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# *The Edgar Wind Journal*

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*Contacts*

[info@edgarwindjournal.eu](mailto:info@edgarwindjournal.eu)

[submissions@edgarwindjournal.eu](mailto:submissions@edgarwindjournal.eu)

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*Publisher*

**Bernardino Branca**

Contact: Route de Verbier Station 11, 1936 Verbier, Switzerland

Phone: 0041 799318816

Email: [publisher@edgarwindjournal.eu](mailto:publisher@edgarwindjournal.eu)

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# Connoisseurship and Art History: Scenes from a Difficult Marriage

Peter Burke

## Abstract

This paper explores the complex history and ongoing debate surrounding connoisseurship in art, particularly focusing on the reliability of the connoisseur's intuitive judgement or 'eye'. The author, writing as a cultural and social historian rather than an art specialist, discusses the interplay between connoisseurs and art historians, the emergence and evolution of connoisseurship as a distinct culture of knowledge, and the necessity of verifying intuition with evidence. The text also acknowledges the absence of a comprehensive historical overview of connoisseurship, a gap the author intends to address with an upcoming book.

## Keywords

Art, Art history, Connoisseurship, Intuition, Knowledge

The polymath Jesuit Michel de Certeau, who was among other things a gifted historian, advised his fellow-scholars to tell their readers, listeners and viewers where they were speaking from, acknowledging their bias in the form of a confession. I am not a specialist on the Vienna school, not a connoisseur, not an artist, an art dealer, an art consultant, an art curator and not even an art historian. At least I can claim to be impartial in the long and sometimes acrimonious debate between connoisseurs and art historians that has taken place over the years!

I identify myself either as a plain historian, a social historian or a cultural historian who has sometimes written about art, especially the art of the Italian Renaissance and the practices of making it, buying it and looking at it. I attempt to place these practices in their cultural contexts, as Michael Baxandall did in his famous study of what he called 'the period eye' in his book on *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, first published in 1972 (as it happens, the same year as my *Culture and Society in Renaissance Italy*). Since that time, the history of practices has become an increasingly important element in cultural history, thanks in particular to Pierre Bourdieu and his famous theory of practice, which was also published in 1972.

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What follows is divided into four parts. The first of these is a short summary of a long debate about the reliability of the connoisseur's eye. The second offers a brief sketch of the history of connoisseurship, from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth. The third part focusses on the rivalry and the conflict between connoisseurs and art historians, or at least some of them. It provides the context for the fourth part, which will emphasise what I believe was most unusual about the practices of the Vienna School in their time, two of these practices in particular.

\* \* \*

For the last few decades, my own focus for research has been the history of knowledge, or more exactly the history of different knowledges in the plural, otherwise known as 'cultures of knowledge'. One of these cultures of knowledge is connoisseurship, a practice that is of interest outside as well as inside art history because of the claims that have long been made in this domain for intuition, the judgement of 'the eye'. A major challenge to these claims is therefore to come to terms with the cultural history of that eye, in other words a history of the famous claim to recognise (often in a flash, an epiphany), not only aesthetic quality but also the hand of a given master.

The debate on the reliability of the connoisseur's eye is never likely to end. On the positive side, think of the discovery of formerly hidden signatures and other documents that support an attribution originally arrived at by the eye, as in the case of one of Bode's attributions to Dürer or Longhi's intuition that Caravaggio had been trained by Simone Peterzano. Another remarkable achievement based on the eye was a string of attributions by the British dealer David Carritt, who discovered, sometimes in unlikely places, a Caravaggio, a Fragonard, a Tiepolo and some Guardi. It is not surprising to learn that when Carritt was young, his eye impressed the elderly Berenson, who liked to test the ability of young connoisseurs who visited him.

On the negative side of the scale we have to place the major disagreements between connoisseurs, including the ones I like to call the 'stars', and their disparagement of one another, as well as their acceptance as original works of what turned out to be forgeries, as in the notorious but not so uncommon case of Abraham Bredius and the Supper at Emmaus that he mistakenly attributed to Vermeer.

