations of specialists in Roman art, see J. Elsner, “Frontality in the Column of Marcus Aurelius” in J. Scheid and V. Huet (eds.), *Autour de la colonne Aurélienne*, Tournhout, 2000, 251–64, esp. 260.

30 Rodenwaldt has not been sufficiently studied and never been explained. He was professor in Berlin from 1932–45, a charged period politically, and committed suicide together with his wife as the Russian tanks rolled into the city on 27 April 1945. The usual explanations are tragic-heroic, citing his despair at the death of his only son, killed on active service (e.g. M. Bieber’s obituary, *AJA* 50 (1946) 405–6 and A. Borbein, “Gerhart Rodenwaldt’s Bild der römischen Kunst” in E. Gabba and K. Christ (eds.), *L’impero romano fra storia generale e storia locale* II, Como, 1991, 175–200, 186). This line may be true; but as the most influential Classical archaeologist of the Third Reich, Rodenwaldt may have had other reasons: the story certainly deserves to be told and the archival evidence may exist. On context, see S. Marchand, *Down From Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970*, Princeton, 1996, 263–375, and for a brief picture of Rodenwaldt as a liberal humanist in an age of National Socialism, see A. Borbein, “Gerhart Rodenwaldt: Gedenkworte zur 100. Wiederkehr seines Geburtstages” *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1987) 697–700. On Rodenwaldt in Berlin, see A. Borbein, “Klassische Archäologie in Berlin” in W. Arenhövel and C. Schreiber (eds.), *Berlin und die Antike*, Berlin, 1979, pp. 125–150, esp. 143–5; K. Junker, *Das Archäologische Institut des Deutschen Reiches zwischen Forschung und Politik: die Jahre 1929 bis 1945*, Mainz, 1997, 20–4 (on Rodenwaldt at the DAI and the succession to Theodore Wiegand in 1932) and W. Schindler, “Gerhart Rodenwaldt und die Geschichte des Bereiches Klassische Archäologie” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Reihe* 35 (1986) 629–36 (on Rodenwaldt in the department of Classical Archaeology). For some general discussion of his career, see U. Hausmann, “Rodenwaldt, Gerhart” *Enciclopedia dell’arte antica. Classica e Orientale*, 6, Rome, 1965, 740–2; *idem* in R. Lullies and W. Schiöngren (eds.), *Archäologenbildnisse*, Mainz, 1985, 236–7; E. Gran-Aymerich, *Dictionnaire biographique d’archéologie 1798–1945*, Paris, 2001, 588–9. For general assessments of Rodenwaldt, see H. Sichtermann, *Kulturgeschichte der klassischen Archäologie*, Munich, 1996, 313–8 and esp. W. Schindler (ed.), *Erkenntniszuwachs und Methodenvielfalt im Wissenschaftswerk von Gerhart Rodenwaldt*, Berlin, 1986 = *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Reihe* 35 (1986) no. 8. These proceedings of a conference in celebration of the centenary of Rodenwaldt’s birth by Classical archaeologists in the German Democratic Republic, whose lack of access to modern books and recent developments in the field led to a fascinating historiographic engagement with the archaeology of the pre-divided German past, is the only substantive assessment of Rodenwaldt’s intellectual contribution. It reminds us that just as before 1914 there were at least two German historiographies of Classical archaeology (German and Austro-Hungarian), so after 1945 there were also two German historiographies of the field – on the two sides of the Iron Curtain; and that in East Germany is not wholly to be dismissed or forgotten.

31 G. Rodenwaldt, “Zur begrifflichen und geschichtlichen Bedeutung des Klassischen in der bildenden Kunst: Eine kunstgeschichtsphilosophische Studie”, *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 11 (1916) 113–31, 123.

32 Panofsky (1920) 326 = (1998) 1023 and (1981) 22–3 from which I quote with some emendation. For some discussion, see M. A. Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History*, Ithaca, 1984, 85–6, 88.

33 Panofsky (1920) 330, n. 1 = (1998) 1027, n. 11 = (1981) 26, n. 10.

34 Panofsky (1924) 129 = (1998) 1034.

35 Dörner (1922) 216–22; Panofsky (1924) 158–61 = (1998) 1060–3.

his own earlier uses of and corrections to the Polygnotus example,³⁶ Panofsky again exploits Rodenwaldt's understanding of Will as the counter example against which to develop his own theory of meaning.³⁷

Two things are relevant here. First, we can perhaps glimpse the divergence of art history from Classical archaeology – something not true in the generation of Wickhoff, Riegl and Strzygowski but effectively enacted in the decades after Riegl's death and perhaps to some extent in relation to differing receptions of Riegl's heritage. Second, Panofsky shrewdly isolates a passage where Rodenwaldt has effectively imbibed Riegl's *Kunstwollen* not only as a specific historical thesis related to the transformation of forms in late Roman art, but as a general principle of all artistic production. Panofsky effectively uses Rodenwaldt to highlight the rapid and remarkable rise of *Kunstwollen* to the level of an unchallenged given in the art historical unconscious – something governing artistic creativity to which historians of art instantly, instinctively and unthinkingly had come to resort. This in turn allows Panofsky to take Rodenwaldt's implicit formalism (by which the will of Polyclitus or Polygnotus can choose particular forms to create by virtue of aesthetic whim) as the counter-case against which to construct the theory of *meaning* which would ultimately become, after several further German essays and Panofsky's American transplantation, the theory of Iconology by the late 1930s.

