

Schlosser *redivus*

Review of:

Julius von Schlosser (1866-1938) *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, vol, 66, 2021. 232 pp., 80 ills, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 70,00 €, ISBN: 978-3-205-21443-4

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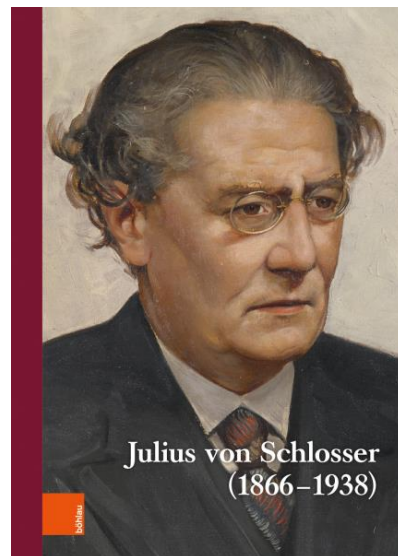


Figure 1 Front cover © Böhlau

The present volume is well made, bound and printed on good paper as we are accustomed with sharp, clear and legible black and white illustrations, containing 13 of originally 16 lectures held October 6th and 7th 2016, three in English and the remaining ten in German, at the Kunsthistorisches Museum and the Kunsthistorisches Institut of the university in Vienna in honour of the 150th birthday of Julius Schlosser (1866-1938) sometime director of the sculpture department and professor there. Those by Michael Viktor Schwarz, Berthold Hub and Rainald Franz are unfortunately omitted. An appendix gives an updated list of his publications by Franz Kirchweger, mercifully correcting the hilarious errors introduced by the publisher to my own bibliography from 1988.¹

The lectures come from more than one generation, exactly as Schlosser had himself been comparatively old as an 'Ordinarius', while they also instructively

¹ Karl Johns, 'Julius Alwin Ritter von Schlosser: ein bio-bibliographischer Beitrag', *Kritische Berichte*, 16th year, no. 4, 1988, pp. 47-64, which includes a list of obituaries, homages and doctoral candidates with dissertation topics not repeated here.

straddle the two institutions where his career took place, and very well illustrate the great range of his historical-philosophical erudition and subjects of interest.

The information and interpretations they offer are unusually welcome since Schlosser is generally acknowledged as one of the founding figures of the discipline, but ignored and misunderstood for more than one reason. Among others, he cultivated a convoluted and difficult style of writing or lecturing and, as a uniquely well-educated monarchist from a military family, could not be easily pigeonholed in the calamitous situation of interwar Austria. His doctoral students came from diverse backgrounds and nationalities, and were largely dispersed by the advent of fascism (only one of them murdered), and in spite of the fact that his two successors in the university chair were both his students, his example was only pursued in marginal, idiosyncratic ways and disparate directions. The trend of his work is best known through that of Ernst Gombrich and Otto Kurz. The lectures published here stick to facts in a time when rational inquiry is encumbered by religious emotions from the one side and vacuous postmodernist schemes polluting the bibliography from the other.

Konrad Schlegel opens with the ‘difficult mine field’ of small-scale sculpture in the museum collection as related to Schlosser’s writings. The Habsburg holdings have a singular significance for their size and other factors such as the inheritance from the Este family and other documented provenances, but attribution and localization are obviously difficult and tentative in this field. The special status of this collection is apparent from the Viennese venue of the Giambologna exhibition which some of us can still recall. Like the other lectures addressing his museum career, we are given valuable concrete details about his positions and activities as a bureaucrat and curator. Although the day was devoted to the teacher, we cannot forget that two of his talented and prolific students, who in his own words ‘surpassed him as they should’, Ernst Kris and Leo Planiscig catalogued that collection in publications still useful today. While Schlegel underscores Schlosser’s special interest in small scale sculpture – posing for a portrait photograph turning one in his hands, we might add that the ‘colossi’ were quite notably also a phenomenon of particular interest which he dealt with in detail in *Die Kunstliteratur* and inspired one of his earliest doctoral students to study in particular. Kurt Rathe, *Der figurale Schmuck der alten Domfassade in Florenz*, Vienna: Stern, 1910, was a book including details he even later chose to quibble with, by a student he seems to have remained in fond contact with.

When the young Schlosser moved to purchase for the museum the terracotta figure of a peasant resting after cutting grass (not wood as previously believed, ‘Rastender Mäher’ *Kunstammer Inv. 7345*), his request was rejected, presumably as a theme unworthy of the imperial collection, but later the Prince of Liechtenstein was able to purchase it as a gift for the new republic. Such details cast a light on the professional situation of the bureaucrat in the final years of the monarchy. By way of anticipation, the topic also evokes a subject extending throughout these lectures, that of his friendship with, and interests running parallel to, Aby Warburg – ‘*arbeitende*

Bauern'. Since the peasant resting after work was illustrated on invitations to the memorial service when Schlosser was buried, the sculpture is speculated to have been among his favourite objects in the collection. We might note that it was once asserted to be a forgery, but is today generally attributed to Andrea Briosco, il Riccio.

