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Art History

and Archeology
6.1 Embracing World Art

Art History’s Universal History and the Making of Image Studies

Birgit Mersmann

Within the realm of modernizing the humanities, the aspiration of art history to transform into a universal discipline and modern science manifests itself as a cultural, anthropological, and spatial orientation toward world art and universal history. The ground for this modern shift was prepared by the universalization of art as based on the concept of mutual cultural influences and historical transfers. At the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, art history joined forces with subbranches of history such as universal history and cultural history. Through these interdisciplinary linkages, it also opened to a new self-definition and revaluation as image history.

The primary objective of this paper is to closely examine how cross-disciplinary fertilizations between universal history (or world history), cultural history, and art history have resulted in a reconceptualization of art history, its study objects, methodology, and geographical framing. For this purpose, it will focus on three areas of reconfiguration, as they manifested themselves in the German and partly Austrian debate on the notion of universal history: (1) the new definition of art history as universal history and world history performed in the scholarly work of the art historians Alois Riegl and Oskar Beyer, (2) the redefinition of universal history as cultural history, as proposed by the historian Karl Lamprecht, and (3) the reconceptualization of art history as a cultural history of images, that was implemented by the art historian Aby Warburg.

Art history and universal history: New linkages

Historically, the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl opened the debate on art history as universal history. He formulated a critique of the academic discipline of art history which, in its essential features, anticipated Oskar Beyer’s critical diagnosis of art history’s inappropriate philological constitution and West-cen-
At the same time, he asserted to recognize an ongoing change in the field of art history, characterized by a move from art history as connoisseurship (Kunstgelehrtentum) to a full-fledged science. This scientific transformation is acknowledged as a process of modernization. Riegl observes a displacement of what he calls an ‘individual history or art’ (Individualgeschichte der Kunst) by a reawakening interest in a universal history of art:

The tendency of specialized history of the past 30 to 40 years appears to be replaced by a new universal trend. The researchers of preceding generations have comprehended each art-historical manifestation as an individual one which, produced by particular causes, expressed only very peculiar effects. [...] The most advanced ‘modernists’ among art historians [...] stress the fact that art-historical manifestations are not only separated by individual features, but also connected by common characteristics.

The intention behind the universal extension of art is a bringing together of temporally and spatially distant art periods for comparison. In order to better understand the new linkages between art history and universal history, a closer historical look at the cultural reinterpretation of universal history has to be taken.

Universal history as cultural history:  
A new concept and methodology of historical research

The redefinition of universal history as cultural history was integral part of the so-called ‘method dispute’ (Methodenstreit) in the historical sciences at the end of the nineteenth century. This is reflected in two influential methods-centered studies on universal and cultural history by Karl Lamprecht: (1) Die kulturhistorische Methode (Berlin, 1900); (2) Zur universalgeschichtlichen Methodenbildung (Leipzig, 1909).

Until the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, ‘world’ history and ‘universal’ history were almost interchangeable concepts. The purpose of assessing world history was to recognize the universal elements in the history of humankind. In the course of the method dispute, it became clear that the controversy was mostly sparked by determining the universal component (or components) in the concept of world history. The most articulated confrontation line ran between (a) universality in world history as political history, and (b) univer-
sality in world history as cultural history. Whereas in the first category of world-historical search for universal patterns that give meaning to all of human history, peoples ‘without culture’ were excluded as study objects due to their a-historicity, in the second search category the prehistory of man as well as the cultures of early civilizations were included. This also meant that culture-oriented world historians welcomed the usage of visual artifacts as prehistorical sources.

Among the most prominent proponents of the first universalistic fraction of world historians, one finds the German historian Leopold von Ranke. His World History (Weltgeschichte) in nine volumes (1881-1986) presented human history as a civilizational history of progression and higher development from Egypt via the Middle East, Greece and Rome into the Germanic Middle Ages, culminating in the Christian nation-states of modern Europe. This Rankean tradition and orientation of writing world history was carried on by his pupil Theodor Lindner. In his Weltgeschichte seit der Völkerwanderung (9 volumes, 1906-1916), non-Western peoples were part of the historical account, but they only served to highlight the superiority and universality of Western culture. The main argument for this assertion was that the most human culture is the most universal: ‘West European culture, the crowning of Indo-European culture, strikes us as the most human’.2