But for Rodenwaldt and the mainstream of his successors within Classical archaeology, Riegl's work was not important as the foundation for an explicit general theory of *Kunstwollen* or for the development of a philosophically defensible theory of stylistic formalism (as was the case in the Second Vienna School).³⁸ Rather, for the Classicists, what mattered was Riegl's bold and categorical confrontation, particularly in "Spätromische Kunstindustrie", with one of the greatest historical and aesthetic problems

in all ancient art – the retreat from naturalism in late antiquity.

Before turning to Classical archaeology's (and particularly Rodenwaldt's) uses of Riegl, let us summarize some aspects of what Rodenwaldt called "Riegls monumentales Buch",³⁹ "Spätromische Kunstindustrie", or to give the work its full title "Die spätromische Kunst-Industrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn im Zusammenhange mit der Gesamtentwicklung der bildenden Künste bei den Mittelmeervölkern", was published in Vienna in 1901 in a luxury and small-circulation edition by the Austrian Archaeological Institute, with photographs expensively inserted alongside the relevant text (as opposed to being gathered in a batch at the middle or back). The book consists of a scene-setting introduction, a conclusion and four substantive chapters that respectively deal with architecture, sculpture, painting and what Riegl calls "Die Kunstindustrie" – "arts and crafts" or "decorative arts" – meaning mainly metal work in practice. The fifth chapter, a relatively brief conclusion, brings the argument together in a meditation on the characteristics of the late Roman *Kunstwollen*. Chapters 1–4 are presented in a densely empirical argument – building their dynamic through the close and detailed description of objects. The main body of the text is an analytic tour de force, as objects of all kinds – buildings, relief sculptures, portrait heads in the round, ivories, mosaics, manuscript miniatures – are subjected to sustained stylistic analysis which renders them individually, severally and collectively representative of the late antique *Kunstwollen*, whose main characteristics are summarised in the final chapter. There formal generalisations like "rhythm, that is the sequential repetition of similar phenomena" can be shown to be typical in different ways of all the works of the period and – crucially – to be different from rhythm in earlier art. Colouristic rhythm, for example, argued to be a property of earlier imperial art, is presented as retreating in late Roman art which "tended

back toward tactility in order to restore linear rhythm to unchallenged dominance".⁴⁰ As has been perceptively discussed, "Spätromische Kunstindustrie" is careful in combining objective descriptions with a constant and thoughtful consideration of the beholder's place and the impact of the forms described on subjectivity.⁴¹

Kunstwollen, with which the book ends, might be said to be a somewhat circular proposition, since it is also the assumption with which Riegl begins,⁴² and the reiterated motif that inaugurates every chapter.⁴³ One might argue (and indeed I have done) that

36 Panofsky (1924) 160 = (1998) 1061–2, referring to Panofsky (1920) 326 and 330 n. 1.

37 On this debate, see briefly M. Franz, "Denkstil und Kunstbegriff bei Gerhart Rodenwaldt" *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Reihe* 35 (1986) 637–43, esp. 642–3.

38 For the distinction among the Classical archaeological followers of Riegl between those interested in 'Struktur' (e.g. Guido Kaschnitz-Weinberg and Friedrich Matz) and those interested in 'Charakter' i.e. "römischem 'Ethos'", see S. Schöne, "G. Rodenwaldts Bewertung römischer Kunst – Einordnung in das Forschungskontinuum" *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Reihe* 35 (1986) 668–72, esp. 669.

39 G. Rodenwaldt, "Römische Löwen" *La critica del arte* 1 (1935–6) 225–8, esp. 225.

40 On rhythm, see Riegl (1901) 209–10 = (1985) 223–4.

41 See Olin (1992) 129–56.

42 Riegl (1901) 10–11 (in the introduction) = (1985) 15–16.

43 Architecture: Riegl (1901) 15 = (1985) 19; sculpture: Riegl (1901) 45 = (1985) 51; painting: Riegl (1901) 125 = (1985) 133 – where modern *Kunstwollen* is evoked; decorative arts: (1901) 139 = (1985) 147.

Kunstwollen is the real topic of “Spätromische Kunstindustrie” and that all the detailed knowledge, description and argument of the book as focused on a single historical period is marshalled to prove – or at least to demonstrate with such overwhelming empirical detail that it could not be questioned – the value of *Kunstwollen* as a concept generally applicable to art in any period.⁴⁴ Certainly, Riegl would immediately apply it to Dutch group portraiture in 1902. But from the point of view of a specialist Classical archaeologist (a Rodenwaldt, for instance) what Riegl had done was to make glorious and consistent sense of a vast and disorganised mass of material, as well as pointing the way to the interpretation of all the thousands of objects he had not discussed. So to return to sarcophagi, Riegl's six examples could stand for all the hundreds that subsequent scholars – Rodenwaldt foremost among them – could now discuss and place in a cultural and historical totality.⁴⁵ In this sense, “Spätromische Kunstindustrie” is parallel to other great late nineteenth or early twentieth century morphological projects in Classical art: the connoisseurship by which John Beazley would attribute Greek pots to painters' hands (and thereby date and interconnect them), the “four styles” by which August Mau would date every Pompeian wall, the “Kopienkritik” by which Adolph Furtwängler would attribute the lost originals of Roman replicas to their famous Greek masters.⁴⁶ Actually, there is much more at stake in Riegl's project than in these other, mainly German, morphological programmes (precisely the general propositions about *Kunstwollen* that would prove so controversial and so fruitful); Riegl is much more ambitious philosophically, while no less empirical or universal.