Paulus Rainer introduces the neglected subject of Schlosser as museum curator appealing to a popular audience. This is not what he is known for, but his small museum guides priced equal to the entrance fee, were innovative in Vienna in 1921, and in 'Ein Lebenskommentar'² he stresses the '*Lust und Liebe*' invested in these publications. Rainer introduces details of the reorganization of the museum holdings during the economically devastating period at the beginning of the republic, and the conflicts elicited in the process. In writing about the Salt Cellar by Benvenuto Cellini, monographically about a single object, he begins with the 19th-century '*Rezeptionsgeschichte*', including Goethe and Berlioz, rather than the relatively rich documentation of Cellini discussed in the *Materialien zur Quellengeschichte*, parts 6 and 7, 1919-1920, or *Die Kunstliteratur* that would appear three years later. As somebody who came of age in the 1870's, he speaks to a generation beginning to accept Italian 'mannerism', and Rainer underscores what he calls a 'discrepancy' – among other things, we might say a trace of normative aesthetics as some of our contemporaries will also find it in Schlosser's treatment of Vasari's paintings and Lomazzo's intellectual constructs. The author is fully aware of this and tells the readers of 'Ein Lebenskommentar' that he has not yet embarked in the direction of his expressions of isolated theory and the insularity of great art. Schlosser was in some ways conservative, but appears to align with suggestions from Hans Tietze and others for revising the administration and activities of the museum. (The *Kunst- und Wunderkammern* of 1908 had already included a quiet criticism of the way in which the Ambras collection was then exhibited.) Rainer provides interesting details about the discussions occurring after the end of the monarchy, and presumably surmises correctly that Schlosser was influential in decisions such as the publication of these inexpensive guides to individual objects. We might add that the Schlosser influence is quite clear in the articles appearing during those years in the *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen* in spite of the fact that Arpád Weixlgärtner was the official editor. Rainer stresses the differences between Schlosser and Tietze (then occupying an administrative position) about the educational mission of the museum, the latter urging an outreach to the widest possible audience. Schlosser objected to a projected amalgamation of the Kunsthistorisches Museum with the 'lower quality' of the *Akademie* and other collections, to a terminal date of 1700 or 1740 as well as the separation of Austrian from other art. Rainer delineates Schlosser's counterproposal for thirteen sections in a document that will certainly interest at least some of us. He is completely correct in finding the popular museum guides by their content to be urging the direction away from the materialism and formalism of the time,

² Julius von Schlosser, 'Ein Lebenskommentar', in: *Die Kunstwissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen* (ed. J. Jahn), Leipzig: Felix Meiner 1924, pp. 95–134.

comparable to the famous public lectures about mannerism being held then by Max Dvořák.

With good documentation, Beatrix Darmstädter surveys the effect of Schlosser on the collection of early musical instruments within the framework of the Vienna museums in general. This is a welcome topic habitually overlooked in the history of art. Schlosser founded it as a separate department of the museum, guided, expanded it and laid out standards for exhibitions, while his catalogue of it stands as one of the monuments of its time. Perhaps overshadowing his publications on ancient coinage, *Alte Musikinstrumente* of 1920 might be regarded as his own most voluminous contribution to the traditional curatorial and catalogue work in museums – including, as it does, original research on subjects that clearly fascinated him as deeply as any other. Not unexpectedly, it involves distinctly fastidious attention to inventories, provenances and relevant historical texts. Schlosser insisted that the relevant artistic decisions occur in the active workshops, and he continually derides authors who sit at their desks and fail to expose themselves to art. When it became clear that he himself would not be regarded as a particularly noted poet, his cello seems to have been the way in which he himself actively participated in the arts (performing with his wife and Hans Hahnloser), and the footnotes in *Alte Musikinstrumente* and elsewhere testify to his avid concert-going and musical interests ranging from antiquity to Alexander Zemlinsky. Musical examples pervade at least the earlier parts of *Die Kunstliteratur* while Schlosser himself collected and donated early instruments, documenting another intellectual and artistic tradition local to Vienna. It is comparable to his valuable reminiscences about the early Viennese art historians and collectors. We must also not forget that his extensive reorganization of the collection and preparation of the catalogue was achieved concurrently with his publication of *Materialien zur Quellenkunde der Kunstgeschichte*, which fills 822 pages of the *Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*.

Raphael Rosenberg is the only contributor to speak about *Die Kunstliteratur*, which has become Schlosser's best-known work to posterity, published in three languages and still readily available after a century. Such an immense and original reference book is of course difficult to approach in a satisfying way from any angle. He poses the question: is this vast material better organized according to periods or genres?³ Arguments can be made for both. Prof. Rosenberg has experience teaching these questions, is himself anything other than a bibliographical slouch, and comes out in favour of tracing individual genres through the ages with a reference to Albert Dresden, *Die Kunstkritik: Ihre Geschichte und Theorie*, Munich: Bruckmann, 1915, cited as 'rather uneven' in *Die Kunstliteratur* (Book 9, 1924 p. 581, Italian 1964, p. 668). He proposes an alternative organization according to 1: treatises on architecture, sculpture, painting and dictionaries, 2: biographical works, 3: the history of art

³ Published in translation: Raphael Rosenberg (University of Vienna), 'Delineating the history of art literature by genre: Julius von Schlosser revisited', *Journal of Art Historiography*, Issue 24, 2021, [24/RR1](#).

according to monuments, 4: according to monographs and descriptions, 5: artistic quotations, 6: topography, 7: catalogues of collections and exhibitions, and 8: art criticism. Any of us familiar for instance with the Provenance Index founded and guided by Burton Fredericksen will be aware of how the computer age is able to improve on the collection of notes made by Abraham Bredius and others in the earlier 20th century. We are presumably unanimous in expecting institutions such as arthistoricum.net to continue thriving and improving our grasp of the material. (Nothing is perfect, and I myself am astonished at how little I find in the *Repertoire d'Art et d'Archéologie*, where, among many others, the *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen* and lectures from most CIHA were never registered.) In *Die Kunstliteratur*, Schlosser has given a personal survey of the discipline before it entered academia, coloured by his own views on art and 'European culture' as a historical period, which he occasionally tells us ended when Napoleon 'closed the doors' upon it. It is of course far more than what some students have called an 'extended telephone book', and discusses the actual problems facing art historians as they became the basis of many or even most dissertations done under Schlosser. It also includes what are still the best succinct appraisals of Plato, Dante, Leonardo or Vasari in their relevance to the discipline, along with many other questions of aesthetics and aperçus, including for instance those providing the basis for the celebrated Gombrich essay about landscape painting or *The Preference for the Primitive*.