In this situation it seems only prudent to follow the example of Bode's former assistant Max Friedländer. Friedländer both employed and defended judgements based on the eye. Nevertheless, he could not resist remarking that to become a charlatan was the 'professional malady' of the connoisseur. In short, Friedländer wrote, intuition 'is to be believed and disbelieved'.<sup>1</sup> In other words, it might be said that no one is infallible, not even 'the Pope'. Needless to say, I am not referring to Pope Francis but to the British

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<sup>1</sup> Max Friedländer, *On Art and Connoisseurship* (1942: rpr Boston MA, 1960), pp. 175, 179 (the English translation was published earlier than the German original).

connoisseur John Pope-Hennessy, who was nicknamed ‘the Pope’ by his colleagues, as much for his authoritarian manner as for his surname. The moral of this story is surely that, as in the case of plain history, scholars need to use every kind of evidence they can find, treating what pure connoisseurs see as conclusions as hypotheses in need of verification by other means.

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Moving now to the second part of this lecture, for a historian of knowledge, another attraction of the history of connoisseurship is that it offers a vivid example of the encounter between various knowledges – or better, perhaps, their collision – including the academic knowledge of art historians and the various practical knowledges of connoisseurs, artists, dealers, restorers and forgers. Out of the collision and hybridisation of those different knowledges over the last four centuries, including forms of *connaissance* and also forms of *savoir*, the bundle of skills – or more grandly, the system of skills that is now known as ‘connoisseurship’ – emerged and developed.

As I began to read the many excellent studies that have been published on individual connoisseurs, I was astonished to discover that no overview of the history of connoisseurship existed beyond short articles in encyclopaedias. This lack of an overview was all the more surprising because a great connoisseur, Roberto Longhi had called for such a study as long ago as 1954, while four decades later, Enrico Castelnuovo had specified the need for a social history of connoisseurs. The remarks of Castelnuovo and Longhi encouraged me to try to fill this gap. My short book on the subject is expected to be published in the spring of 2026.

Since the task of a plenary lecture at a conference is usually to offer a general introduction to the theme, placing it in a wider context, I have chosen to say something about my conclusions here. Like most histories, the book is organised chronologically. As a result, a serious problem is confronted right at the start. When should such a history begin? It is necessary to bear in mind, first, that practices usually change gradually rather than suddenly; second, that there are different degrees of skill as well as different kinds of people who possess it; and third, most important of all, that practices cannot and must not be assumed to have begun at the same time as the surviving records of them.

The moment of ‘textualisation’ is likely to be much later than the practices described. However, that moment is itself important because it assists the transition from what the philosopher Michael Polanyi called ‘implicit knowledge’ to a form of knowledge that can be criticised and verified.

What I should like to suggest now is that important changes in judging works of art began in Europe around the year 1600. This was the outset of what may be described with a useful oxymoron as a ‘long revolution’, following the example of the British critic Raymond Williams in the case of literature.

For historians, new words are a kind of litmus paper that reveals new concerns, or at least more intense concerns. The term ‘connoisseur’ entered Italian (in the form of *conoscitore*) and French in the seventeenth century. As for the word ‘connoisseurship’, it was coined, in English, by the painter Jonathan Richardson in the early eighteenth century. Curiously enough, the English word has since been borrowed by French and Italian scholars (however they pronounce it), although in German, as you know, the simpler term is *Kennerschaft*, with equivalents in Dutch and the Scandinavian languages.

In my view, the ‘invention’ of connoisseurship (or better, its ‘codification’) can be dated to the seventeenth century. I am using the term ‘connoisseurship’ to describe a combination of practices of which the most important were judging the quality of a work of art; identifying the place where and the moment when it was produced; attributing the work to a particular artist; and finally, discriminating between original works and copies or forgeries.