But for the Classicists, *Kunstwollen* was less a general or philosophical proposition to be debated, than a wonderfully pragmatic model allowing formalism to combine with subjectivism and allowing scholars to grasp and refine the deep workings of a fundamental cultural change, clearly visible in material form and style. One did not have to take on Riegl's positive view of the transformed late Roman *Kunstwollen*, or his argument against “decline”,⁴⁷ for his comprehensiveness, virtuosity of command in describing objects, and grand vision to be compelling. This pragmatic and materially based view of “Spätromische Kunstindustrie”, essentially founded on a combination of the book's authority in com-

manding the material and its usefulness in pointing the way forward for scholarship on Roman art, encouraged the unconscious imbibing of precisely those assumptions about *Kunstwollen* that Panofsky seized on in his attack on Rodenwaldt. The Classicists' reading of “Spätromische Kunstindustrie”, so different in so many ways from the art historians', gestures to the deep ambivalence in Riegl's own project. On the one hand, “Spätromische Kunstindustrie” was an historical thesis, deeply grounded not only in assessing objects produced by a specific culture and era but also in examining cultural change – the very flow of history itself – through the specific stylistic signals carried by works of art and craft.⁴⁸ On the other hand, this thesis was designed to bolster and promote (while being at the same time sustained by) a general and transhistorical concept, *Kunstwollen*, whose value and resonance was far wider than any specific area of art history, carrying complex psychological, cultural and essentialist meanings. It is this second agenda – the role of *Kunstwollen* as a general concept – that was so important to the art historical arguments of the 1920s (specifically Panofsky, Wind and Sedlmayr), but was almost entirely ignored with two exceptions by the Classicists. In an uncharacteristically philosophical and reflective piece (rather than a litany of objects), published in the 1927 num-

44 Elsner (2006) 748–53, esp. 751.

45 Oddly, while *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* might have raised the same challenge to other areas of Roman artistic production where copious examples survive, it was not taken up in the same way. Guido Kaschnitz-Weinberg invested a similar effort in portraiture as Rodenwaldt in sarcophagi, but his series of articles dating from the mid-twenties to 1950 (all collected now in G. Kaschnitz von Weinberg, *Ausgewählte Schriften II: Römische Bildnisse*, Berlin, 1965) rather than attempting to fill in Riegl's gaps in a Rodenwaldtian frenzy of positivist stylistic empiricism, turn instead to what might be called formalist-philosophical issues of structure, form and the definition of Italo-Roman *Kunstwollen* (e.g. 93, 94, 122; see also G. Kaschnitz von Weinberg, *Ausgewählte Schriften I: Kleine Schriften zur Struktur*, Berlin, 1965). On Kaschnitz, see R. Lullies in Lullies and Schiering (1988) 248–9. For discussion of the place of Rodenwaldt's work on sarcophagi, see K. Zimmermann, “Rodenwaldts Beitrag zur Sarkophagforschung” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Reihe* 35 (1986) 681–5; H. G. Thümmel, “Heidnisches und Christliches auf spätantiken Sarkophagen” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Reihe* 35 (1986) 688–93; A. Effenberger, “Rodenwaldts Bedeutung für die Sarkophagforschung” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Reihe* 35 (1986) 698–704.

46 For Beazley's method, see R. Neer, “Beazley and the Language of Connoisseurship” *Hephaistos* 15 (1997) 7–30; J. Whitley, “Beazley as Theorist” *Antiquity* 71 (1997) 40–7. For Mau, see A. Mau, *Geschichte der dekorativen Wandmalerei in Pompeji*, Berlin, 1882, but still with no full critical discussion of the ideologies at stake in the method and historiography. For Furtwängler, see A. Furtwängler, *Meisterwerke der griechischen Plastik*, Leipzig, 1893 with the additional arguments of G. Lippold, *Kopien und Umbildungen griechischer Statuen*, Munich, 1923 – critical accounts include M. Fullerton, “‘Der Stil der Nachahmer’: A Brief Historiography of Stylistic Retrospection” in A. Donohue and M. Fullerton (eds.), *Ancient Art and Its Historiography*, Cambridge, 2003, 92–117, esp. 102–8; E. Perry, *The Aesthetics of Emulation in the Visual Arts of Ancient Rome*, Cambridge, 2005, 78–90; C. M. Hallett, “Emulation vs. Replication” *JRA* 18 (2005) 419–35; J. Trimble and J. Elsner, “Introduction: If You Need an Actual Statue” *Art History* 29.2 (2006) 203–14.

47 See J. Elsner, “The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901” *Art History* 25 (2002) 358–379, esp. 361–70.

48 For the fundamental importance to issues of history and temporality throughout Riegl's corpus, see Gubser (2006), and especially 188–200 on rhythm and temporality in *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*.

ber of the journal of aesthetics where both Wind's and Panofsky's attacks on the Rieglian heritage had figured, Rodenwaldt confessed his theoretical dependence on Riegl and affirmed his view of the objective value of *Kunstwollen*.⁴⁹ And in 1929 in a long review of the publication of a second edition of "Spätromische Kunstindustrie",⁵⁰ Guido Kaschnitz-Weinberg defended Riegl against the attacks of Wind and Panofsky, providing perhaps the one thoughtful response for an audience of Classicists to the philosophical issues about form, meaning and *Kunstwollen* which occupied Panofsky, Wind and Sedlmayr.⁵¹ Needless to say, as a product of the Second Vienna School and a close associate in the 1920s of Sedlmayr and Otto Pächt (whom he praises on the last page for carrying forward the Rieglian agenda), Kaschnitz-Weinberg affirmed the Viennese formalist interpretation of *Kunstwollen* as having an objective value that was fleshed out in the work of Max Dvořák and his Viennese students.⁵² As far as philosophical reflections on *Kunstwollen* within Classical archaeology, these would suffice.