The foundation of universal history as world history of culture took off with Kurt Breysig’s history of humanity (Die Geschichte der Menschheit: Die Völker ewiger Urzeit. Die Amerikaner des Westens und des Nordens [1907]). New about this record of world history was the explicit interest in problems of ethnology as linked with the issue of universality. Breysig had a clear institutional vision for implementing his world-historical research agenda. He attempted to establish an interdisciplinary institute for comparative historical research at the Humboldt University in Berlin, but he failed due to the resistance from respected historians active in the university’s historical department. It was only Karl Lamprecht who, following Breysig’s path and vision, finally succeeded in establishing an interdisciplinary historical ‘Institute for Cultural and Universal History’ (Institut für Kultur- und Universalgeschichte) at the University of Leipzig in 1909, which was officially supported by the King of Saxony. The institute still exists today, although it was renamed as the ‘Global and European Studies Institute’ (GESI), thus evidencing its far-reaching mission of modernizing and at the same time globalizing historical studies.3

Regarding these changes and subdisciplinary differentiations in the emerging field of universal history, the crucial methodological question to be addressed is: What were the cultural and art-historical implications of Karl Lamprecht’s universal-historical method? Most effectively, Lamprecht actuated a cultural paradigm shift in the historical sciences and its methods. This one is instigated by a
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critique of how contemporary universal history is pursued methodologically. The fundamental criticism is mainly directed against the philosophy of history, following the deductive method in its application to a metaphysical concept of history, and the particular history, following the inductive, historical-critical method of source criticism. For Lamprecht, the new methodological challenge for historical studies lay in embedding the universal-historical method into a broader framework of cultural history.

Universal history was considered to be a process of renaissances and receptions. Because these movements are cultural-historical phenomena, the core of universal history was defined by cultural history. The formation of universal history presupposes a ‘double’ comparative approach in order to transgress the fragmentation of isolated history writings. It should involve two phases of comparative studies: (1) a comparison of the historical development of particular subfields of history (political history, constitutional history, economic history, social history, religious history, art history) across different nations, ideally all of them, and (2) an international, cross-cultural comparison of national histories, their overall developments.

Departing from the subfields of historical development, Lamprecht comes to the conclusion that intellectual and mental history in contrast to material history aspires most closely to world-historical significance, and that, among it, art history entails the highest potential of universality, as its products (that is, artifacts) are reflections of the cognitive and mental capacity of imagination (Phantasietätigkeit). For this reason, he recommends art history – in particular, the examination of plastic and graphic arts – as a primary field of study for establishing a universal history. The main argument for art’s universality is twofold in Lamprecht. Firstly, he stresses the production side by reasoning that human artistic creativity is a universal phenomenon. All peoples on earth have created artifacts, thereby providing evidence that the human as image maker is an anthropological constant throughout history and beyond historical writing. Secondly, his argument draws upon the reception side. Scientists have universal access to visually shaped and crafted material worldwide. Given the option of direct contact and experience, they can study these objects as unmediated forms of cultural representation and historical tradition. These two aspects of art’s universality imply the visual interpretation of cultural history, thus launching two types of visual studies: (1) visual history as historical study of visual monuments, and (2) visual (culture) studies as the study of activities and forms of visualization. Both branches offer a combination of studies in material and mental culture, as emphasized by Lamprecht.

But where to start from, when applying the universal-historical method to art history? In the vein of Lamprecht’s approach, the main point of departure for studying visual imagination in the field of artistic creation was the ornament. The
first contribution to a universal art history of ornamental style, using Lamprecht’s newly introduced universal-historical method, was a dissertation by Werner von Hörschelmann on the development of ancient Chinese ornament (Die Entwicklung der alt-chinesischen Ornamentik [Leipzig, 1907]) submitted at the Institute of Cultural and Universal History in Leipzig. That Chinese art history with its long-standing tradition became the first case study for proving universal art history gives a clear indication that a new world horizon of art was about to form at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Cultural history of images: The emergence of image studies in the work of Aby Warburg