Schlosser ought still to appeal to some academics today for writing a history of art with no illustrations. Along the way he discloses details of changes he himself made. Since he considered Italy to be the source of all relevant ideas, he originally intended to limit the survey to Italy, but found that impractical. He tells us that he would have dealt with perspective more closely if he had found a collaborator to do so, or himself 'had been a better student of mathematics'. Certain acrobatics were necessary to make Vasari the protagonist of Book 5 of 9, while the very concept of *Kunstliteratur* is not clearly delineated, admittedly being violated for instance to include the history of art inventories. In his own annotated copy, the '*durchschossenes Exemplar*', the opening page of Ghiberti-bibliography annotated by both Schlosser and Ludwig Schudt (which I hope to illustrate as frontispiece to the English edition)⁴ itself includes a relatively grave error not caught by Otto Kurz either. Schlosser knew that the world is imperfect, and we can see this complacency in the correspondence with Gertrud Bing before the publication of his 1927 lecture in the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg. Kurz recalled his mentor as a lecturer seeming to have 'stepped in from the 18th century'. As a monarchist cultivating a quirky image to a later generation and not desiring to be particularly translatable, he was well aware of possible alternatives and remained flexible and liberal in his very own way. In spite of that, his arguments are strong, relatively consistent and difficult

⁴ [Karl is putting the finishing touch to his own translation of *Die Kunstliteratur*, which I am hoping will be published before I am dead. – Ed.]

to circumvent. It should be more obvious than it apparently is that *Die Kunstliteratur* is more than merely a bibliography.

Marthe Kretzschmar has been studying the materials of sculpture for a number of years, and here provides welcome background to the voluminous essay about wax portrait sculpture with documentation of Schlosser's relevant curatorial work in the imperial collections, and finding elements anticipating the late theoretical essays where he tells us that these questions had been preoccupying him since the 1890's.

One is immediately reminded of Aby Warburg, *Bildniskunst und Florentinisches Bürgertum*, Leipzig: Seemann, 1902 and the wax *boti* in the Florentine church of SS. Annunziata (Paatz, *Die Kirchen von Florenz*, vol. 1, pp. 157-158), which Schlosser had already cited in the *Kunst und Wunderkammern*, published in 1908. We will not disagree with those who insist that Warburg provided an influence. Both were omnivorous readers on a similar political wave-length, corresponding with one another and exchanging off-prints, while Franz Wickhoff had been writing on similar subjects since a decade earlier, and was developing a book about naturalism in art from his lectures on the subject when he died suddenly and unexpectedly in 1909. Warburg was devoted to renaissance art and living completely independently while Schlosser was a curator of primarily medieval sculpture well within the bureaucracy. The former analysed the naturalism of portraits as an historical exemplum in a single church in Florence, but the latter surveyed the genre from ancient Mesopotamia to Madame Tussaud. After he had already mentioned the subject to Wilhelm von Bode in 1902, Kretzschmar cites documents of 1905 from the museum archive leading her to conclude that the 'the research for his essay had been largely accomplished' by that time (p. 78), reminding us that Wickhoff's article about the 'wax bust in Lille' was published in 1901, eight years before Bode famously purchased the wax bust of Flora for the Berlin Museums as the work of Leonardo.

The reference to anthropology was anything but customary among art historians around 1902, and is necessary in tracing the emergence of the general conception of art and 'fine art' from the religious traditions of the treasuries. Some of the readers are familiar with these subjects from *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern* of 1908. Superstitions surrounding naturalistic sculptures on the verge of coming to life or walking around during the night were a favourite topic, seem indeed almost to have been a *leitmotif* throughout Schlosser's writings and lectures – certainly the impulse for the celebrated book by Kris and Kurz.⁵ The point is that medieval art could have produced wax casts and made portraits with the same 'verism' as the Roman republic, but chose not to – a few years after Riegl's famous line about

⁵ Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Die Legende vom Künstler: Ein Geschichtlicher Versuch*, Vienna: Krystall, 1934, reprinted Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980, English translation by Alistair Laing and Lotte M. Newman, *Legend, Myth and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

'*Fortschritt und nichts als Fortschritt*' (progress and nothing other than progress, *Die Spätromische Kunstindustrie*, 1901, p. 6; 1927, p. 11; French 2014, p. 64). In summarizing the knowledge received by his generation, Cennino Cennini (ca. 1380-before 1427) had given directions for making the cast from life of an entire human body, but the earliest then preserved and still exceptional example was made on a tomb in the cathedral of Cosenza when Isabella of Aragon died in an accident during travel in 1271.⁶ This is the subject of historical *ricorsi* which Schlosser very frequently quotes from Giambattista Vico.

Artur Rosenauer has been teaching about earlier Austrian art-historical methodology for a few decades, and as successor to Otto Pächt was also in personal contact with the students of Schlosser over a long period of time, and is well familiar with what was on their minds. Aside from his credentials, he is actually quite interested in the subjects at hand and able to illuminate them through his comparison to Alois Riegl, whose name and rival example should never be entirely absent.