If we turn to Classical archaeology's appropriation of Riegl, through his reception in the work of Rodenwaldt, three levels of influence may be discerned. First – and perhaps

most important – is the almost unconscious acceptance of Rieglian *Kunstwollen* as a general guiding principle for the development of art, the specific point so ably noticed and attacked by Panofsky. Second there is the fundamental acceptance of Riegl's specific historical agenda for Roman art – in the need to answer the (explicitly teleological) question "Does any bridge lead back to Constantine from Classical art?,"⁵³ as well as in the empirical/descriptive method employed to determine an answer and in the very identification of a specific historical period that came to be called *Spätantike*.⁵⁴ Rodenwaldt, who inherited the great project of publishing the Roman sarcophagi from his own teacher Carl Robert, spent a substantial part of his scholarly career fleshing out these questions – effectively by adding examples to Riegl's six select sarcophagi.⁵⁵ Finally, there is the specific need to genuflect overtly and repeatedly to Riegl as the originator of the modern project for the Roman side of Classical archaeological research. I shall deal with these three elements in Rodenwaldt's work in reverse order.

The genuflective references to Riegl – which means specially (indeed exclusively) to "Spätromische Kunstindustrie" – are a leitmotif in Rodenwaldt's many fundamental articles on imperial Roman art from the 1920s to the 1940s.⁵⁶ This is specifically true of the papers that attempt to stand back and take an overview of the periods discussed.⁵⁷ For instance, in a long review of the German contribution to the study of late imperial art, Rodenwaldt not only opens with Riegl, but refers to him several times in the main text as the foundation for later and current developments.⁵⁸ More interesting intellectually are the specific uses and appropriations of Riegl's historical agenda in outlining the development of change in Roman art.⁵⁹ Two issues may be defined here. First there is the constant search, and not only in Rodenwaldt's work,⁶⁰ for a "missing link" – a key moment (or series of moments) of formal transition or transformation at which to place the turning point of change, a change to be identified in stylistic terms but also to signify all the larger historical claims and implications of *Kunstwollen* as a cultural and psycho-social agenda. The most famous and ambitious examples of this in Rodenwaldt are the great "Stilwandel" paper of 1935, which analysed stylistic change in the late Antonine period,⁶¹ the magisterial essay of 1936 which covered art history between the years 220 and 270 and which culminated in its confirmation and de-

49 G. Rodenwaldt, "Wandel und Wert kunstgeschichtlicher Perioden" *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 21 (1927) 159–64, esp. 161. See also the quote from Pinder emphasising "Wollen" at 163.

50 A. Riegl, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*, Vienna, 1927.

51 G. Kaschnitz-Weinberg, "Alois Riegl: Spätromische Kunstindustrie" *Gnomon* 5 (1929) 195–213, esp. 198, 205, 208–10, 211 on *Kunstwollen*.

52 Kaschnitz-Weinberg (1929) 205, 210–11.

53 For this question see Riegl (1985) 57; for teleology *ibid* 9.

54 On the historians' debt to Riegl, see A. Giardina, "Esplosione di tardoantico" *Studi Storici* 40 (1999) 157–80, esp. 157, 164–5, and W. Liebeschuetz, "The Birth of Late Antiquity" *Antiquité Tardive* 12 (2004) 253–61, esp. 254–5.

55 For some discussion of this strategy, without overt reference to Riegl but focusing on Rodenwaldt's paper "Eine spätantike Kunstströmung in Rom" *RM* 36/7 (1921/2) 58–110, see H. Sedlmayr, "Ars Humilis" *Hefte des kunsthistorischen Seminars der Universität München* 6 (1962) 7–21, esp. 7–16.

56 See Rodenwaldt (1921/2) 78, n. 2 – the opening of this paper with Strzygowski and the "Orient oder Rom" debate, while not explicitly citing Riegl, effectively places Rodenwaldt's position firmly in the Rieglian (Rome-centred) camp of this argument, on which see further Brendel (1979) 38–47 and Elsner (2002); G. Rodenwaldt, "Der Belgrader Kameo" *JdAI* 37 (1922) 17–38, p. 22, n. 2; Rodenwaldt (1927) 159; G. Rodenwaldt, "Über den Stilwandel in der antoninischen Kunst" *Abhandlungen der preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Berlin, 1935, 1, n. 2; Rodenwaldt (1935/6) 225; G. Rodenwaldt, "Zur Kunstgeschichte der Jahre 220 bis 270" *JdAI* 51 (1936) 82–113, esp. 110–2 and 112, n. 1; G. Rodenwaldt, "Zur Begrenzung und Gliederung der Spätantike" *JdAI* 59/60 (1944/5) 81–7, esp. 81 and 83.

57 The exception here is the magisterial "Römische Reliefs. Vorstufen zur Spätantike" *JdAI* 55 (1940) 12–43, on which see further below.

58 G. Rodenwaldt, "Studi e scoperte Germaniche sull'archeologia e l'arte del tardo impero" *Quaderni dell'impero: Roma e provincie* 1 (1937) 1–28, esp. 2, 6, 16, 17.

59 For 'expressionism' for example, as a Rodenwaldtian formulation designed to explain the rise of late Roman art, see R. Bianchi Bandinelli, "Espressionismo", *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica classica e orientale* 3, Rome, 1960, 460–1.

60 For example, K. Lehmann-Hartleben, *Die Trajanssäule: Ein römisches Kunstwerk zu Beginn der Spätantike*, Berlin, 1926, 152–4.