At this point I need to pause for a moment. You may well have been asking yourselves, as I did at the beginning of my research, Were there no connoisseurs during the Renaissance? In the case of classical statues, connoisseurs are not difficult to find, but the case of painting is less certain. To take the obvious example, Giorgio Vasari showed an eye for quality and a concern with differences in style (he used the term *maniera* over 2,000 times in the course of his biographies). He was also interested in attributing paintings. However, Vasari reveals no awareness of the need to justify his attributions. A better example might be that of the Venetian collector Marcantonio Michiel, a little earlier in the sixteenth century. Michiel once claimed that a fellow collector, Giovanni Ram, ‘possesses a copy’ of a work by Giorgione ‘which he believes to be the original’ (*egli creda che sii el proprio*). Unfortunately, Michiel does not record how he knew that this version was a copy.<sup>2</sup>

In the seventeenth century, the situation is clearer. Treatises on connoisseurship began to appear, beginning with the Italian physician Giulio Mancini (whose work was not printed until the 20th century but circulated in manuscript in his time). Mancini’s initiative was followed by the French engraver Abraham Bosse, the French critic and diplomat Roger de Piles and the Florentine scholar Filippo Baldinucci, to quote only the best-known examples from this period. All four of these writers discuss the three main skills that I mentioned earlier: the sense of quality, the capacity to attribute paintings to particular artists and the ability to distinguish originals from copies.

Why the years around 1600 should have been a turning point is an intriguing question. One answer might be that the treatises were a response to demand, on the part of the increasing number of amateur collectors of art. Another answer, supplementing the first rather than offering an alternative, might emphasise the fact that the interest in old

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<sup>2</sup> *Der Anonimo Morelliano*, ed. by Theodor Frimmel (Vienna, 1888), p. 78.

paintings was a new one. Works by Dürer, Raphael and Titian in particular were collected more and more avidly from the age of King Philip IV of Spain, King Charles I of England, and, here in Prague, the emperor Rudolf II. Rudolf owned a number of paintings by Dürer, as well as works by Titian, Correggio and Parmigianino. Like his rival Maximilian of Bavaria, he commissioned copies to replace original works taken – not to say ‘looted’ – from churches. What for pious viewers were primarily holy images, representations of sacred events, were now viewed by collectors as examples of the skill of the artists.

The new demand for old art was supplied by a growing art market. This market inevitably included fakes. Fake Claudes were particularly common, provoking the artist to compile a record of works that he had actually painted. Claude called this record the *Liber Veritatis*. It has a good claim to be the first oeuvre catalogue. At this time, some dealers sold copies of paintings as if they were originals, while others were accused of doing so. No wonder then that the treatises discussed how to discriminate between originals and copies.

The evidence for an increasing interest in attribution in the seventeenth century is rich and various. Some of it comes from inventories of the goods of the upper class. In Flanders, the inventory of the paintings owned by Rubens offers the first case known to me of the term ‘Old Masters’ (*anciens maîtres*), distinguished from the ‘moderns’ of the 17th century who soon became ‘old’ masters in their turn.

At this time, the attribution of paintings and drawings became a kind of game. In Florence, the collector Cardinal Leopoldo de’ Medici tested Filippo Baldinucci by challenging him to attribute 200 drawings to the correct artists. In London, Charles I tested the artist Inigo Jones in a similar way with paintings from which the labels had been removed. In Rome, a group of artists and collectors including Padre Sebastiano Resta held regular meetings to discuss attributions, mainly of drawings. In similar fashion, in early eighteenth-century Paris, the financier Pierre Crozat was the host of a salon that met on Sundays in his house in the rue de Richelieu, once again to discuss and attribute drawings.

In the eighteenth century, the art market and the number of amateur collectors expanded and still more guides to collectors were published. This was the golden age of the amateur connoisseur. The number of these amateurs increased and although it was inflated by what contemporaries called ‘semi-connoisseurs’ or even ‘pseudo-connoisseurs’, there was definitely a group of dealers and collectors who had ‘the eye’, most of them active in Italy and France together with a few in England, The Netherlands and Germany.

These amateurs often sharpened their eyes by taking lessons in drawing, painting or engraving. The outstanding figure was Pierre-Jean Mariette, a Parisian dealer in prints like his father, as well as a collector who participated in Crozat’s salon and was probably the greatest connoisseur of his time. Mariette once wrote a sentence that might serve as a motto for a connoisseur: I quote, ‘There is a sort of contentment in knowing that a given work is from a given time and by a given hand’.

Early in the nineteenth century, this age of amateurs began to be replaced by an age of professionals. The nineteenth century was an age of professionalisation in many spheres, as architects, engineers, surveyors and accountants, for instance, all formed their own associations and specified the qualifications deemed necessary for the exercise of these practices. In the world of connoisseurship, the decisive change was surely the foundation, in Europe and the Americas, of many public museums and galleries. These new foundations needed full-time curators who would be able to acquire important works of art, catalogue them, display them and where necessary, arrange for their restoration or conservation (thus assisting the rise of another profession). Formal training for curators appeared relatively late, with the Louvre as a pioneer, followed by a course at Harvard.

