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Andrew Hopkins and Arnold Witte

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**Riegl, Alois.**

***The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome.* Ed. and trans. Andrew Hopkins and Arnold Witte.**

Texts and Documents. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010. Pp. x, 279. ISBN 978-1-60606-041-4 (paperback) \$50.

The translation into English of Alois Riegl's final book, *Die Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom*, is certain to be embraced with enthusiasm by specialists and students of art history and the Baroque alike. Those familiar with Riegl's work in the field of Baroque studies will appreciate the renewed attention given to this important text while English-speaking newcomers will no doubt welcome the opportunity to access the late ideas of this pioneer of the Vienna School.

Riegl is of course best known for his influential theory of *Kunstwollen*, first projected in his groundbreaking *Stilfragen* of 1893. Yet in *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome* this theoretical concern is largely set aside in order to privilege discussion of singular works. To some extent this may be attributed to the fact that the text, first published posthumously in 1908, derives from the incomplete lecture notes compiled by Riegl during his tenure at the University of Vienna. The emphasis here is on example and though the book seeks to adumbrate the stylistic changes that took place in Italian art between 1520 and 1610 it does so principally through the close formal analysis of select works, many of which will surprise by their appearance in a discussion on Baroque art. For in Riegl's view the Italian Baroque finds its earliest expression not in the familiar late sixteenth-century paintings of the Bolognese school or the Roman works of Maderno and Caravaggio but in the shifting styles of the mature artists of the Renaissance including Michelangelo and Correggio. Amongst these artists it is Michelangelo who occupies a central position for although Riegl openly acknowledges that he belongs to the Renaissance an evident change in the artist's style after 1520 indicates for the author a departure from the "equilibrium and balance" of his earlier work. Thus Michelangelo is, in Riegl's estimation, as much the "father of the Baroque" as he is an artist of the Renaissance (112). The ensuing discussion on this style shift is nuanced and entirely engaging even if, for contemporary readers, the discussion ultimately falls short of producing a full and satisfying definition of the Baroque in art and architecture.

That the text appears as cohesive as it does is remarkable given the fragmentary nature of Riegl's manuscript. This is a testament to the efforts of the book's original editors who observed in their preface the difficulties encountered while piecing together his thoughts from the two existing versions of his notes (90). So too is it a credit to the efforts of the editors of the current edition who have struck a fine balance between literal translation and contemporary interpretation of complex passages and terms. Even under the best circumstances Riegl's writing can be challenging and his tendency to use short, telegraphic sentences and neologisms to convey complex ideas has undoubtedly made the task of translation into English all the more daunting. Notable and problematic terms such as *Zwangsmotif* ("controlling motif") and *Tiefraum* ("deep space") were adopted by Riegl in order to distance his ideas from those of his contemporaries (vii). These words, like the aforementioned *Kunstwollen*, do not translate into singular terms in English and they are subject to the vagaries of interpretation. For the purposes of this translation the editors have largely chosen to follow the interpretations of their predecessors with some notable exceptions. The term *Nahsicht*, for instance, has been translated as "proximate", contrary to the previous interpretations "near view" or "proxemic" offered by Margaret Iversen and Richard Woodfield (ix). Wherever interpretation has forced extended and cumbersome phrases in English the original German word or expression has been provided in brackets immediately following the translation.

The format of Riegl's original text has been retained throughout though the table of contents has been amended to reflect the pagination of the current edition. Nonetheless the editors have included references to the page numbers of the 1908 edition for the benefit of those who care to read the translation comparatively. This gesture, above serving as a scholarly courtesy, speaks to the motivations behind the project proper. For although *Die Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom* was warmly received in its time (enough that its popularity warranted the publication of a second edition in 1923), it has since been largely neglected. This is particularly noteworthy in light of the attention devoted to Riegl and the Vienna School in recent scholarship. With the publication of an English translation a critical reassessment of Riegl's Baroque book and its significance is now due. Clearly the editors have taken this matter into consideration by including three illuminating essays on the subject of the text and its critical fortunes. The first of these, by Alina Payne ("Beyond *Kunstwollen*:"

Alois Riegl and the Baroque”), situates Riegl’s ideas on the Baroque in the context of their time. A second contribution by Arnold Witte (“Reconstructing Riegl’s *Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom*”) addresses the complexities of interpreting Riegl’s text and original notes while a third essay by Andrew Hopkins (“Riegl Renaissance”) treats the reception of the book. Collectively these essays offer a very fine addition to a text that is certain to open further enquiry on the late ideas of this important art historian.

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**Ruggiero, Guido.**

***Machiavelli in Love: Sex, Self, and Society in the Italian Renaissance.***

Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007. Pp. x, 285. ISBN 13-978-0-8018-8516-7 (hardcover) \$25.

Guido Ruggiero is the historian who has done the most to shape our current understanding of sex and violence in Renaissance Italy. Reaching deep into the Venetian archives, and particularly into criminal court records, he has drawn out evidence of how Italians constructed behavioural boundaries and how they dealt both personally and socially with violations of those norms. This is the hard edge of sex and violence, stiffened and complicated by the contexts of crime, court, and discipline, and always coloured by them. It gives us a view of sexual identity that Foucault would recognize, a construct built out of forms of discipline and with an often hollow centre.

In this collection, Ruggiero aims to move from the hard edge of conflict and discipline to see how sex figured in the lives of those who took it as a form of pleasure, enjoyment, and entertainment. Conflicts here are more about performance than about honour. More to the point, conflicts are not the defining centre of the story. Ruggiero aims instead to capture a broad range of shared understandings and assumptions about sex, and to show how Italians used these to shape the way they understood their own experiences and presented their selves to others. To get at this idea of socially-constructed sexual identities, he frames the concept of ‘consensus realities’: that is, the imagined, performed, and shared understandings about sex that were operative within groups. To