These subjects are far from superfluous and still require such careful consideration: according to a recent 'History of Art History', Schlosser 'revered' Riegl when in fact his entire career was largely devoted to refuting various proposals made by Riegl, particularly in *Die Spätromische Kunstindustrie*. Such a misunderstanding is interesting because it is based in an inability to interpret and understand written sources which is precisely the core of Schlosser's lifelong identification of contradictions and mistakes in Riegl, and his objection to the 'system' for stylistic analysis endorsed in the *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*. It illustrates the very objection as Schlosser delineated it in *Die Kunstliteratur* (Book 1, 1924, p. 59, Italian 1964, p. 72, and in many other places between 1902 and 1933): when one artist influences another within the genetic development, there are cultural assumptions inextricably bound up with the forms and styles. When Schlosser wrote about Riegl he was being characteristically polite, as it was expected at the time. This inability to understand Schlosser's often tangled German usage has isolated him from not merely the English-speaking world, but from much of posterity in general, and the present volume goes a great way to rectify the situation with solid data about aspects that are usually ignored.

Professor Rosenauer speaks with a certain authority from the opposite camp, and is unhesitating in his rejection of Schlosser's idea of the insularity of the art work, his comparative neglect of connoisseurship, and a few other characteristics. He notes that Schlosser usually shows less interest in the individual object and was always

⁶ The portrait on the tomb is discussed and illustrated: Émile Bertaux, 'Le tombeau d'une Reine de France à Cosenza en Calabre,' *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 40e année, 3e période, 1er avril 1898, 490e livraison, pp. 265-276, 1er mai, 491e livraison, pp. 369-378, Schlosser, 'Geschichte der Porträtbildnerie in Wachs: Ein Versuch,' *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, vol. 29, 1910-1911, p. 192, online at https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/jbksak1910_1911 (accessed 04.11.2022). Roberta Panzanelli ed., *Ephemeral Bodies*, Los Angeles: Getty, 2008, p. 197, fig. 6, Schlosser, *Die Kunst des Mittelalters*, Berlin-Neubabelsberg: Athenaion, 1923, p. 82, fig. 92-93.

willing to continue into nearly any neighbouring discipline, and considers the weakest point of his work to be an inadequate distinction of art from non-art. Indeed, we might respond that something of the topic at hand in the *Kunst- und Wunderkammern* and *Die Kunstliteratur* is to trace the slow distinction of art from other curiosities and the pre-history of systematic art-historical studies. In 'Ein Lebenskommentar', Schlosser himself tells us that he has 'still not resolved these questions', and considering his other achievements, perhaps we can forgive him and enjoy it when the Academy-lecture about Ghiberti in the 'Künstlerprobleme der Frührenaissance' ends with an encomium of Neapolitan opera.⁷

Hans-Ulrich Kessler gives an introduction to the letters written by Schlosser to Wilhelm von Bode as preserved in the estate of Bode in the *Zentralarchiv* of the Berlin museums – which are quite important in our context. While he seems to have been comparatively quiet and introverted, and wishing not to reveal much of himself in his writings, Schlosser's correspondence will provide the richest source for determining his opinions and intellectual development through turbulent times, and this lecture gives us a glimpse into this aspect of research (Dr. Kessler promises to continue with the subject). Schlosser refers to religious affiliations, regionalism and nationalism, rising anti-Semitism, the idea of Groß-Deutschland, his avoidance 'of any kind of clique', and of course the activities of research and museum administration, the personality and scholarship of Josef Strzygowski as well as small references to his own doctoral students. If we are to learn more about his personality and opinions, it will be through precisely such readings of the surviving correspondence since his own other papers have not survived.

Michael Thimann delves into the subject of book collecting in comparison to the lifelong friend Aby Warburg with fascinating concrete information about the original book lists and activities of both. While the interests of the two overlapped in very many ways and they shared certain common political views among many other things, Schlosser, to put it mildly, had far less financial means at his disposal and space to house his collection of books.⁸ In the miserable economic situation after 1919, he was grateful to receive offprints and newly published books from friends both for himself and the department library, referring gratefully to his growing shelf devoted to Fritz Saxl – whom he consistently addresses as 'Dear Friend'.⁹ While he also

⁷ Julius Schlosser, *Künstlerprobleme der Frührenaissance* (3. Heft): V. Stück: Lorenzo Ghiberti, Wien: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1934 online at <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/schlosser1934bd3> (accessed 04.11.2022).

⁸ In his lecture at the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg, Schlosser had included political asides about the Versailles treaty and other phenomena held in common with Warburg, but these were omitted from the published version, letter from Saxl to Schlosser November 23 and December 18, 1927, Warburg Institute Archive, WIA GC/19252. Warburg himself delicately alludes to their mutual antipathy towards France December 23, 1927, WIA GC/19251.

⁹ Warburg Institute Archive, WIA GC 21535, March 9, 1928.

identified cryptic subject matter in art from an early stage in his career, Schlosser was less fixed than Warburg on the survival of antiquity. In *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern*, he endears the reader to recall how ‘we all began compulsively collecting things as children’, and this is the only lecture to tangentially touch on that phenomenon within the Schlosser-oeuvre. By contrast to Warburg, he often interrupts the text of *Die Kunstliteratur* to record his pleasure in handling the binding of a well-made book. By contrast again, Schlosser used the facilities of the imperial, the later state library, as he himself even mentions in one of his letters to Fritz Saxl when called on to identify the earliest use of the term ‘attic’ in architecture.¹⁰ The most relevant section of Schlosser’s personal book collection is that devoted to the cities and regions of Italy – which he himself mentions in the preface to *Die Kunstliteratur* as being ‘reasonably complete’. A manuscript list seems first to have been bound in 1909 (Thimann plate 10). The bibliographical and historiographical account of what became Book 8 is composed in an order in which the Austrian visitor would reach the individual region by train from their point of departure. We will all here agree with Prof. Rosenberg that there would have been other possibilities for organizing the material, but the personal view does not deter from, but is actually the point of the project.