Professionalisation is also visible in universities. Some historians, from Leopold von Ranke onwards, occupied chairs in their subject at this time. They were followed by art historians, beginning with the German-speaking world. Gustav Waagen's chair in art history in Berlin was founded in 1844, Anton Springer's chair in Bonn in 1852, Jacob Burckhardt's chair in Zürich in 1855 (shortly before his return to Basel). The first established chair in Vienna was founded in 1863 and the Institute of Art History in Leipzig in 1873.<sup>3</sup>

Other common signs of professionalisation are congresses and journals. The first international congress of art historians was held in Vienna in 1873. As for journals, the *Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst* goes back to 1875 and the *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* to 1876. Again, the German-speaking world led the way, but from the 1870s onwards, France, the United States and Italy began to catch up. The Englishwoman Elizabeth Rigby (later Lady Eastlake, wife of the director of the National Gallery in London and herself an amateur connoisseur), noted that 'In Germany, Italy and France, connoisseurship is a profession'. This profession required, she added, 'the astuteness of the lawyer, the diagnosis of the physician, and the research of the antiquary and historian'.<sup>4</sup>

By the late nineteenth century, connoisseurship, once a form of almost pure *connaissance*, was including an increasing dose of *savoir*. Attributions were often made not by the eye alone but also by the use of documents such as inventories, contracts and records of provenance. Forgeries were sometimes detected by the chemical analysis of their paint or by X-rays (first used in medicine, but rapidly followed by students of art), while infrared and ultraviolet light was later employed in the study of underdrawings and pentimenti.

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It is time to turn to the third part of this lecture, the conflict between connoisseurs and art historians. In present company there is no need to say that academic life is extremely

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<sup>3</sup> Heinrich Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte als Institution* (Frankfurt, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> Lady Eastlake to Layard, 1890, in Julie Sheldon (ed.), *The Letters of Elizabeth Rigby, Lady Eastlake* (Liverpool, 2009), p. 609; Susanna Avery Quash and Julie Sheldon, *Art for the Nation: The Eastlakes and the Victorian Art World* (London, 2011), p. 154.

competitive, not only between individuals but also collective competition between universities and between disciplines. For example, some nineteenth-century sociologists such as Herbert Spencer regarded the older discipline of history as no more than a provider of raw material for their theories, rather like bricks for a house. For their part, historians treated palaeography, numismatics and even archaeology as ‘ancillary’ disciplines, in other words, their servants. In similar fashion, in 1881, the German art historian Anton Springer published an article, ‘Kunstkenner und Kunsthistoriker’, in which he claimed that ‘connoisseurship always remains an activity of merely preparatory nature’.<sup>5</sup>

The Italian connoisseur Giovanni Morelli was perhaps thinking of Springer when he made the following remark in a book published nine years later: ‘Connoisseurs say of art historians that they write about what they do not understand; art historians, on their side, disparage the connoisseurs and only look upon them as drudges who collect materials for them’.<sup>6</sup>

On one side, then, we see a passionate belief in the power of the trained eye in attributing paintings and detecting forgeries. On the other, we find an equally passionate belief in the evidence of documents. On one side, *connaissance*, on the other, *savoir*. The perception of incompatibility between the two sources of knowledge was a relatively new one. In the seventeenth century, Filippo Baldinucci practised connoisseurship but also wrote the biographies of artists, apparently without any sense of conflict between the two projects. The same goes for Pierre-Jean Mariette in the eighteenth century, who combined his famous connoisseurship with writing lives of artists as well as an unfinished history of engraving.

