

In Defence of Baroque: The Wölfflin-Frankl-Giedion Tradition

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If there was a style which took long to be academically and stylistically respected, it was the Baroque. The text which made it worth intellectual appreciation is *Renaissance und Barock*, translated into English as *Renaissance and Baroque*, by Heinrich Wölfflin.¹ This publication, issued in 1888, had rendered Baroque an acceptable theme for scholarship. Until then, it “had been considered too pathological to be worthy of serious study”.² Wölfflin had established a tradition of systematic, comparative, empirico-analytical research which was developed further from teacher to student. He, who in 1893 was appointed professor of art history at the University of Basel to succeed his teacher Jacob Burckhardt, the lead authority in the historiography of art and culture at the time, had taught the Czech scholars Paul

1 Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*. (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1965); reprint of 1888 ed. The translation by Kathrin Simon, *Renaissance and Baroque* (London: Collins, 1964), was used in this essay.

2 Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, *Reading Aalto through the Baroque*. In ‘AA Files’, no. 65 (2012), 72. This publication was expanded further in Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, *Reading Aalto through the Baroque: Constituent Facts, Dynamic Pluralities, and Formal Latencies*. In Andrew Leach, John Macarthur and Maarten Delbeke, eds., *The Baroque in Architecture Culture, 1880-1980* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 139-150. This chapter elaborates the themes and issues included in Pelkonen (2012) in terms of Baroque sense on time, Baroque as latency, Baroque space and (Neo-)Baroque Architecture. It also includes a number of photos of Aalto at the drawing board.

Frankl and Sigfried Giedion. The former, later Wölfflin's assistant, had critically challenged and developed his master's ideas in his publication *Die Entwicklungsphasen der neueren Baukunst*, translated as *Principles of Architectural History: The Four Phases of Architectural Style, 1420–1900*, hereafter shortened to *Principles of Architectural History*.³ This text was instrumental 'to induce his reluctant contemporaries to approach Baroque architecture sympathetically'.⁴ It was published in 1914, a year earlier than Wölfflin's publication *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, translated as *Principles of Art History*.⁵ Unlike his teacher, Frankl was 'reluctant to use this term [Baroque], which was then still so charged with negative overtones'.⁶ As James Sloss Ackerman observed, this Wölfflin-Frankl tradition was continued by Sigfried Giedion through his publication *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*.⁷ This paper aims to outline the contributions of the main protagonists of this tradition through their respective above-mentioned text, in defence of Baroque.

3 Whilst acknowledging the association between the two scholars, James F. O'Gorman, the translator into English of the *Entwicklungsphasen der neueren Baukunst*, chose the title *Principles of Architectural History* to distinguish it from Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History* (Paul Frankl, *The Principles of Architectural History: The Four Phases of Architectural Style, 1420–1900*, translated by James F. O'Gorman and with a foreword by James Sloss Ackerman, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1973 edition).

4 James Sloss Ackerman, *Foreword*. In Paul Frankl, *Principles of Architectural History: The Four Phases of Architectural Style, 1420–1900*, James F. O'Gorman (trans.), xi.

5 Martin Warnke notes that the literal translation of the original German text is *Fundamental Art-Historical Principles: The Problem of the Development of Style in Recent Art* (Martin Warnke, *On Heinrich Wölfflin*. In 'Representations' 27 (1989), 174 and 185, fn 11). Warnke's essay was translated into English by David Levin. Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History. The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*, translated from 7th German Edition (1929) into English by Hottinger (New York: Dover Publications, 1932, and reprints).

6 Ackerman, ix.

7 *Ibid.*, xi.

Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Birth of a New Tradition*, second edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949).

The prime mover

Wölfflin had studied at the universities of Basel, Berlin and Munich under the leading authorities of the time.⁸ At the University of Basel, he studied art history under Burckhardt. He read philosophy in Berlin under the Wilhelm Dilthey, the heir of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's chair. He was also influenced by the neo-Kantian philosopher Johannes Volkelt and the classical archaeologist Heinrich Brunn.⁹ Wölfflin completed his doctorate in 1886 at the University of Munich where his father was professor of classical philology. The title of his dissertation was *Prolegomena zu einer Psychologie der Architektur*, translated into English as *Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture*. In his study he relates empathy to architectural form, a theme developed from Theodor Lipps.¹⁰ Wölfflin argued that architecture had a basis in form through the empathetic response of the human figure.