By contrast to Warburg, Schlosser was a curator of sculpture who considered his teaching and theorizing to be a simple personal interest. He remained close to fellow sculpture curators. The Italian translator of *Die Kunstliteratur* was curator of sculpture in Florence. Another inspiration to him, Julius Lange, was also curator of sculpture, and Leopoldo Cicognara, who provided a model for a collection and catalogue of art books, had also written a history of Italian sculpture which he repeatedly quotes approvingly.

Warburg’s library as a ‘laboratory for scholarship’ is abstracted from its vehicles themselves much in the way that ‘*Kunstliteratur*’ hovers somewhere above the objects and artefacts while penetrating into detail in a way that, in his very popular lectures at least, Max Dvořák had not. When Dvořák was pithy and to the point, it was in his book reviews in the *Kunstgeschichtliche Anzeigen*, and of course in his seminars.

In a slight typographical error (p. 129) the Schlosser-Warburg correspondence is said here to begin in 1906. In fact, the earliest surviving letter from Schlosser to Warburg dealing with monkeys and lions on medieval cups seems to be dated April 4, 1903 (the same year in which the Schlosser Croce correspondence begins). In the letter of November 29, 1904, Schlosser thanks for the invitation to visit Hamburg, reiterates the interest with which he follows every Warburg publication, ‘agrees completely with everything’ Warburg has said about the philological and historical underpinnings of the history of art (*‘ist mir aus der Seele gesprochen’*), after having said

¹⁰ Dated as I recall, June 22 and July 5, 1930 Warburg Institute Archive, WIA GC 1930/2883 and WIA GC 1930/2885.

'freilich läuft mein Weg seit geraumer Zeit immer mehr von diesen Dingen ab' (of course my own research has for some time now been leading in a completely different direction than these subjects). Whether 'diese Dinge' refers primarily to animal imagery on medieval cups is unclear, but not everywhere in these lectures is it completely appreciated that Schlosser sharply distinguished 'Kulturgeschichte' from 'Kunstgeschichte'. In his Dvořák-obituary he quotes Wickhoff as telling him that their friend ought to perhaps have gone into the former rather than the latter. In his 1934 'Rückblick' onto the 'Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte' he stressed that in comparison to the yearbook published by the Prussian museums, that of the Vienna museums remained bound to individual objects in the collections, or at least that as its point of departure. It is a principle outspoken in his reviews of dissertations and distinct perhaps from Warburg.

Libraries and librarians were characterized ironically by Robert Musil in section 100 of his magnum opus. The description is presumably based on the Augustinerlesesaal of the Nationalbibliothek where Schlosser spent many hours, days and weeks of his professional career.¹¹ While Musil wrote in his slow and methodical way, he was also famously having tea or coffee hours with Otto Pächt and Bruno Fürst in the abode of the latter in the Ballhausplatz, separated from the reading room by the Heldenplatz. The ironic view he gave of libraries and cataloguing is intimately linked to those students reviving aspects of Riegl's theories and developing a critical view of Schlosser and Warburg. One librarian there, similar enough in other descriptions, and possibly providing a model for the librarian evoked by Musil was Kurt Rathe – whom we have already mentioned, curator of the print collection in that library, who, in a very detailed article of 1935, empirically refuted the 'very shaky premises' of Otto Pächt's *Österreichische Tafelmalerei der Gotik*.¹² The criticism was apparently never acknowledged and when I spoke with him late in life, Pächt remained adamant. Rathe also found favour in the KBW in studying traces of astrology in 15th century art, and corresponded on the subject with Saxl, who later published another of Rathe's lectures in the Studies of the Warburg Institute.¹³

These are all subjects beyond the parameters of succinct lectures about a neglected art historian, but they are latent within the materials or arguments at hand,

¹¹ 'General Stumm dringt in die Staatsbibliothek ein und sammelt Erfahrungen über Bibliothekare, Bibliotheken und geistige Ordnung' (General Stumm von Bordwehr enters the State Library and experiences librarians, libraries and intellectual order), Robert Musil, *Gesammelte Werke Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978, pp. 459-465.

¹² Kurt Rathe, 'Aus der Frühzeit der Kärntner Tafelmalerei,' *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, new ser. vol. 9, 1935, pp. 49-72. Rathe was a former doctoral student remaining on friendly terms with Schlosser while the mentor was a de facto editor of the *Jahrbuch*.

¹³ Kurt Rathe, *Die Ausdrucksfunktion extrem verkürzter Figuren*, Studies of the Warburg Institute, vol. 8, London: Warburg Institute, 1938.

and should remind the reader that they might still learn from studies made a century ago.