The tremendous impact of Lamprecht’s model of universal cultural history on the reconceptualization of the discipline of art history in the German-speaking countries is most pronouncedly reflected in the work of Aby Warburg, although this influence has never been studied to the full extent of its significance. As Aby Warburg studied cultural history with Karl Lamprecht at the University of Bonn as one important component of his studies in art history, history, and archeology, a direct link of influence is obviously given. Foremost, it was Lamprecht’s universal-historical method that gained influence in the field of art history and contributed to reshape its methodology. The change in art history’s methodology is a repercussion of the historical method dispute fiercely led in the historical sciences in the 1890s. The methods controversy was carried out between Leopold von Ranke as proponent of the descriptive historical method and Karl Lamprecht as advocate of a new genetic approach to historical studies. Warburg’s introduction of iconology as a new cultural-scientific method of art history that transcends the motif- and content-based analysis of iconography adheres to the concept of Lamprecht’s universal cultural history. Ascending to the ‘Warburg method’ in art history’s reception, it had a big impact on the redefinition of art history as universal cultural history.

One of the most effective [methods and schools of art history] (and one of the few to have been somewhat self-analytical) is iconology – or the Warburg method, after its promulgator. [...] This method in simple essence is to study the work of art as a carrier of the interests of its culture and its social myths.

In proposing iconology as a new art-historical method, new emphasis was put on studying art works as activities of the human mind (and soul) and transmitters of culture and society.
The strong influence of Lamprecht’s universal-historical method formation on Warburg is also reflected in the interdisciplinary modeling of Warburg’s Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek (Library for the Study of Culture) after the agenda of the Leipzig Institute for Cultural and Universal History. Warburg himself had defined his Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek as the ‘Institut für methodologische Grenzüberschreitung’ (Institute for the Crossing of Methodological Frontiers). The crossing of methodological frontiers, implemented by a new library system of ordering scientific books according to the interdisciplinary principle of ‘good neighborship’, intended a traversing of usually separated disciplinary frameworks and methodologies, including the interlacing of scientifically segregated historical epochs from antiquity to modernity. Warburg’s interdisciplinary relocation of the field of art history aimed at the widening of the art horizon in time and space. He strove for its embedding into cultural history, universal history, and image history. In line with Lamprecht’s assumption that the course of universal history is constituted by processes of renaissances and receptions as dominant cultural-historical manifestations and thus coincides with cultural history, Warburg redefined art history as cultural history, therein including the formation of cultural memory through the transmission of images. Cultural history of art thus aspires to build an organum of remembrance of ‘images past’. At this point of the Warburgian mental, psychic and cognitive refunctionalization of art history, image history joins forces with cultural history.

The particular concern about the psychological dimension of art and culture as well as the ‘modern’ idea of culture as a whole way of life is nurtured by Lamprecht’s psychologization of historical studies. Lamprecht distinguished between two concepts of history: (a) an individual-psychological understanding of history, in his view identical with traditional political historiography, and (b) a socio-psychological understanding of history congruent with cultural history. Accordingly, cultural history is interpreted as history of human socialization. For Lamprecht, the socio-psychological or cultural factor is the actual causal factor of historical development. It becomes visible as diapason, the overall habitus of an epoch or era, accumulatively formed by the transmission of cultural conditions cast into traditions. Cultural development follows the law of the ‘historical resultant’, a principle Lamprecht adopts from Wilhelm Wundt. The appropriation of the cultural past does not only take shape as an addition of individual factors, but as a processing of a socio-psychological or cultural overage or surplus, resulting in the advancement of culture and a reshaping of the diapason of a society:

[R]egarding the organic unity of each socio-psychic life of a given time, the transformations are not restricted solely to the economic and social life, they rather affect the complete advanced intellectual life: as observed, it
adapts the effects as quickly that, through spontaneous energy, it further
develops them much faster than the development on the topsoil of the eco-
nomic life and the societal stratification would allow.⁹

The universal element inherent in cultural history is constituted by a profound
developing potency, reoccurring in all forms of human community buildings so
that it naturally establishes a nexus between different cultural eras:

The most deepest and lowest causes can only be grasped as particular pro-
cesses of the one developing potency, which manifests itself throughout
the history of all large-scale human communities, [...] as movements of the
specific potency of the human-social and finally also the human-individual
soul, in as much as this one is inscribed into the general chronology and the
particular development of its social environment.¹⁰