An attempt to reconstruct Wölfflin's intellectual development based on unpublished journals, correspondence and other manuscripts at the University of Basel, was undertaken by Joan Goldhammer Hart.¹¹ The objective of this investigation was to comprehend Wölfflin's contribution in its original socio-historical context, and includes an extensive study of his doctorate, a study that included

... the germ of his later ideas is already present. The young author suggested that architecture derived its forms from the idealized human body: by identifying ourselves with architectural forms, that is by empathy, we receive their esthetic message.¹²

8 Joan Goldhammer Hart, *Heinrich Wölfflin*, In 'Encyclopaedia of Aesthetics' (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), Vol. 4, 472-6.

9 Hart includes philologists August Bockh and the artist Adolf von Hildebrand as other notable influences on Wölfflin (Joan Goldhammer Hart, *Heinrich Wölfflin: An Intellectual Biography*. (Berkeley: University of California, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1981). Also see Joan Goldhammer Hart, *Reinterpreting Wölfflin: Neo-Kantianism and Hermeneutics*. In 'Art Journal' 42, no. 4 (1982), 292-300.

10 Kirsten Wagner and Jonathan Blower, *Animating Architecture: Empathy and Architectonic Space*. In 'Art in Translation', 6:4 (2014), 399-435.

This essay by Wagner and Blower addressed the psychological and physiological perception of space and the variation of both through empathy theory.

11 Hart, 1981.

12 Wolfgang Born, *Heinrich Wölfflin 1864-1945*. In 'College Art Journal', 5, no. 1

Besides *Renaissance und Barock* and *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* which left a lasting impact on art history, Wölfflin published another work entitled *Die Klassische Kunst*, translated as *Classic Art*.¹³ Throughout all these publications Wölfflin interpreted the transition from realism of the fifteenth century to the idealism of the sixteenth century in terms of a shift from the bourgeois to the nobility.¹⁴ Furthermore, he employed the same research methods, systematically and consistently, to explore the characteristics of art of a given period, namely the comparative method, inductive logic, and formal analysis. However, Hart notes that the reasons that he advanced for the shifts he identified from one epoch to another varied, gradually developed from simplistic to more elaborate and complex ones.¹⁵

Renaissance and Baroque was the result of two years of travelling in Italy after his doctoral studies. In this work, Wölfflin, ... for the first time succeeded in establishing objective criteria in esthetics by developing his psychological observations into a system of comparative analysis. Contrasting the architectural characteristics of the seventeenth century with those of the sixteenth, he defined a group of complementary concepts which elucidated the significance of the two periods. The structural character of the Renaissance (*tektonisch*) and the flowing character of the Baroque (*atektonisch*) he interpreted as legitimate expressions of artistic tendencies which unfold consistently in the lapse of time.¹⁶

Stilwandlung, meaning transition of styles, is a fundamental theme in Wölfflin's scholarship: 'Why did the Renaissance end?'¹⁷

(1945), 44. This publication is effectively an *obituary* for Wölfflin by a former student at Munich. Wolfgang, through his father's first marriage, is the half brother of the Nobel-prize-winning physicist Max Born.

13 Heinrich Wölfflin, *Classic Art. An Introduction to the Italian Renaissance*. Translated from the 8th German Edition (Basle: Benno Schwabe & Co, 1948) by Peter and Linda Murray (London: Phaidon Press, 1952, 2nd edn 1953).