It is only in the nineteenth century, that age of professionalisation and specialisation, that we find a tension between the partners, a strain in the marriage between them – not to speak of what Princess Diana described as ‘a crowded marriage’, a *ménage à trois* that included the curator. Wilhelm Bode, for instance, claimed that connoisseurship should be left to the professionals, in his case meaning curators. Bode also he criticised Morelli as a dilettante and even a ‘quack doctor’.<sup>7</sup> By the twentieth century, it was time to speak of separation between the partners, if not of divorce. On the side of art historians, Aby Warburg dismissed what he called ‘the whole nosey tribe’ of ‘connoisseurs and attributionists ... only inspired by the temperament of a gourmand’.<sup>8</sup> Among Warburg’s followers, Erwin Panofsky defined the connoisseur as ‘a laconic art historian’, a definition that may seem neutral but was surely meant as a gibe at Bernard Berenson and his famous

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<sup>5</sup> Anton Springer, ‘Kunstkenner und Kunsthistoriker’ (1881: rpr in his *Kunstkenner und Kunsthistoriker*, Leipzig, 1886), pp. 377-404.

<sup>6</sup> Ivan Lermoloeff [Giovanni Morelli], *Italian Painters* (1890: English translation, London 1892).

<sup>7</sup> Wilhelm Bode, ‘Morelli’, *Fortnightly Review* (1891). Cf. Catherine Scallen, ‘Wilhelm Bode’s and Giovanni Morelli’s Debates about Connoisseurship’, in *Rembrandt, Reputation and the Practice of Connoisseurship* (Amsterdam, 2004), pp. 35-102.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Ernst Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (London, 1970), p. 183.

bare lists of names. Another member of the ‘Warburg School’, Edgar Wind, criticised connoisseurship in his lectures on Art and Anarchy.<sup>9</sup>

For his part, Berenson went so far as to describe Panofsky as ‘the Hitler of art study’. Berenson was well aware that some art historians regarded him as a charlatan, thanks in part to his ‘persistent indifference to documents’.<sup>10</sup> That mid-twentieth-century British art students were taught to look down on connoisseurs is suggested by the story of the verdict of one of them on Philip Pouncey, a remarkable connoisseur of Italian drawings. The student is supposed to have said ‘Oh, Pouncey. He just knows who things are by’.<sup>11</sup> On the other side, the primacy of the eye was defended not only by Berenson but also by scholars such as Pietro Toesca, whose watchword was *Prima conoscitori, poi storici*, and his former student Roberto Longhi, to whom the same remark is also attributed.

The story that I am telling here is not confined to art but forms part of the history (still unwritten) of intellectual specialisation. That division of scholarly labour has permitted many important discoveries, but at a price. This price may be described in a single word as ‘territoriality’, which obstructs discoveries by drawing frontiers between disciplines and also by denigrating the work of scholars who lack what the critics regard as the appropriate professional qualifications to contribute to a particular topic.

Aby Warburg, who could afford – literally afford, thanks to the family bank – to be an independent scholar, made famous fun of the intellectual ‘frontier police’, as he called them (*Grenzwachertum*). Warburg’s own essays reveal what a polymath can contribute to knowledge, often by drawing analogies between problems and solutions in more than one discipline. Fortunately, polymaths could still be found in the twentieth century – Ernst Gombrich is an obvious example – as well as scholars who combined the eye of the connoisseur with the skills of the art historian: Frederick Antal, for instance, Denis Mahon or Federico Zeri. I expect that you know the famous anecdote about Zeri at the Getty Museum, to which he was an official adviser. One day he turned up for a meeting there and was taken to see and admire the Museum’s latest acquisition, an ancient Greek statue, the Getty Kouros. Within a minute Zeri remarked, ‘I hope you haven’t paid for it yet’. They had paid 10 million dollars for a work that most experts now agree with Zeri and believe to be a fake.

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Finally, in this context, I should now like to offer a few remarks about the Vienna School of art history, a remarkable collective phenomenon that was obviously linked to the

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<sup>9</sup> Edgar Wind, *Art and Anarchy* (London, 1963), pp. 30-46.

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Samuels, *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Legend* (Cambridge, MA, 1987), p. 402; Carmen Bambach, ‘Bernard Berenson’s Drawings of the Florentine Painters’, *Burlington Magazine*, 151 (2009), pp. 692-6, at p. 694.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in John Gere, ‘Philip Pouncey’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 76 (1991), pp. 529-44, at p. 536.

cultural golden age of the late Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the years from 1848 to 1914 in particular, the capital of the empire acted as a magnet attracting individuals of talent from the provinces, among them Freud, who came from Příbor in Moravia and Mahler, from Kaliště in Bohemia. In the case of art history, talented immigrants included Alois Riegl from Linz, Franz Wickhoff from Steyr, Moriz Thausing from Čížkovice, Max Dvořák from Roudnice, his students Frederick (Frigyes) Antal and Johannes Wilde, both from Budapest, and Josef Strzygowski from Biala in Galicia.