61 Rodenwaldt (1935) – a piece fundamental for example to R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Rome: the Centre of Power*, London, 1970, 313–28.

velopment of Riegl's findings,⁶² and the paper on reliefs leading up to late antiquity of 1940, which (unusually) makes no explicit mention of Riegl but entirely works within the agenda of defining aspects of late antique style in earlier imperial art.⁶³ Each of these articles – at length and in detail – attempts to trace the subtle development of what Riegl had identified as the late Roman *Kunstwollen* through the span of earlier Roman art. These papers effectively serve to flesh out the skeleton implicitly offered by “Spätromische Kunstindustrie” with a wealth of formally-based stylistic empiricism which itself emulates the specific chosen examples offered by Riegl.

More striking still than the dominance of Riegl's art-historical agenda deep into the 1930s and 1940s, is the persistence of his method. In the 12th and last volume of the “Cambridge Ancient History”, published in 1939, writing almost without footnotes to secondary sources, Rodenwaldt offered a sweeping synoptic vision of “the transition to late-Classical Art”.⁶⁴ It is a mark of his pre-eminent status in the discipline of Roman archaeology at this period that Rodenwaldt should have been invited to be the voice of Roman art in what was envisaged to be the definitive discussion in English.⁶⁵ Of only three references to works of modern scholarship within this essay, two are to “Spätromische Kunstindustrie”, with Riegl being the only modern author to be mentioned by name in the text.⁶⁶ But more than this, what is striking is Rodenwaldt's adoption of Riegl's method in “Spätromische Kunstindustrie”, for example in section 2 “From Severus Alexander to the Accession of Diocletian” where the “crisis and disintegration of the Empire” is explored through “a continuity of stylistic development”.⁶⁷ The Rieglian methodological model of listing example after example defined by acute and detailed stylistic analysis so as to create a rhetorical effect of stylistic change fundamentally embedded in sound empirical command of the totality and range of relevant objects is brilliantly marshalled.⁶⁸ Rodenwaldt differs from Riegl's deployment of the method in the greater brevity of his descriptions by comparison with those of “Spätromische Kunstindustrie” but combines this with a greater number and variety of examples. In substantive terms, he differs only in making the choice to bring together discussion of sculpture, architecture, painting and the minor arts in a single period-based account, by contrast with Riegl's decision to separate out the media and treat each discretely but according to the same method.

As we have already seen – following the expert guidance of Panofsky – underlying all this was a pretty unexamined and direct acceptance of *Kunstwollen* as the determining element governing historical change in the arts – something observable in the forms of objects but redolent of the structures of society, the mental habits of artists, viewers and patrons, the intellectual and social world out of which objects were generated. In his reflective mode, writing in the “Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft”, Rodenwaldt refers specifically to the theoretical pre-eminence of Riegl and to his “apparently objective concept of *Kunstwollen*”.⁶⁹ Elsewhere he cites the notion of *Kunstwollen*;⁷⁰ or – without explicit reference to Riegl – has recourse to the idea of “will”.⁷¹

My argument thus far has been that Riegl ruled pretty well unchallenged in Classical archaeology until the 1940s – at least as embodied in the discipline's leading Romanist whose influence was potent (not least on the work of Bianchi Bandinelli and his Italian students and Otto Brendel and his American students) as well as the likes of Kaschnitz-Weinberg and Friedrich Matz.⁷² The ramifications of this dominance, from citations via the replications of method to the fundamental acceptance of the idea of *Kunstwollen* in all its aspects (which ranged from the psychology of late antique anxiety to the specific definition of a late Roman period in the first place) are extraordinary. They are borne out by a book published in Norwegian in 1958 and in English in 1965 by Hans Peter L'Orange, the dominant figure of Norwegian archaeology whose most famous work had been the detailed 1930s' account of the Arch of Constantine, the monument

62 Rodenwaldt (1936) esp. 110–2.

63 Rodenwaldt (1940).

64 G. Rodenwaldt, “The Transition to Late-Classical Art” *CAH* 12 (1939) 544–70.

65 Cf. also G. Rodenwaldt, “Art from Nero to the Antonines” *CAH* 11 (1936) 775–805. On Rodenwaldt's view of Roman art, see M. Oppermann, “G. Rodenwaldt und die römische Kunst” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Reihe* 35 (1986) 661–7 and Borbein (1991) esp. 179–80, 182–3, 190, 197–8.

66 Rodenwaldt (1939) 554 and n. 1, 555 and n. 3. The other secondary work mentioned is Lippold (1923) at 546 n. 1.

67 Rodenwaldt (1939) 552–61, quote 552.

68 On the method, see Elsner (2006).

69 Rodenwaldt (1927) 161: “Theoretisch wurde sie vor allem durch Riegl vertreten”, “Der scheinbar objektive Begriff des Kunstwollens”; cf. G. Rodenwaldt, *Der Sarkophag Caffarelli: Winkelmanns-programm der archäologischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin* 83, Berlin, 1925, 21 for “das augusteische ‘Kunstwollen’”.

70 Rodenwaldt (1935–6) 225 “den Begriff des ‘Kunstwollens’”; Rodenwaldt (1944/5) 81 and 83.

71 Rodenwaldt (1916) 25 – the passage cited and attacked by Panofsky; Rodenwaldt (1927) 163; also G. Rodenwaldt, *Die Kunst der Antike*, Berlin, 1927, 84. For some discussion of Rodenwaldt's debt to Riegl and explicitly to *Kunstwollen*, see D. Röbler, “Zu Rodenwaldts Klassikbegriff” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Reihe* 35 (1986) 653–60, esp. 653 and 655; Schöne (1986) 670–2; Oppermann (1986) 663.