14 Warnke, 176.

15 Hart, 1981.

16 Born, 44.

17 Alina Payne, *Wölfflin, Architecture and the Problem of 'Stilwandlung'*. In 'Journal

This was the point of departure in *Renaissance and Baroque*, his *Habilitationsschrift*. His interest was not in the history of artists but in the history of art; he was not interested in describing how the Baroque evolved, but to comprehend its beginning.¹⁸ *Stilwandlung* was associated with architecture in Wölfflin's work

... because its discourse offered what he needed, and that was so because at the time it interacted with a host of human-based sciences that could be productively blended with the theories from philosophy and psychology that he was working with.¹⁹

Long conceived but born out of agony

In *Principles of Art History*, Wölfflin 'developed his art theory in a fully matured, definitive form, and which soon gave him international fame'.²⁰ In this text he outlines and discusses the development of the Renaissance and Baroque, the styles discussed in *Renaissance and Baroque*, with special reference to painting.²¹ Wölfflin derived a scheme by noting changes in the development from one style to another. He then generalised his scheme into a theory. In *Principles of Art History* he had identified ten fundamental notions found in paintings produced over the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. He classified them in terms of the five pairs of characteristics listed hereunder.

Renaissance		Baroque
linear	↔	painterly
plane	↔	recession
closed form	↔	open form
multiplicity	↔	unity
clearness	↔	unclearness

of Art Historiography', no. 7 (2012), 2.

18 Ibid, 2-3.

19 Ibid, 2.

20 Born, 45

21 Wölfflin's work was widely available following the publication of the 1932 English translation.

Warnke had investigated what Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History* stood for and achieved in its time. He noted that the first reactions to this publication were negative.²² Oskar Walzl, in 1917, was the first to introduce Wölfflin's theory in his comparative study of art. Why was Wölfflin not immediately appreciated by art historians and theorists? It was due to the historical timing of the publication, a point that Wölfflin makes in his preface to the text where he also laments that the war had conditioned a number of reproductions included in the text. Warnke put it succinctly thus:

The outbreak of the war inspired the bureaucrats of German academia to publish a slew of patriotic gushings on behalf of the emperor and the *Vaterland* and against the cultural barbarism of the Franco-English enemy.²³

To support his statement, Warnke cites Wölfflin who in 1914, according to Lotte Warburg, had stated:

Why are all of the oldest artists and professors rallying to the flag? Apparently, only the very few feel comfortable with themselves. I can understand it as far as art historians go, but it's the same everywhere! And the speeches that scholars make in favor of the war! So this is the unity everyone's making such a big deal about - everyone losing his mind!²⁴

22 See the positions, published in 1917, of Oskar Wulff and Rudolf Kautzsch in the *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* and in *Der Begriff der Entwicklung in der Kunstgeschichte: Rede zur Kaiser-Geburtstagsfeier am 27 January 1917* respectively (Warnke, 172-173). The *Principles of Art History* was also reviewed by Wilhelm Waetzoldt in *Kunst und Künstler*, 14 (1916): 468-71, and by Erwin Panofsky in 1915, 'Das Problem des Stils in der bildenden Kunst'. In *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, 10 (1915): 460-67. Warnke observed that the latter was based on Wölfflin's theory rather than on the publication itself (Warnke, 184, fn 5). A list of other reviews and articles with respect to the *Principles of Art History* are listed in Warnke (ibid.).

23 Warnke, 173.

24 Joseph Gantner, *Heinrich Wölfflin 18 64-1945: Autobiographie, Tagebücher, und Briefe*. (Basel and Stuttgart, 1982), 288. Quoted in Warnke, 173.

With respect to the contemporaneity of the date of the publication of the *Principles of Art History* at the commencement of the war, Warnke questions whether the timing was coincidental or intentional.²⁵ By the end of 1913, Wölfflin's ideas as inferred from his notes with respect to *Principles of Art History*, are indicative of 'unsettling uncertainty and disorientation'.²⁶ To support his claim, Warnke further cites the numerous titles which Wölfflin considered for his publication, which are tabulated below.

Warnke attempted to investigate whether political developments in Europe at the time stimulated Wölfflin to complete the work. He cites and notes that the political scenario did impinge on the completion of the text:²⁷

This general critical estimation of the political situation, which was of course not unique but is nonetheless striking, did not fail to leave its mark on the *Principles of Art History*. There is a series of excerpts from letters that make it clear that for Wölfflin the work of a teacher and art historian were directly related to contemporary events.