The triangular modeling of the relation between art, culture, and the image in
the work of Aby Warburg is strongly influenced by Lamprecht’s thoughts on the
universal-historical formation of culture, his acknowledgement of the human col-
lective consciousness. This can be seen from Warburg’s cultural-historical recon-
ceptualization of the principal functions and meanings of art, culture, and the
image as medial and symbolic transfer unit. Culture is defined as ‘historical sum
of all efforts made by man to overcome his fear’.¹¹ The artwork is comprehended as
a pathetic representation of the dialectic between expressive energies of the past
and rational orientations of the present. The image is understood as engram of
culture and (re)collection of mnemonic energies. At the same time (and this does
not stand in contradiction to its definition as ‘pathos formula’), it is considered as
document of historical evidence. Warburg’s concept of the historical ‘survival’ or
‘afterlife of images’, that is, particular visual forms of human expression which are
transmitted throughout history via their motional potency, is closely connected
to the idea of socio-psychological overflow, the surplus value of the historical
resultant.

The universalist concept of modern world art history

In the European history of art-historical studies, the development of a modern
world art history as based on the idea of universal history was most prominent-
ly conceptualized in German-speaking academia by the Dresden art historian
(Dresden 1923). Although the book has not been extremely influential at the time
of its publication, it was recently rediscovered in the context of the revival of world art studies as one of the earliest conceptual attempts to transform classical Western art history into modern world art history. The transvaluation of art history (Umwertung der Kunstgeschichte) explicitly stated in the book title refers to the modernization of art history as academic discipline, its content, scope, and methodology. The essay’s direction of impact is inspired by the French tradition of the ‘Quérelles des Anciens et Modernes’, virulent at the turn from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. By transposing the controversy into the new modern era at the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, it formulates a criticism of the old, classical model of art history, its concepts and methods, and suggests a new modern art history in the shape of world art history.

The crucial elements claimed by Beyer in Welt-Kunst for modernizing art history are contemporaneity and dehistorization. Both factors are coupled, as the relevance of the present and its significance for the future implies a devaluation of the past: ‘The new research will no longer deal with the past of art, with art “history”, but [...] ultimately always with art contemporaneities’. The devaluation of the historical dimension is tantamount to the dephilologization of art history:

For this reason, we may reckon that the study of art [Kunstwissenschaft] will increasingly lose its historical character, as the aspect of history turns out to be unsignificant with regard to the numerous new works flooding in; the historical interest shall only be an auxiliary agent, because in principle it has nothing to do with the spirit of art.

Parallel to the devalorization of the historicizing component, a revalorization of space takes shape. This spatial turn is to be understood as a process of de- and re-territorialization of art history, the geographical extension of European/Western art history to world art history:

We may expect that the history of art will transform into a comparative research on style [...]. Its function would be to help understand the individual domains of style of the world art arena [Weltkunstkreis] from within themselves, their spiritual form, to characterize them in the most intense plasticity, and to extend all of them onto one and the same plane of knowledge so that they can be surveyed as on a topographical map: Where do things belonging together exist, where do historical lines of connection run, where to find typical parallel phenomena, and where those elements that are incompatible by essence.
This geospatial shift in the perspectivization of art history is paired with a new interest in visual art as material culture and, as a consequence, a reorientation toward a focus on objects as opposed to the fixation on the artist as ingenious originator. The revaluation of the art object itself and its critical reflection, supported by the argument of unmediated access and the advantage of a direct visual-perceptual experience, effectuates a move away from art philology, as rooted in the art-historiographical tradition of Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (*Le vite*), toward art philosophy as a new self-reflective approach to the study of art. In the same line and in coalition with the advancement of the natural sciences, art history argues for a comprehensive scientification of its discipline, including its methodological framework. As a result, art history is redefined in Beyer’s world art project either as *kunsthistorische Wissenschaft* (art-historical science) or even *Kunstwissenschaft* (art science), thereby signaling that the long-standing burden of history or historiography is thrown overboard and that art history can no longer be confined to the role of an ‘auxiliary agent’ for the historical sciences.