72 F. Matz, “Alois Riegl, Gesammelte Aufsätze” *Gnomon* 10 (1934) 449–54; F. Matz, *Geschichte der Griechischen Kunst, 1: Die geometrische und die früharchaische Form*, Frankfurt, 1950, esp. 1–36 which is the programmatic introduction, entitled “Kunstgeschichte und Strukturforchung: Zur methodischen Orientierung”; F. Matz, “Strukturforchung und Archäologie” *Studium Generale* 17 (1964) 203–19. On Matz, see B. Andreae in Lullies and Schiering (1988) 250–1.

Riegl had famously adopted as the definition of the late antique *Kunstwollen*.⁷³ Making no explicit mention of Riegl whatsoever, L'Orange's "Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire" offers an extraordinary and unremittingly formal analysis whereby the schematism of late Roman architectural and sculptural forms as well as the styles of late antique portraiture are run against the increasing "equalization, standardization and centralization" of the late empire (again a series of formal definitions cast this time as historical rather than archaeological facts).⁷⁴ The "abstraction" and "transcendentalism" of late antique art are mapped against the rise of spirituality;⁷⁵ the institutional and social reforms of Diocletian, which supplied order to the chaotic empire,⁷⁶ are taken as the key historical effect of the same unnamed cause of the formal characteristics (symmetry, frontalism etc.) that may be observed in architecture, sculpture and portraits. Here, without reference to Riegl or any explicit recourse to *Kunstwollen*, the Rieglian agenda as adapted by Classical archaeology and so powerfully naturalized by Rodenwaldt, remains completely ascendant but entirely absurd. None of L'Orange's formal parallels (taking in all aspects of material culture, religion and society) can possibly add up except by subscription to an all-encompassing explanatory deus-ex-machina like *Kunstwollen*, whose truth-value is so transparent as not even to need invocation. It is in the face of this kind of formalism, so out of control, so indebted to an unthinking application of Riegl, so unable to state (let alone critique) its own historiographic or methodological origins, let alone the ontological foundations on which its edifice is necessarily constructed, that one cannot but sympathise with Ernst Gombrich's imprecations against *Kunstwollen* as "a ghost in the machine, driving the wheels of artistic developments according to 'inexorable laws'".⁷⁷

The key point about L'Orange's book is its wholehearted subscription to a formula which it omits even to mention let alone attribute or argue for. The usual academic sin of omis-

sion – failure to cite or argue against that with which one disagrees or which may substantially vitiate one's own view (sometimes an omission of particular scholars or arguments, sometimes an omission of a telling piece or class of evidence) – is here reversed. Instead of failing to cite a contradiction, L'Orange (inexplicably but tellingly for a discipline in absolute denial, especially after the Second World War, of any attempt at self-reflection or of posing philosophically-grounded secondary questions) fails to cite or argue for the theoretical basis – in my view an unsustainable basis – on which his entire edifice centrally and crucially must stand if it is to hold any water at all. In this, "Art Forms and Civic Life" presages the move to the near-total exclusion of Riegl in Classical archaeology as the discipline moved into the late twentieth century. But, whereas the exclusion of Riegl's work by art historians under the spell of Panofsky's *Sinn* is rooted in a fundamental opposition from the Warburgian "meanings" brigade to the formalists (especially Sedlmayr and the Viennese) who traced their origins to Riegl, that of the Classicists is so wholehearted and unexamined an immersion in pretty well all the implications and ramifications of Riegl's *Kunstwollen*, that it ceased to be necessary to cite it or him at all. There are two problems here. First, one might worry that not nailing one's theoretical or methodological colours to the mast is always problematic (though are any of us wholly innocent in this respect?). Second, and more substantially, in this case those methodological assumptions are riven with problems (as Panofsky had so penetratingly pointed out in 1920) none of which the Classicists ever addressed, let alone resolved.

The Modern Era

If we turn to some major Roman works of late twentieth century Classical archaeology – works persuasive both in their command of the relevant materials and their attempt to take at least an implicit theoretical stance – the silent presence of Riegl's *Kunstwollen* remains interesting. In 1987, Paul Zanker published "Augustus und die Macht der Bilder" (translated in 1988 as "The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus"),⁷⁸ a revolutionary book in that it provided a coherent and comprehensively detailed account of the uses of images to signify and construct power at the point when Roman culture turned from Republic to Principate. Zanker's persuasiveness, and his is a book that has for perhaps the first time really convinced ancient historians of the prime significance of visual evidence for this period,⁷⁹

73 See H. P. L'Orange and A. von Gerkan, *Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinobogens*, Berlin, 1939, where L'Orange refers most systematically to Rodenwaldt's work. Riegl's *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* makes an active intervention here – especially in the sections on style (103–8, 192–8). For L'Orange's debt to Riegl and Kaschnitz-Weinberg, see B. Aaritsland, "'Total Absorption': A Study of Method in the Work of Hans Peter L'Orange on the Arch of Constantine" *Acta ad archaeologiam et atrium historiam pertinentia* 11 (1999) 63–84, esp. 78 and 82.

74 H. P. L'Orange, *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire*, Princeton, 1965, quote from p. 3.

75 L'Orange (1965) 24–33.

76 L'Orange (1965) 37–68.

77 See E. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, London, 1960, 14–18, quote from p. 16.

78 P. Zanker, *Augustus und die Macht der Bilder*, Munich, 1987 = *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, Ann Arbor, 1988.