This backed his claim that Wölfflin completed his book as his personal reaction to military service:²⁸

25 Warnke, 173.

26 Warnke makes the following observations (ibid, 173ff):

The ideas contained in the *Principles of Art History* were presented in a lecture entitled 'Fundamental Principles of Art History', delivered by Wölfflin in Berlin in 1906-7; In 1910, Wölfflin delivered a lecture at the Prussian Academy of Sciences entitled 'Style in Visual Art', a title which he considered for the *Principles of Art History* (ibid, 174); In 1911, he delivered another lecture at the Prussian Academy of Sciences entitled 'Formal Analyses as an Introduction to the Artistic Development of Recent Times', which lecture was published a year later; By 1913, his ideas were disjointed and without any clarity. Warnke cited Wölfflin's entry in his diary of September 1913: 'Upon reading old notebooks, shocked by the erratic, superficial, disjointed management of my life' (Joseph Gantner, *Heinrich Wölfflin 1864-1945: Autobiographie, Tagebücher, und Briefe*. (Basel and Stuttgart, 1982), 276; cited in Warnke, 174); and Wölfflin, stated: 'ten years of nothing. Everybody's waiting' (On this point, Warnke makes reference to Hart, 1981, n.221).

27 Warnke, 175.

28 Ibid, 174. Making reference to Gantner (276), Warnke quotes Wölfflin's entry in

It does indeed appear that Wölfflin finished up his book as a personal version of military service, and that he finally wrote it out with incredible concentration in the months after the outbreak of the war.

Date	Titles considered for the text published as <i>Principles of Art History</i>
1902	<i>Style: Introduction to Recent Art History</i>
1903	<i>The Concepts of Art History</i>
1904	<i>The Principles of Art History</i>
1909	<i>Developmental Laws of Recent Art;</i> <i>Exercises in the Comparative Consideration of Art;</i> <i>Art-Historical Analyses</i>
1910	<i>Style in Visual Art</i>
1911	<i>Formal Analyses as an Introduction to the Artistic</i> <i>Development of Recent Times;</i> <i>The Problem of Style</i>
1912	<i>The Form of Development in Recent Art</i>
1913	<i>The Problem of Development in the Visual Arts: A</i> <i>Consideration of the Fundamental Principles of Style in</i> <i>Recent Art History</i>
1914	<i>The Fundamental Principles of Art: Art as Expression, Art</i> <i>as Representation [Darstellung], Art as Quality</i>
1915	<i>Fundamental Principles of Recent Art History:</i> <i>Developments in Art;</i> <i>Principles of Art History</i>

A loyal critic and his evolution of Wölfflin's *Renaissance and Baroque*

Frankl's academic interest shifted from architecture to history of art. He graduated as an architect from Berlin in 1904. Four years later, he enrolled to read philosophy, history and art history at Munich under Wölfflin and Berthold Riehl, the latter his academic supervisor for his

his diary of September 1913: 'The book-like military service, ... the compulsion to consolidate one's powers, goal-conscious self-discipline' (ibid).

doctoral dissertation which focused on fifteenth-century glass painting in the southern region of Germany. Following completion of his doctorate, he took up a teaching post under Wölfflin. His post-doctoral thesis was influenced by Wölfflin's stand with respect to architectural development but did not endorse his views with regards to formalism. He presented his *Habilitationsschrift* to Wölfflin in 1914.

Other major works besides *Principles of Architectural History*, are *Das System der Kunstwissenschaft*²⁹ and *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries*.³⁰ In *Principles of Architectural History*, he proposes four major categories of art history, a scheme which he used in his later writings. *Das System der Kunstwissenschaft* is a comprehensive history of art based on phenomenology and morphology. *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries* builds on his research interest in medieval architecture and his study of European cathedrals supported by a Guggenheim Grant which allowed him to travel and teach in Europe after the Second World War. Through these works, Frankl ... searched for the principles and categories, visual and otherwise, which realize and determine artistic creation and perception: the work of art; the artist; the patron and the viewer; and all these in relation to their time and place.³¹

In the preface of *Principles of Architectural History*, written in June 1913, Frankl states that it is a response to Wölfflin's publication *Renaissance and Baroque*. According to Frankl, the issue of style had not been resolved by Wölfflin. Thus, the *Principles of Architectural History*³²

29 Paul Frankl, *Das System der Kunstwissenschaft* (Brünn und Leipzig: R.M. Rohrer, 1938).

30 Paul Frankl, *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960). Frankl had worked on another text, *The Gothic*, which was published posthumously (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962).