The endeavor of scientifically modernizing the classical discipline of art history is acted out by means of a harsh criticism toward the existing tradition of art history and its scholars. The whole first chapter of Beyer’s book on *Welt-Kunst* stands under the agenda of ‘unmasking’ (*Entlarvung*). It reveals the state-of-the-arts conditionality of art history as single-sided and inadequate. The main point of critique refers to the so-called ‘historical dogma’, the idea of a continuous progress and higher development of art (creation), culminating in the appraisal of peak stages. Contrary to this teleological, progress-oriented historical dogma, Beyer pronounces himself for a revaluation of early stages of art design, articulating interest in stylistic transformations as a reflection of changing needs of expression in a particular culture and society. By doing so, he advocates a more pronounced cultural approach to art history, moving from what he calls a ‘conviction of art’ (*Kunstüberzeugung*) to a ‘conviction of culture’ (*Kulturüberzeugung*). In addition to the criticism of the historical dogma, Beyer pounces on the ‘antique dogma’ as the basis of classical art history. The idea of art as representational form, as imitation of nature, is refused because of its extreme limitation.

The same critique of constriction is also applied to the individualistic and biographical approach of classical art history, the celebration of technical virtuosity ruled by the principle of ‘art for art’s sake’. The reproach is that art is valued as the individual product of a unique and creative personality, but not as a product of community, including a particular culture. According to Beyer, the attention of new world art studies should be directed toward the ‘communitarian work of art’ (*Werk der Gemeinschaft*), and not any more to the ‘artwork of individualistic isolation’ (*Werk der Vereinzelung*). Consequently, folk art and popular art are
strongly upvalued; they take center stage as agents and determinants of universal art history. In the same string of argumentation, universal history is conceived of as a counter model to individual history, the latter being equated with the exceptional, particular status of Western art and art history. It is exactly the idea of an individual history of art, for centuries dominant in the Western hemisphere of the art world, that has to be overcome in order to open the way to the constitution of a universal history of art.

Bundling all of these points for change, foremost the geospatial and socio-cultural turn, it becomes clear that Beyer’s critique of what is usually designated as classical art history points to the limitations of the European/Western concept of art and art history. It is the confrontation with the new world horizon of art that pushes classical European art history beyond its long-standing conceptual and methodological boundaries. The inclusion of the new world horizon anticipates art history in a global perspective. The reorientation of art history follows the trends and transformations in historical research prevailing in those days, namely the study of world history as universal history. Accordingly, art history is located between world art history and universal art history. The primary goal of Beyer's transvaluation of art history is the extension of its geographical scope. Art history must transcend its regional boundaries and cultural-historical bonds, thus opening spaces for its transition to world art history.

When assessing the limits of art-historical research of his time and former periods, Beyer comes to the conclusion that art history mostly suffers from a strong nationalism. He criticizes the national art historiography in Europe, its reduction to German and Italian art, and, as a countermove, calls for a truly European art history. New research emphasis is put on both, the internationalization and regionalization of art and art history. At the same time, so-called European or Western art history is considered to be exceptional, that is solely representative for the particular, but not for the universal. By aiming at the new horizon of world art and art history, Beyer also practices a strategy of provincializing European art history. Western art history in its disposition of the early twentieth century is not (or in the logic of his argumentation: not yet) universal, or universally applicable, although it claims the universality of its modern condition. The global modernization of art history, as pursued by Beyer, thus resonates with the questioning of the Western concept of art and art history, its 'universalist’ consensus.

The universal dimension of art history can only lie in the universal perspective of a world horizon of art. The narrow-mindedness of the 'old' traditional art-historical perspective shall be superseded by an open-minded wide-angle perspective of a new future-oriented art history with a high viewpoint that allows to make the ‘vastness of world art manifestations’ visible. In this sense, world art history enacts a shift from a micro-historical to a macro-structural perspective.
In principle, Beyer follows Lamprecht’s approach of universal history as culture-comparative history. According to this position, the universal in art coincides with the spiritual (form) in art. It can only be grasped by means of a comparative research on style. One of the consequences of this universal, spiritual turn is that art history is remodeled, even upgraded, into a truly ‘spiritual’ science (Geisteswissenschaft). The scientification of art history, in particular its spiritualization, takes shape under the growing influence of the natural sciences:

As a recently created university discipline, the study of art history had to demonstrate its ‘scientific’ dimension in comparison with other human sciences – and it had to fulfill the requirements of a ‘science’, primarily expressed as holistic explanatory models and laws [...]. Simultaneously, art history had to secure an independent profile in order to contrast itself to the discipline of history, which had provided the most important methodological model of the positivist Kunstgeschichte in the tradition of Rumohr. [...] Probably the most decisive attempt to solve this dilemma on the part of Kunstwissenschaft involved an orientation towards the natural sciences, initially based on their classification systems.17

The transformation from Kunstgeschichte to Kunstwissenschaft signifies a switch from a historical (auxiliary) science to a full-fledged science of mind, a Geisteswissenschaft in the Wundtian sense wherein the spiritual component is prevalent. Parallel to this reorientation, Beyer envisages a new type of art historian, the so-called Kunstdenker (art thinker), who stands in for the change of mind, the scientific advancement of art history from an art-historical philology to a proper art philosophy, qualified for higher knowledge. The remodeling of art history into a genuine Geisteswissenschaft, a philosophical science of art, is oriented toward the integration of the human sciences. It aims at understanding the human mind by looking at worldwide human artistic creativity, its forms and structures of expression, and by defining art forms and styles as ‘living forms’ of cultural and societal life. Because the creation of art is reacknowledged as a human capacity and social phenomenon, it calls for a transdisciplinary brotherhood of researchers. Here, the preference of universal/world art history for the study of collective art (Gemeinschaftskunst) is transferred to the idea of an international community of art researchers contributing to the formation of a universal history of world art. From the viewpoint of Beyer, this transformation of art history into a spiritual human and social science is already on its way. The transvaluation of European/Western art from representational art (Darstellungskunst) to expressive art (Ausdruckskunst) under the influence of world art/non-Western art is understood as a clear signal that the reorientation of classical art history toward world art history has begun.
Modern global humanities and the making of image studies

The shift in historical studies toward universal history had a lasting effect on the redefinition of art history as modern science. The cultural-scientific approach, including psychophysical and anthropological elements, to the study of art revealed the image as a new and autonomous category of investigation. This held true for both of the here discussed reform projects of art history, the ones by Beyer and Warburg, although they undoubtedly differ largely in their incentive and design. In postulating world art history, Beyer relied on artistic expression as human activity. He set the agenda for a universal history and theory of creative imaging, focusing on the interrelations between conceptions of the world and image concepts, in short: between world pictures and pictorial worlds. One central drawback inherent to this universalistic conceptualization of world art history is that it does not allow thinking beyond the category of style. Universal art history is – also in terms of methodology – restricted to a comparative analysis of style; hence, it cannot reach the status of a genuine image history or even image science. Moreover, it adheres to the modern idea of the universal as spiritual, coming dangerously close to the folkish, nationalistic ideology of the given period.

Also Warburg is in search of the universal image of mankind and humanity that transcends the individual work of art. This is why he develops interest in the return of the image, the renaissance or survival of the image. By definition, the universal image is both at once, an image of remembrance and an image of expression, an internalized and externalized, mental and physical image. Because of the new valorization of the mediating qualities of images, their emotional and translational potency, Warburg took a pioneering role in not only transforming art history into image and media history, but also reshaping it as universal art history.

Certain parallels in reorientation between the making of the modern science of art history around 1900 and the attempts of making art history into a global discipline around 2000 can be detected. These manifest themselves in two different shapes: firstly as transposition from world art history to world art studies and from Western art history to global art history and secondly as a move from art history to image studies (Bildwissenschaften) and visual culture studies. Although the impact direction and main interest in transcending the historical, cultural, and methodological limitations of Western art history and plunging into the exploration of visual creativity and visual imagery appear to resemble each other with regard to the science-led renewal of art history during the time periods of around 1900 and 2000, the goals, conceptions, and implications of modern world art history strongly differ from those of contemporary global art history. Whereas the hegemony of Western modernism with its universal ideology still
prevails in world art history, global art history endeavors to deconstruct it by revealing the alter-modernities of a purported postmodern and postcolonial era. This is one of the reasons why the art historian Hans Belting has strictly warned against identifying world art history with global art history:

World Art History cannot serve as a synonym [for Global Art History], as it is a history of world art and as such presents even a double problem: on the one hand the notion of world art, as an art concept with a questionable universalism, and on the other hand the notion of history that implies the even more questionable assumption that world art, in its utter diversity, allows for a common history in terms of art history.21

In particular the last sentence constitutes a direct link to the here discussed attempts at creating a universal art history. Drawing on the pitfall of the universal, Belting views globalism as

almost an antithesis to universalism because it decentralizes a unified and uni-directional world view and allows for ‘multiple modernities’. [...] This also means that in the arts, the notion ‘modern’ becomes a historical definition and accordingly loses the authority of a universal model.22

A full critical assessment of what these differences mean for the concatenation between modern and global studies of art history is strongly required, but it lies beyond the purpose of this paper. The arguments brought forward here intended to suggest that the early-twentieth-century German projects to make art history into a purportedly ‘modern’ science present an important historical foundation, but also a critical lesson for future attempts at methodologically and theoretically reconceptualizing art history in the contemporary global context.

Notes
3 For detailed information about the history of the Leipzig Institute for Cultural and Universal History from its foundation up to the present, see Matthias Middell, Weltgeschichtsschreibung im Zeitalter der Verfachlichung und Professionalisierung. Das Leipziger Institut für Kultur- und Universalgeschichte 1890-1990, Von der Vergleichenden Kulturgeschichte zur Revolutionskomparatistik, Bd. 1: Das Institut unter der Leitung von Karl Lamprecht.


The term ‘diapason’ is introduced by Karl Lamprecht in *ibid., ‘Was ist Kulturgeschichte? Beitrag zu einer empirischen Historik*, in Herbert Schönebaum (ed.), *Karl Lamprecht. Ausgewählte Schriften zur Wirtschafts- und Kulturgeschichte und zur Theorie der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Aalen: Scientia, 1974), 309. It means a general sociopsychical disposition of human culture and society as causal factor of historical development and is also referred to as ‘Gesamtwille, Gesamtgefühl, ein Gesamtkomplex von Vorstellungen und Begriffen’ (*ibid.*, 264), which unifies the material and spiritual culture of an epoch to one organic whole. Based on the idea of diapason, Lamprecht conceives of historical change and development as intensification of the sociopsychical life. This is expressed in his periodization theory of five historical cultural epochs: symbolism, typism, conventionalism, individualism, and subjectivism.

The law of the historical resultant has been developed by Wilhelm Wundt in his *Logik. Eine Untersuchung der Prinzipien der Erkenntnis und der Methoden wissenschaftlicher Forschung*. Vol. 3, *Logik der Geisteswissenschaften* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1908), where he discusses the logic and the principles of the historical sciences (see in particular Section 2: 400-442). Embedded into his overall psychophysiological empirical approach to the humanities, it is related to the formation of psychological cognitive processes in a long-term historical perspective. Each psychic and mental activity from intuition over conceptions to complex decisions and powerful actions contains a surplus value with respect to its constituting elements. As the ‘resultant’ entails a qualitative growth, it has also been defined by Wundt as ‘creative resultant’. In his treatise ‘Was ist Kulturgeschichte?’ Lamprecht draws upon the psychological science model of Wundt as proposed in *Logik*, arguing that psychology as ‘exact science of the laws of spiritual life’ (*ibid.*, 272) would be the ‘foundation of all historical sciences’ (*ibid.*, 259). By adopting the principle of the historical resultant from Wundt, he attempts to explain the qualitative higher development of human culture, society, economy, and science which, in a feedback loop, induces the cultural-historical universalization of mental and cognitive operations.

Karl Lamprecht, *Deutsche Geschichte*, Ergänzungsband zur jüngsten deutschen Vergangenheit, Bd. 2.1 Wirtschaftsleben, soziale Entwicklung (Berlin: Gaernter, 1912), 472. English translation by the author.


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14 Ibid., 65.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., 28.
19 For a new contemporary conceptualization of world art studies as transdisciplinary undertaking involving anthropological, psychological, evolutionary, creative, and neuroscientific studies, see Kitty Zijlmans and Wilfried van Damme (eds.), World Art Studies: Exploring Concepts and Approaches (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2008), in particular the first chapter ‘Introducing World Art Studies’ (23-61).