I am well aware that I am probably the individual present at this conference who knows least about this subject. On occasion, though, an outsider may be struck by something that insiders take for granted but is revealed by comparison. From a comparative point of view, three unusual features of the Vienna School particularly impress me. One of these features, despite its importance, does not seem relevant to the theme of this lecture: it is the strong emphasis on decorative art, linked to the foundation of the Museum für Kunst und Industrie in 1864, on the model of the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum, or V&A). The other two features, on the other hand, are central to my argument.

In the first place, the Vienna School stands out for its unusually close links between the practice of art history and the practice of plain or general history. Although a few art historians in other places began their careers by studying plain history, I can think of no parallel to the entwined histories of the department of art history at the University of Vienna and the Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, which was modelled on the French *École des Chartes* but did not, as the *École* did, confine its investigations to texts. I don't know of any other institute for historical research where art history was part of the curriculum. Wickhoff, Riegl and Dvořák all studied there.<sup>12</sup> Today, Wickhoff and Riegl are remembered by plain historians for their part in the 'invention of late antiquity' as a historical period, an idea now widely accepted thanks to the later efforts of Peter Brown. As for Dvořák, he is best known (at least abroad) for the posthumous collection of essays entitled *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte*, known in English as *Art History as the History of Ideas*. Incidentally, I would prefer to translate *Geistesgeschichte* as 'Cultural History', which now includes the histories of taste, material culture and the collective imagination.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Julius von Schlosser, 'The Vienna School of the History of Art' (1934: English translation in *Journal of Art Historiography*, 1 (2009), pp. 1-50; Eva Kernbauer et al., *Rudolf von Eitelberger von Edelberg: Netzwerker der Kunstwelt* (Vienna, 2019); Karl Johns, 'Wickhoff', in Cécile Trautmann-Waller (ed.), *L'école viennoise de l'histoire de l'art* (Rouen, 2011); Georg Vasold, *Alois Riegl und die Kunstgeschichte als Kulturgeschichte* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 2004); Peter Noever et al., *Alois Riegl Revisited* (Vienna, 2010); Diana Cordileone, *Alois Riegl in Vienna, 1875-1905* (Farnham, 2014); Dagobert Frey, 'Max Dvořák's Stellung in der Kunstgeschichte', *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 1 (1923), pp. 1-21; Otto Benesch, 'Max Dvořák', *Neue Österreichische Biographie*, 10 (1957), pp. 189-98.

<sup>13</sup> Jaś Elsner, 'The Viennese Invention of Late Antiquity', in *Empires of Faith in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Jaś Elsner (Cambridge, 2020), pp. 110-27; Max Dvořák, *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte* (1924: English translation, *Art History as the History of Ideas* (London, 1984).

As for the Viennese emphasis on documents, Rudolf von Eitelberger, a former lecturer in philology, edited a series of sources for art history. Theodor von Sickel published essays on diplomatic. Julius von Schlosser, a former student of Wickhoff's, edited ten volumes of *Quellenkunde der Kunstgeschichte* (1914-20).<sup>14</sup> Max Dvořák wrote a dissertation on the falsification of documents by a fifteenth-century imperial chancellor.

The emphasis on palaeography may be surprising at first sight, though there are, of course, important parallels between palaeography and connoisseurship, between individual handwriting and the strokes of a certain painter's brush, parallels that have been regularly noted since the seventeenth century. The French scholar Jean Mabillon, who published his famous treatise *De Re Diplomatica* in 1681, argued that genuine documents could be distinguished from forgeries by a study of their scripts. Mabillon, one of the 'stars' of palaeography, even claimed that he could distinguish genuine from false charters with a single glance, as an artist, he wrote, distinguishes 'an original painting from a copy', thus reversing the common comparison between pictorial style and handwriting.<sup>15</sup> Given the Viennese tradition of concern with documents, it is no surprise to see that the study of illuminated manuscripts received particular emphasis, notably in Wickhoff's most famous publication, *Die Wiener Genesis* (1895) and in Dvořák's studies of Byzantine influence on fourteenth-century miniatures.<sup>16</sup> Like connoisseurs, palaeographers, including another 'star', Ludwig Traube, rely on their eye.