79 A. Wallace-Hadrill, "Rome's Cultural Revolution" *Journal of Roman Studies* 79 (1989) 157–64. "the most significant contribution to the understanding of Augustan Rome since [Sir Ronald Sime's] *The Roman Revolution* [of 1939]" and "... impossible for social historians ... to ignore" (p. 157).

rests on very similar grounds to that of “Spätromische Kunstindustrie” in its time: the promise of a total historical picture, grounded in empirical command of all the relevant materials, in which any potentially missing item (e.g. a new archaeological find) might easily be fitted. Like “Spätromische Kunstindustrie”, Zanker deals with a moment of change – although more on the level of political and institutional change than the full blooded social, ideological and formal transformations of late antiquity. But most crucially, the book is grounded in a core proposition – which I think might now be seen as the dominant axiom governing Classical archaeology today – that visual culture taken in a broad sense is *expressive* of the same social and intellectual realities of its time.⁸⁰ For Zanker, “visual imagery . . . reflects a society’s inner life and gives insight into people’s values and imagination that often cannot be apprehended in literary sources”.⁸¹ His concern is to paint a picture of the origins of a “system of visual communication”, the “standardized visual language of Roman Imperial art”.⁸² The result of all this – that visual and archaeological evidence may be used to “write history” – is close to the aims of L’Orange and indeed Riegl himself. The weapons of formalism are less evident in Zanker’s book, though they underlie his specific discussions of objects or sites (many of which are the subject of earlier specialist analyses by himself).⁸³ But the book’s archaeology, its art historical contribution to the history of social constructions, its dominance and persuasiveness in a field where most subsequent accounts of Augustus are effectively affirmations or slight nuancings of Zanker’s picture – all this rests on the commanding appeal of the harnessing of formal empiricism to an historical thesis. It cannot be proved that *Kunstwollen* underlies this thinking (indeed it can surely and vigorously be denied), but I remain worried by the proposition that aligns the evidence of images as cultural expressions alongside other kinds of historical evidence as cultural expression in order to paint a totalising explanatory picture. Personally, I would prefer any picture to show conflict, the evidential bases to ring not in harmony but at times and in differing contexts in discord. The harmony of an integrated historical view of a culture at any one time (reflected in, expressed by its art, texts, institutions, and so forth) *is* the surviving and still potent spirit of *Kunstwollen*, very much as it is expounded in the last concluding chapter of “Spätromische Kunstindustrie”.

From a different stance and at the same time as Zanker’s great book, Tonio

Hölscher published a short, very dense and abbreviated but hugely significant and influential meditation on how Roman art functioned within imperial culture and society.⁸⁴ Hölscher supplies an account of the workings of the “language of images” in imperial Roman art, whose origins under Augustus Zanker’s book described so persuasively. Hölscher explicitly returns to style, worrying in his opening paragraphs that the loss of formalism in the turn to “political and social meanings” has serious consequences “especially for social history”.⁸⁵ The alignment of formalism with a post-structuralist model of “semantic” signification (borrowed from Umberto Eco) in order to construct a model of Roman art as a linguistic system of cultural communication, is impressive – as is Hölscher’s command of a huge variety of ways in which Roman objects replicate and adapt Greek models of different periods in order to “serve equally as an expression of cultural historical background and elitist way of life, and as a universally understood system of communication”.⁸⁶ The “general language of imagery” becomes in Hölscher’s account one of the very definitions of how Roman imperial culture functioned. In general, Hölscher’s book is very reticent about its historiographic origins within the long history of Classical archaeology – for example, Hölscher does not discuss earlier linguistic models for looking at Roman art (such as those advanced by Riegl’s “Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts”, a long and unfinished set of manuscripts only published in the 1960s).⁸⁷ But my question here is simply to ask whether in this reticence we cannot again discern the spirit of *Kunstwollen*. Otherwise, what is the underlying cause and the mechanism for the “expressive” manifestation of visual signs which can somehow communicate semantically and for the

80 The most explicit and acute theoretical case for this position is R. R. Smith, “The Use of Images: Visual History and Ancient History” in T. P. Wiseman (ed.), *Classics in Progress*, Oxford, 2002, 59–102, which specifically identifies Zanker’s 1970s work as “standing near the beginning of . . . what we may simply call the historically based tradition – that of interpreting ancient images firstly in relation to the interests and mentalities of their buyers and audiences” (69). Note Smith’s careful use of the words ‘expressive’ and ‘expression’ at e.g. 61, 72, 96, 97. For a critique of such notions of expression, attacking in particular the adduction of “ad hoc intuitive models” and the “invocation of an unexamined conception of ‘context’” in Classical archaeology, see esp. J. Tanner, “Portraits, Power and patronage in the late Roman republic” *Journal of Roman Studies* 90 (2000) 18–50, esp. 19–22.

81 Zanker (1988) 3.

82 Quotes from the programmatic opening of the conclusion, Zanker (1988) 335; but see also the rest of the conclusion (335–9) and the introduction (esp. 3–4).

83 On questions of style and form see e.g. Zanker (1988) 8–11; for some critique of the idea that “stylistic options incorporate moral values” see Wallace-Hadrill (1989) 160–2. Note Smith’s plea for “style as history” (2002) 99–100.

84 T. Hölscher, *Römische Bildsprache als semantisches System*, Heidelberg, 1987 = *The Language of Images in Roman Art*, Cambridge, 2004.

85 Hölscher (2004) 1.

86 Hölscher (2004) 125, cf. J. R. Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans*, Berkeley, 2003, 3 borrowing the notion of a “multilayered system of communication” and 9 for art sending messages.