Ingrid Ciulisová analyzes court art which included the sometimes-abstruse subjects of allegory and brings in the influence of Franz Wickhoff – which others ought perhaps also to have done. Court patronage was the better documented counterpoint to ‘*Armeleutekunst*’, and had been a favourite subject since Schlosser’s very beginnings, prompted we might assume by his curatorial position in the imperial collection, and apparent already in his review of the Duke of Berry inventories, ‘European court art viewed through Byzantine eyes’, the earliest post-antique medals, or the lecture on Ferrara and the essays about Dosso Dossi. We might recall that Erica Tietze’s studies of some of these courtly allegories are likely to have had their origins in the *Übungen* Schlosser regularly held with his students in the museum. Excepting the contribution about wax portrait sculpture, this discussion of patronage is almost alone in touching on Schlosser’s important programmatic cycle of essays in the *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, 1892-1914. Those studies provided examples of multiple aspects and approaches fruitful and necessary to the history of art as distinct from ‘*Stilgeschichte*’, including patronage, early collecting and display of art, religious superstitions, workshop organization and the art market as well as didactic devices or theoretical issues and reflections on such problems as the evocation of motion and emotion. When the male line of the Este family died out, their holdings reverted to the Habsburgs, and detonated a number of historical results – some discussed in the correspondence with Croce. As we have noted, the Este bronzes were catalogued by Leo Planiscig, and during the Austrian occupation of the Este territories, the notoriously obsessive police control meant, by the way, that censorship copies of much of the greatest Italian scholarship of the time ended up in the university library of Vienna.¹⁴

Attention is again drawn to Schlosser’s relationship to the work of Warburg and his circle. Some of the parallels have been intriguing. We might recall that in writing about Dürer, Warburg was almost literally anticipating the title of the Habilitation essay by Wickhoff, like Erwin Panofsky thereafter, who then published his own Dürer-essay in the *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 1921-1922.¹⁵ Something

¹⁴ Leo Planiscig, *Die Estensische Kunstsammlung Band 1 Skulpturen und Plastiken des Mittelalters und der Renaissance: Katalog*, Vienna: Schroll, 1919.

¹⁵ Aby Warburg, ‘Dürer und die italienische Antike,’ *Verhandlungen der achtundvierzigsten Versammlung deutscher Philologen und Schulmänner in Hamburg vom 3 bis 6. Oktober 1905*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1906, pp. 55-60; the Habilitation of Franz Wickhoff, ‘Dürer-Studien’, *Kunstgeschichtliches Jahrbuch der K. K. Zentralkommission für Erforschung und Erhaltung der kunst- und historischen Denkmale*, vol. 1, 1907, pp. 1-12 is based on his earlier dissertation, ‘Eine Zeichnung Dürers nach der Antike’, University of Vienna 1880; Erwin Panofsky published his own ‘Dürers Stellung zur Antike’, in the *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 1 (15), no. 2, 1922, pp. 43-92. The use of antiquity by later artists became a standard source for Viennese dissertations since the time of Moriz Thausing.

of the connection to antiquity circled around the famous bronze figure of the 'Youth of Magdalensberg' in the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Antikensammlung VI.1 now as 16th century cast from a Roman original). Panofsky later recalled his contact as a young scholar with Arpád Weixlgärtner on the subject of Dürer, whom, as the living successor to Karl Giehlow, he or Saxl seem to have invited to write a preface for their book of 1923, *Dürers Melancholia I: Eine quellen- und typengeschichtliche Untersuchung*. Nuremberg workshop practices around the time of the young Dürer had apparently been a favourite topic in the lectures and *Übungen* held by Schlosser, with the practice and results of Michael Wolgemut and others eliciting a number of studies and dissertations on the part of his students, including Ernst Kris, Alice Wolf and Otto Nirenstein-Kallir.

Again, Ciulisová opens an enormous topic that should invite readers to further explore the momentous studies meticulously made by the young curator of sculpture and decorative objects at the turn of the century.

Sebastian Schütze, "'Kritische Kunstgeschichte in ihrem Sinn" Schlosser und Croce' illuminates the intellectual relationship on the basis of the correspondence published in two separate editions. Aside from the shifting of the relationship before and after 1914/1918, the important point here is some of the differences between the philosopher judging history and art, and the art historian training students for work in the museums and the *Denkmalamt*.

While Schlosser was shy as a public speaker and a sharp critic but not himself philosophically original (referring to himself as *αφιλοσοφος*), Croce embodied ideals that in the intellectual turmoil around the year 1900 must have fired the young Italophile's imagination. He was an unusually productive and influential 'private scholar' politically engaged, an Italian with a close knowledge of Hegel, opposing the same inadequate materialism and formalism Schlosser himself eschewed, but lacking the curmudgeonly element Schlosser might have sensed in himself.

Schütze delineates some significant tendencies in Schlosser which depart from the example of Sickel and Wickhoff, but also the basis which *Die Kunstliteratur* provided for the more recent conceptions of 'period eye' and 'visual culture' in studying Italian renaissance art. This is obviously one of the seminal topics in situating the Schlosser oeuvre and again critical of the contemporary Riegl-Rezeption which might have been sharing a snicker with General Stumm von Bordwehr as he retired to the reading room to research his collection of knives.

Robert Williams (+), 'Schlosser, Vossler and Wölfflin' gives a fastidious reading of Karl Vossler's linguistics in terms of positivism, idealism, creativity, the individual and the collective, and the relation of art to other art and to non-art. It is then related in an illuminating way to the difficult distinction we find Schlosser making between the history of artistic language and the history of style. Schlosser did indeed choose an abstract mode for some of his academy lectures late in life, but he always remained a public servant teaching art-historical practice to those willing to

listen. Ernst Gombrich has recorded how the ‘language of art’ arose in his lectures in connection with celebrated examples, and it is also clear from university documents.¹⁶

It does indeed come as something of a surprise that the friendship with Heinrich Wölfflin would suddenly blossom, and the small book about the Bamberg Apocalypse be lauded as the work of the greatest living art historian.¹⁷ Warburg was probably not considered to be an art historian any more than Dvořák, while Wickhoff and others were not gifted with longevity, but it also again illustrates his close connections to the colleagues in Munich – something which he underscored a few times in writing.