31 Richard Krautheimer, *Paul Frankl*. In 'Art Journal', 22, no. 3 (1963), 167. This is Krautheimer's obituary for Frankl.

32 Frankl, xiv.

... contains the tentative results of a study that began when I first picked up Heinrich Wölfflin's *Renaissance und Barock* more than a dozen years ago. Although I did not consider myself capable of investigating the problem of stylistic development as fruitfully as Wölfflin had, and although, as a mere novice, I could do no more than try to see buildings through his eyes, I felt from the beginning that he had not completely solved the problem. Since then I have studied his book intensely at least once a year, acquainted myself with the material by travelling and by reading other works, and tried to clarify the problem myself. My most important tools were the analysis of buildings according to four basic elements: space, corporeality, light, and purpose, and the conception of the Renaissance and Baroque as polar opposites.

The scope of the *Principles of Architectural History* is stated in the opening paragraph of same text which reads:

To study stylistic changes in architecture, that is, to establish the polar opposites separating the successive phases of one epoch, which is our main aim here, we must focus upon the comparable elements in the art of building and determine categories of similar features that remain constant over a period of time.³³

The foreword to the translation of the *Principles of Architectural History* by James F. O'Gorman, penned by James S. Ackerman, gives an accurate exposition of Frankl's arguments. Ackerman outlines concisely the two interlocking systems, one critical and the other historical.³⁴ The former establishes four categories to study architecture: spatial form, corporeal form, visible form and purposive intention.³⁵ Within

33 Ibid, 1.

34 Ackerman, vii-x.

35 Frankl states that 'Space, light, corporeality, and purpose are the most general concepts They best characterize the differences between buildings. They are so different that there is no danger of repetition' (Frankl, 1-2). Ackerman respectively

each of these categories, the four historical phases of post-medieval architecture, namely, the periods 1420-1550, 1550-1700, 1700-1800, and 1800 to 1900, were analysed.³⁶ Whilst the first category is indebted to Albert Brinckmann, Alois Riegl and August Schmarsow, the second focuses on Wölfflin's system in *Renaissance and Baroque*.³⁷ The third category draws on the psychology, mostly that of the emerging Gestalt school. In Frankl, the experience of the observer is 'kinetic' rather than 'motionless'. The fourth category is a response to the emerging relation between architecture and the social sciences. In all the historical phases, the architect does not account for the dynamics of style:

... the true protagonists of Frankl's four phases are immanent style-forces (Riegl's *Kunswollen*). 'The *development* of style is an intellectual process over-riding national characteristics and individual artists.' But the development is not simply linear: it proceeds by the action and counteraction of 'polar opposites'. An instance of this Hegelian scheme at work would be the transition from the organisation of spaces by *addition* in the first phase to organisation by *division* in the second.³⁸

The lasting objective of the *Principles of Architectural History* was "to achieve insight into the organism of stylistic development by comparing all epochs and their development".³⁹ Crucial to comprehend

re-states these four categories as spatial composition, treatment of mass and surface, treatment of light, colour and other optical effects and the relation of design to social functions (Ackerman, vii). He notes that these categories depart from Vitruvius, *Firmitas*, *Commoditas*, and *Venustas*; 'Frankl de-emphasizes *Firmitas*; retains *Commoditas* in his fourth category. *Venustas* he expands into three categories' (ibid). Ackerman also remarked that Riegl's distinction between 'haptic' and 'optic' experiences had influenced Frankl's distinction of 'corporeal' and 'visible' form (ibid, viii). He also notes that 'purposive intention' is the English translation of the German term '*Zweckgesinnung*' (ibid.).

36 With respect to the first phase, Frankl mainly makes reference to the architects from Brunelleschi to Antonio da San Gallo the Younger. He does not differentiate between the 'Early' and 'High' Renaissance (ibid, ix).