The second unusual feature of the Vienna school was the complementary opposite of the first. It was the tradition of the primacy of the object, implying the primacy of the eye. For this reason, successive professors – Rudolf von Eitelberger, Franz Wickhoff, Alois Riegl and Julius von Schlosser – did not give their lectures at the university but in the Museum für Kunst und Industrie, speaking in the presence of the objects that they discussed. Riegl faced opposition not, so far as I know, from art historians but from his curatorial colleagues, forcing him to leave the museum and work at the university alone in the final eight years of his life, depressed by the loss of his daily contact with objects.<sup>17</sup>

The Vienna School also stands out for its collective relation to Giovanni Morelli. Moriz Thausing was a follower of the master, whom he described as 'a great friend of mine and a remarkable connoisseur'. Thausing introduced his own students, including both

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<sup>14</sup> Theodor Sickel, *Die Urkunden Otto II* (Hanover, 1888), etc; Julius von Schlosser, *Schriftquellen zur Geschichte der Karolingischen Kunst* (Vienna, 1892).

<sup>15</sup> Jean Mabillon, *De Re Diplomatica* (Paris, 1681), 2. Cf. Franz Wickhoff, *Abhandlungen* (Leipzig, 1913), pp. 232, 382.

<sup>16</sup> Dvořák, 'Die Illuminatoren des Johann von Neumarkt', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* (1901): pp. 35-127; Schlosser, *Eine Fulder Miniaturhandschrift* (Vienna, 1892). Cf. Hans Aurenhammer, 'Max Dvořák and the History of Medieval Art', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 2 (2010), pp. 2-16.

<sup>17</sup> Schlosser, 'Vienna School', p. 31; Cordileone, *Riegl*.

Riegl and Wickhoff, to Morelli.<sup>18</sup> Wickhoff's Morellian approach is visible not so much in his famous edition of the Wiener Genesis as in his catalogue of Italian drawings in the Albertina, which Schlosser described as 'unthinkable without the example of Morelli'.<sup>19</sup> Morelli himself praised Wickhoff for his 'feine Blick', as well as criticising him for trying to run before he could walk. In return, Wickhoff criticised Morelli for his failure to use documentary evidence.<sup>20</sup>

Hans Tietze, a former student of Riegl and Wickhoff (to both of whom he dedicated his book on method), expressed criticisms of Morelli's focus on ears and hands, calling it 'stylistic analysis as Bertillonage' (ein Bertillonage der Stilkritik), in a reference to the French policeman Alphonse Bertillon and his once famous method of identifying individuals by means of precise physical measurements.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, Tietze too followed the Morelli method in his studies of Dürer and of Venetian drawings.

In short, at a time of increasing distance – to put it mildly – between connoisseurs and art historians, the Vienna School was able to combine the two main forms of knowledge about art and, with greater difficulty, the careers of art historian and curator. In our own time, when, as Frédéric Elsig laments, there is a three-way split between 'le sphere académique, le monde museal, et le marché d'art', the Vienna School remains (or at least should remain), an inspiration.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Artur Rosenauer, 'Moriz Thausing und die Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte', *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 36 (1983), pp. 135-9; Thausing quoted in Karl Johns, 'Moriz Thausing and the Road towards Objectivity', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 1 (2009), p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> Franz Wickhoff, 'Die italienischen Handzeichnungen der Albertina', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, 13 (1892), pp. clxxv-clxxxiii; Schlosser, 'Vienna School', p. 18; Matthew Rampley, *The Vienna School of Art History* (University Park, PA, 2013), p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> Rosenauer, 'Thausing'.

<sup>21</sup> Hans Tietze, *Methode der Kunstgeschichte* (Leipzig, 2013), p. 335.

<sup>22</sup> Frédéric Elsig, *Connoisseurship et l'histoire de l'art* (Geneva, 2019), p. 9.

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