There are always inaccuracies when a single essay is studied outside of the context of what went before and after, or where the lecture was held and to whom. Professor Williams could already have found traces of ‘vitalism’ in the essay ‘Zur Kenntnis der künstlerischen Überlieferung im späten Mittelalter’ from 1902. We are given a view of ‘Romantic subjectivity’ not apparently acknowledging that that was the period that first began to systematically study history, and that this was Schlosser’s chosen profession. In graduating from the Piaristengymnasium, Schlosser had chosen Schelling as one of the two philosophers to be examined about, and throughout his writings he also shows a close knowledge of Hegel and of much else from that generation. Verses from Schiller or Hölderlin seemed at times to roll from his tongue. At various points, he was a keen critic, writes quite sarcastically about early 19th-century art, and should not be written off quite so curtly. In bandying terms such as ‘Romanticism’ and ‘positivism’ or ‘idealism’ for that matter, we should bear in mind that these concepts have various aspects, possibly mean something distinct to each of us, and Schlosser’s students were all being taught to begin with a concrete problem and avoid any sort of jargon. His comments on the dissertations always return to that point. In his feud with Strzygowski, Schlosser more than once stated that ‘*Kunstwissenschaft*’ was not the goal of his academic work, but rather ‘*Kunstgeschichtswissenschaft*’. ‘Ethnic essentialism’ might strike some as an overstatement of what Schlosser occasionally seems to be indulging, and should not be confused with his anticlericalism. The urge to recognize and come to terms with ‘internal’ or ‘essential’ (as opposed to superficial) qualities was not original to Schlosser, and not much related to Wölfflin or Walter Benjamin, but something that had already been conjured by Wickhoff and remained a leitmotif of the Viennese art historians still alive to Otto Pächt when he referred to ‘*das innere Thema*’ in his lecture

¹⁶ Ernst H. Gombrich, ‘Einige Erinnerungen an Julius von Schlosser als Lehrer,’ *Kritische Berichte*, 16th year, no. 4, 1988, pp. 5-9, English by Karl Johns ‘Some Reminiscences of Julius von Schlosser as a Teacher,’ *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 23, December 2020, [23/KJ1](#), pp. 1-6.

¹⁷ Schlosser, *Die Kunst des Mittelalters*, Berlin-Neubabelsberg: Athenaion, [1923], p. 7, reiterated in *Die Kunstliteratur* and again in the lecture ‘‘Stilgeschichte’ und ‘Sprachgeschichte’ der bildenden Kunst: Ein Ruckblick’, *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-historische Abteilung*, Jahrgang 1935 Heft 1, p. 22 although Williams would have admitted that very many other names bounce around in this lecture.

on artistic originality published in 1967.¹⁸ This is not to even mention Sedlmayr in his later phases. In reading a single essay separately from the oeuvre, it is not always obvious that the author is situating themselves within a larger string of ideas. For example, the distinction of *'Kunstgeschichte'* from *'Künstlergeschichte'*, the history of art from that of individual artists, is taken directly from Heinrich von Brunn (1822-1894), whose *Griechische Kunstgeschichte* seems also to have been a source of inspiration to Riegl.¹⁹ It is a contrarian statement about the writing being published around him. For Schlosser, Brunn was a predecessor in distinguishing art from individual artists in the way that Winckelmann had done and he himself underscores through nine books of *Die Kunstliteratur*. This lecture is nonetheless a very clear and intelligent analysis, contributing well to a complicated question of wide interest.

Hubert Locher, *'Inselhaftigkeit: Über Julius Schlossers Kunstbegriff'* is very informative in examining Schlosser's conception of 'insularity' within the more general notion of art. For those with the impression that the more purely theoretical statements were written primarily after Schlosser had retired from the museum and university, it will be helpful to be reminded that *'Inselhaftigkeit'* is already reflected in connection with the study of wax-portraiture, published in 1910 and written in the years before. Along with other metaphors of 'being at sea', it illustrates his assessment of normative aesthetics, a-historical definitions of art omitting craft, including trends he subsumed as *'Klassizismus'* and other dead ended ideas in approaching art – which he confesses to have nearly all patiently examined *'nicht ohne heimliches Stöhnen'* – not without quietly groaning. In his final statement published in 1935, the term *'Stilgeschichte'* appears differently than in the usual context, not as the development of given styles, but as the stylistic criticism of individual objects. It is key to distinguishing the history of art from cultural history, something which both Wickhoff and Schlosser felt to have been a slight *faux-pas* on the part of their friend Max Dvořák. Schlosser is said to have 'capitulated' to a trend of the time in turning to the monographic approach at the end of his life, and the question of 'the insularity' is aptly noted to have been developed then by Sedlmayr in his notion of *'Strukturanalyse'*. Such things are difficult to decide one way or another since there is almost no documentation from Schlosser, and Ghiberti, the subject of his actual monograph, is also an unusual, cherry-picked example since Ghiberti was such a pivotal artist with so few extant works, all of them well documented and in a single place. Ghiberti's artistic achievements also align perfectly with the continuity between craft and art and other topics that tickled Schlosser throughout his career.