87 E.g. A. Riegl, *Historische Grammatik der bildenden Künste*, Graz, 1966 = A. Riegl, *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts*, New York, 2004.

emergence of a system of visual-linguistic communication in itself as complex implicitly as the institutions (of empire) which it served and from which it emanated? Again, there is no explicit reference to Riegl or to *Kunstwollen* – and indeed when I raised it with him, Hölscher was specifically resistant to the essentialism underlying the Vienna School's obsession with form and structure. But the book may nonetheless be read as implying that the cultural or linguistic meanings conveyed by particular forms in Hölscher's model are intrinsically expressed by those forms rather than conventionally imputed to them.⁸⁸ And even if formal signification did work only through convention, what impulse was there to set so elaborate a system to work and by what means can it be said to be operating? Like Zanker, Hölscher's system conceives of a totality for which it is fully meaningful and in which all the notes are struck in harmony and not in dissonance.

It might be added that both Hölscher's and Zanker's great books date to what has become a significant moment in its own right in German history and may reflect that (albeit unconsciously). They represent the pinnacle of West German thinking in Classical archaeology in the post-War era of the two Germanys, immediately before the entirely unexpected and unpredictable collapse of Communism in 1989 and the subsequent re-unification of Germany. I suspect the concern with the ideological meanings of images and with the public political significations of art was unavoidable in the scholarly context of the divided Germany. Interestingly both Zanker and Hölscher have rather turned away from the use of form to articulate underlying ideologies in their work after 1989.

Now, neither of these modern accounts (both in my view statements with genuine aspirations to classic status in their discipline) makes any mention of Riegl – epitomizing the oblivion to which he has been consigned by the discipline of Classical archaeology in its modern form. Yet, I have been arguing, both are fundamentally operating within the orbit that Riegl's work constructed for Roman art and archaeology, which was most powerfully developed by the likes of Rodenwaldt, Kaschnitz-Weinberg and Bianchi Bandinelli (the latter being one of Hölscher's teachers). At stake are questions about what it is that works of art can express – how they epitomize, reflect or articulate social, collective or any other kinds of realities. Equally, even if one were to grant the existence of such expression, the question must arise as to how images do the work of expressing. Here the issue of will – the key subjective

element underlying *Kunstwollen* – was essential to Riegl's solution, and it may be said to emerge again in notions like "aspiration" and "mentalities".⁸⁹ In Classical archaeology since Riegl and his immediate followers, there has been no attempt to give a philosophically-grounded or generally reflective account of these problems – that is the issues of what is "expressed" (the precise thing or things communicated by an image), of how expression may take place (the mechanism by which images communicate) and of the impulse or cause for such communication. Yet without such an account, one has to ask on what fundamental basis even the most sophisticated and impressive works of modern Classical archaeology can stand intellectually.

It is in this context that the remarkable stature of Riegl's "Spätromische Kunstindustrie" must be judged. For Riegl saw that to give an account (whether historical, formalist or aesthetic) of how Roman art developed was insufficient unless one could supply the mechanism and impetus by which every object could be taken to be representative (or "reflective" or "expressive") of its context. He came up with *Kunstwollen*, a brilliant solution since it allowed him to bridge the aesthetic, cultural, formal and structural characteristics of any object or set of objects with its broader historical context – whether that be seen as a social, cultural or institutional set of expressions of the same collective combination of elements (subjective and objective) that give rise to art itself. If all "expressions" of a culture (including images) embody its "Will", then the study of history (indeed all studies) are effectively of that Will at any one time and of the ways it may change. Yet in identifying his ontology, Riegl opened the way for the Warburgians to demolish its basis. The problem is that *Kunstwollen* is – so far as I know – the only art historical solution yet offered in Classical archaeology for the problems implicit in "expression" and "communication". And yet not only is *Kunstwollen* as untenable as Panofsky originally claimed in 1920, but its patent mystification is so apparent that it is now unmentioned (perhaps unmentionable) even as it remains implicitly invoked.

Over twenty years ago, Norman Bryson controversially opened his assault on traditional art history with a lament about the "sad fact" that its complacency at that time – especially in asking methodological or philosophical questions – rested on a failure to examine "the tacit assumptions that guide the normal activity of the art historian". He claimed that "art history lags behind the study of the other arts".⁹⁰ Bryson was wrong. Had he looked at

Classical archaeology, he should have found a discipline lagging still further behind than art history. Despite its formidable command of the objects, its wonderful and empirical im-

88 See my foreword to Hölscher (2004) xxvi.

89 E.g. Smith (2002) 96 "aspirations", 100 "mentalities, perceptions, self-perceptions".

90 N. Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, London, 1983, xi.

mersion in questions of style and form, its exceptional embeddedness in the range of other disciplines which together make up “Classics” (notably ancient history and ancient documents, but also philosophy, literature, philology), Classical archaeology – especially in the hands of its most distinguished practitioners over many generations – has failed to challenge or examine the premises and axioms underlying at least the Roman side of its practice since the end of the nineteenth century. The reasons, to some extent at least, are historical. After the heady conceptual moments of Riegl’s propagation of *Kunstwollen* and the fierce philosophical debates of the 1920s, came the War, a series of ruptures and displacements in what has always been a tradition overwhelmingly dominated by German scholarship (even in its émigré forms), and the deep desire of post-War generations not to stir up any skeletons by poking too enthusiastically in the old cupboards. But now, over 60 years after Rodenwaldt took his own life at the fall of Berlin, it must at last be time to put the old assumptions to the test, rather than to find ever more subtle ways of reformulating them for a new era without naming their root presuppositions.

I opened this essay with Philip Larkin’s shied core, striking the basket and skidding across the floor. We have explored the core of a discipline – the Roman side of Classical archaeology – through some of its most distinguished contributions. That search has spread back, earlier and earlier, to Riegl’s inception both of the specific field of Roman art and its still-dominant but unnameable metaphysic. Let it not be denied that the *Kunstwollen* is still with us.