37 Ibid, vii.

38 Ibid, ix-x. Ackerman quotes from Frankl, 3.

39 Frankl, 3.

Frankl's position is his critical assessment of a given piece of art or monument and its respective contextual place in history. The individual work was the source of his attention:⁴⁰

Philosophy, religion, politics, and science – the whole of Renaissance culture – had to be ready before the fine arts could give them expression. 'Renaissance Man' preceded the Renaissance artist.⁴¹

Space, Time and Wölfflin

Introduced to the study of Baroque by Wölfflin, Giedion's doctoral dissertation, completed in 1922, was entitled *Spätbarocker und Romantischer Klassizismus*, translated into English as *Late-Baroque and Romantic Classicism*.⁴² The significance of his research suggests that 'baroque had a universalism, an 'unconscious' ability to 'recall' earlier primitive and 'völkisch' forms that resonated through to the present'.⁴³ Giedion formally acknowledged Wölfflin and Burckhardt for his intellectual formation. He credited the conception of *Zeitgefühl* to Wölfflin, whose major contribution Giedion argued was 'the process of *Stilwandlung* that he accessed by contrasting epochs the better 'to grasp the spirit' of each'.⁴⁴ From Burckhardt, Giedion absorbed the notion of culture, 'how a period should be treated in its entirety, with regard not only for its painting, sculpture, and architecture but for the social institutions of its daily life as well'.⁴⁵ To Giedion, 'baroque manifests itself as a new power to mould space, and to produce an astonishing and unified whole from the most various parts.'⁴⁶

From the chapter on Alvar Aalto included in the second 1949 edition of *Space, Time and Architecture*, Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen notes that

40 Krautheimer, 167-168.

41 Frankl, 2.

42 Sigfried Giedion, *Spätbarocker und Romantischer Klassizismus* (Munich: F. Brückmann, 1922).

43 Pelkonen, 72; cited Giedion, 1949, 14.

44 Payne, 2.

45 Ibid. Payne notes that '*Zeitgefühl* literally means 'feeling of the time' or 'period feeling' though neither formulation is in use in English (ibid, fn. 3).

46 Giedion, 1949, 109.

one may infer other sources which may have influenced Giedion in his work.⁴⁷ Most notable are the works relating to baroque scholarship by Eugenio d'Ors⁴⁸ and Henri Focillon,⁴⁹ especially through their approach to comprehend historicity in architecture:⁵⁰

In Giedion, as in d'Ors and Focillon, the emphasis throughout is on the human being, whether an artist, historian or a perceiving subject. Interweaving the viewpoints of the artist and of the beholder, they all make the case that the subject is inseparable from the world they live in, the objects they encounter and the buildings they occupy. Art is an integral part of life, or as Focillon puts it succinctly 'a work of art is situated in space'.⁵¹

Giedion traces the undulating, curvilinear motif found in Aalto and other architects to the Baroque period, in particular to the church of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane by Francesco Borromini.⁵² Pelkonen notes that Giedion's reference to Borromini should not be read as a call to revive Baroque as a historical style. She argues that

[Giedion] treats the baroque as a state of mind tending towards a synthesis between inside and outside, not just in architecture but also in human terms, as it marked a moment when the external world was shaped by our inner desires, and vice versa. In this sense, the resurfacing of the key formal trope of the baroque was read by Giedion as a sign of the reappearance of this synthetic mindset.

47 Aalto had occupied a prominent position not only in architecture but also in historiography of the international modern movement (Pelkonen, 72). He had 're-established a union between life and architecture' (Giedion, 1949, 565).

48 Eugenio d'Ors, *Lo Borroco*, trans. in French as *Du Baroque* (Paris: Gallimard, 1935).

49 Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art*, trans. Charles Beecher Hogan and George Kubler (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1942).