¹⁸ Otto Pächt, *'Künstlerische Originalität und ikonographische Erneuerung,' Stil und Überlieferung in der Kunst des Abendlandes Akten des 21. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte in Bonn 1964*, vol. 3 *'Theorien und Probleme,'* Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1967, p. 271, reprinted Pächt, *Methodisches zur kunsthistorischen Praxis*, Munich: Prestel, 1977, p. 164. Pächt's dissertation of 1925, *'Das Verhältnis von Bild und Vorwurf in der mittelalterlichen Entwicklung der Historiendarstellung'*, had already grappled with this.

¹⁹ Heinrich Brunn, *Griechische Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 1, Munich: Bruckmann, 1893, discussing the Vaphio cups pp. 46-52.

Little clinkers are unavoidable: Schlosser did not in fact himself translate Julius Lange, but found a student to do so: Ferdinand Nagler who repeatedly vacationed in Denmark. Prof. Rosenauer had already intimated the problem that when the insularity of the object is taken too far, it loses its connection to the historical reality as it was among others, being drilled in the Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung – and the master was still driving his students there to the end of his days.

Matthew Rampley, 'A Moment of Crisis: Julius von Schlosser, the History of Art as Style, and the History of Art as Language' very ably, clearly and circumspectly rounds off the presentations including 'Critical Issues' and 'Philosophical Questions'. He gives us what is probably the best critical summary of the situation now available, astutely avoiding the pitfalls of generalizing from the analysis of a single essay isolated from the others and diverging from Schlosser's own intentions as he repeatedly asserted them. In his admittedly earlier 'Ein Lebenskommentar', Schlosser told us that these were questions he had been pondering and had not yet resolved.

Nietzsche is cited by Schlosser at the end of the Montaigne essay, and to my knowledge at only one other point in his published work.²⁰ Nietzsche was not taken seriously in academia and directed himself more to an audience without a secondary education. He seems never to have read Hegel or other philosophy. At this time, there were comparatively few canonical subjects to study in higher education, and anybody with a *humanistisches Gymnasium* under their belt would have made it as far as the Stoics in their readings of Greek. I know personally that those graduates were quite thoroughly familiar with the thoughts and feelings of Plutarch and Pausanias, and that Nietzsche was felt to be more of a rhetorician, appealing perhaps to undergraduates. Hermann Usener was the more influential teacher of Nietzsche (and formative influence on Aby Warburg for that matter), and responded to *Die Geburt der Tragödie* as vacuous of any academic value. Usener is cited by Schlosser as a significant source and might be more relevant to ponder.

As a patient and unusually well-read historian, Schlosser often refers to the succession of historical periods, intellectual trends, artistic styles, and how the model of 'Impressionism' had during his youth become superseded by the period of 'Expressionism'. Unlike most of us, he uses the term to indicate the definitions of Benedetto Croce, and in the bombastic closing lines of *Die Kunst des Mittelalters* expresses his faith that the coming generation will replace his own exactly in the role as he at that age himself had done.

Crisis or no crisis, the world moves on. It accounts for much of Schlosser's quirkiness before his later audience, and the larger question would seem to be why

²⁰ Schlosser, 'Randglossen zu einer Stelle Montaignes,' *Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte Franz Wickhoff gewidmet*, Vienna: Schroll, 1903, p. 182, reprinted Schlosser, *Präludien*, Berlin: Bard, 1927, p. 226, English translation by Karl Johns *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 12, 2015, [12/KJ2](#), p. 13.

such an intelligent, persistent and erudite scholar would never have confronted the problems inherent in so simplistic a definition of art as 'expression'. When Williams and Rampley mention the positions that we are no longer able to accept today, we might have expected this to have been the actual subject at hand. Rosenauer leaves us with the pragmatic conclusions on the part of a practicing art historian.

There were no lectures from the coin room, or from the *Schatzkammer*, the collections of ancient art, the department of ancient or modern languages and linguistics, and none directly about the idiosyncratic *Die Kunst des Mittelalters*, the *Kunst- und Wunderkammern*, nor his thoughts about Byzantine art, Giotto or Venice.²¹ There are also few references to the anthologies which were Wickhoff's impulse ultimately leading to *Die Kunsthistorie*. Those about Ghiberti have not been included although it would have provided an important antipode to reflections on his later formulations of the 'language' and insularity of 'true art'. There are only so many hours in the day and a limited number of speakers available to pronounce on a given subject. Within the Schlosser-material we do ourselves still sense the same antithesis between current practices in the museum and in the university.

Nearly all of these contributions illuminate small errors and inaccuracies on the part of Schlosser or corrections made in intervening research, but ultimately they serve to show how much of his work is still largely valid – and why Kris, Kurz, Gombrich and the others found good reasons to suffer through a difficult lecture style and confront 'the prickly problems of the discipline'. Some of the lecturers are naturally more immersed in the broader oeuvre than others, and the sympathy or interest varies as it can only be expected. For those believing that some of the ideas such as the insular monad conception of great art arose late in his career, it is helpful that more than one of the lecturers pointed to early utterances less well-known to most readers – and demonstrate his consistency over a long period. An Anglo-American audience might be grateful for the illuminating lectures on large, more philosophical subjects by Robert Williams and Matthew Rampley, and hopefully find them informative.

Some aspects will remain difficult to appraise since biographical facts are little known, and Schlosser does not reveal more than a very few details in his writings. These are every one of them excellent and thought-provoking lectures, not contributions to the entertainment industry, but properly dignifying Schlosser's achievement and will provide a concrete basis for further research into the formational scholarship of that time.

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²¹ It is interesting that Arnold van Gennep also began his career as a numismatist.



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