50 Pelkonen, 72.

51 Ibid, 74. Her quote is from Focillon, 65.

52 Pelkonen, 72.

Final Comments

Renaissance and Baroque was the first treatise which outlined a detailed morphology of Baroque thus demonstrating that it is a stylistic category worth scholarly research. For Wölfflin, Mannerism is part of the Baroque aesthetic, a position that leading scholars of the time, including Burckhardt, dismissed. In *Principles of Art History*, Wölfflin proved how the transformation of the Renaissance into Baroque was actually not revolutionary but evolutionary, a theory equally valid to interpret other periods. This position ‘ran counter to the Hegelian notion of the zeitgeist, by then entrenched in the foundational ideas of the modern movement’.⁵³ This is another ‘political’ reason why his reading of the Baroque took longer to be appreciated.

Wölfflin’s theory still aroused emotions in the study and assessment of a work of art.⁵⁴ His theory was further developed by Frankl and Giedion. Frankl’s work is ‘essentially an attack on, or at least a vigorous criticism of Wölfflin’s thesis and method’.⁵⁵ Giedion applied Baroque comprehension to one of the leading architects of the international modern. This Wölfflin-Frankl-Giedion tradition is an illustration of how academic scholarship critically develops ideas, thoughts and theories of one’s predecessor(s) and/or mentor(s). This is just one of the instances in the history of academia whereby a scholarly tradition is clearly traced/inherited by a student from his teacher, by a disciple from a learned master. It is a tradition based on a multidisciplinary, scientific approach to art history grounded not in art itself but in the psycho-philosophical theory developed through a simple, yet rigorous, deductive method based on a number of case studies, in this case paintings.

Although Wölfflin’s writings were, and are still interpreted as formalist, he thought of himself otherwise. Prior leaving the chair as professor of art history at Munich, he told his students:

I am thought of as a formalist, as cool. I’m not. I wrote the

53 Pelkonen, 72.

54 Warnke, 172.

55 Ackerman, vi.

Principles of Art History not in order to mechanize history, but in order to render judgment exact. Arbitrariness, the sheer, uncontrollable eruption of emotion, has always disgusted me.⁵⁶

Wölfflin's standing as a formalist has proved to be more useful to historical accounts of artistic forms than any number of socio-economic analyses.⁵⁷ His scheme for charactering art was the subject of the seminal publications by Cornell⁵⁸ and Arnheim.⁵⁹ It has been extensively applied by art historians and psychologists to describe spatial systems in images.⁶⁰ Reference to the psychological application of Wölfflin theory stems from his own work; his theory and scheme is grounded in the psychology of perception, a reference to Kantian philosophy through his influence of Volkelt.

Cornell's discussion formed the basis of the empirical research by Goude and Derefeldt, professors of psychology at the University of Uppsala, funded by the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Their study included four experiments to assess the aspects ratings and similarity estimates, each with respect to trained and untrained observers.⁶¹ They concluded that Wölfflin scheme is reliable

56 Gantner, 368; cited in Warnke, 183.

57 Warnke, 172.

58 Henrik Cornell, *Karakteriseringsproblemet i konstvetenskapen*. (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1928).

59 Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception*. (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1960).

60 John Willats, *The Rules of Representation*. In Paul Smith and Carolyn Wilde, eds., *A Companion to Art Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002), 411-425.

61 Gunnar Goude and Gunilla Derefeldt, *A Study of Wölfflin's System for Characterizing Art*. In *'Studies in Art Education'*, 22, no. 3 (1981), 32-41. The methods used in their study, and their appropriateness for the characterization of art, have been validated over the last half century (see Gunnar Goude and Gunilla Lindén, *An experimental psychological technique for the construction of a characterizing system of art painting and an attempt at physiological validation*. In *'Uppsala universitet Psykologiska institutionen'*, 33 (1966), 1-28; Gunnar Goude, *A multidimensional scaling approach to the perception of art*. In *'Scandinavian Journal of Psychology'*, Vol. I, 13, no. 4 (1972a), 258-271; Gunnar Goude, *A multidimensional scaling approach to the perception of art*. In *'Scandinavian Journal of Psychology'*, Vol. II, 13, no. 4 (1972b), 272-284).

to both types of observers:

... it seems relevant to say that our investigation not only indicates that students can use Wölfflin's system in a theoretically correct way, but also serves as a verification of this system and theory.⁶²

62 Goude and Derefeldt, 36.