

Archaeology and Art History: Common Ground for the New Millennium

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ARCHAEOLOGY and art history are closely allied disciplines, particularly for the study of the medieval period. This paper seeks to compare and contrast archaeological with art historical approaches to medieval material culture in terms appropriate to an archaeological audience, much as Stanisław Tabaczyński examined the relationships between archaeology and history in the pages of this journal only a few years ago.¹ Rather than emphasize the distinctions between archaeology and art history, an attempt is made to focus on where these two disciplines intersect and how art history at the cusp of the new millennium differs from what archaeologists on both sides of the Atlantic often assume. This seeks to bring recent changes in art historical methods and theory to the attention of medieval archaeologists, suggesting that interdisciplinary cooperation between archaeology and the humanistic disciplines, including art history, should be strengthened.

ART HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY: ART AND ARTEFACT

Both art history and archaeology are concerned with material culture, although only certain objects are generally considered pertinent to art history. The classicist R. R. R. Smith has referred to the distinction between archaeology and art history as a contrast 'between artefacts and artwork',² yet this distinction between the two disciplines involves making difficult decisions about which objects will be included under which rubric. Art history is sometimes considered the study of the history of aesthetically pleasing objects, on a scale ranging from the well-crafted or well-designed to what may be culturally considered the 'beautiful' work of art. By contrast, 'all evidences of past human activity, whether economic, social or religious must be considered as archaeological source materials', regardless of their aesthetic or artistic value.³ Confusion reigns, though, in deciding which objects or materials have aesthetic value — there is no sharp dividing line between artefact and artwork, and, indeed, they have a high degree of overlap. As David Freedberg has pointed out, 'art objects of the West . . . have functions that go beyond purely aesthetic ones; . . . and objects we might not normally classify as

¹ S. Tabaczyński, 'The Relationship between History and Archaeology: Elements of the Present Debate', *Medieval Archaeol.*, 37 (1993), 1–14.

² R. R. R. Smith, 'A Greek and Roman Point of View', *Cambridge Archaeol. J.*, 42 (1994), 263.

³ R. Engelmark and J. Linderholm, 'The Role of Environmental Archaeology; To Measure — To Interpret, or Both?', *Proceedings of the VII Nordic Conference on the Application of Scientific Methods in Archaeology* (Helsinki, 1997), 10.

“art” are capable of being seen for their aesthetic qualities’.⁴ If we agree that ‘the central task of art history is the study of visual images’,⁵ we are not required to assess or rank the aesthetic qualities of these visual images in order to study them. This definition of art history has important implications for the overlap of the discipline with archaeology.

The imbrication of art and archaeology is especially strong for the medieval period. While the study of Renaissance art history, for instance, has been dominated by the major divisions of painting, sculpture, and architecture, the arts of the Middle Ages are less easily categorized. Medieval art historians investigate a wide range of objects including book arts (book covers as well as manuscript illumination), liturgical vessels, reliquaries, jewellery, tapestries, weaponry and armour, glass (including stained glass) and ivory (including combs and playing pieces as well as decorative plaques). Although these objects have been considered ‘minor arts’ or ‘decorative arts’, rather than ‘high arts’, they nonetheless have received the notice of art historians. However, many of these arts also fall into categories of artefacts that archaeologists study. Even researchers who study the high arts of medieval architecture and architectural sculpture are as often archaeologists as art historians, perhaps due to the antiquity of the structures under examination and the methods necessary for investigating them. The mutual dependency of medieval art history and archaeology is readily apparent.

COMPARING ART HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY: OVERLAPPING CONCERNS

Beyond the mere overlapping of medieval art historical objects with medieval archaeological artefacts, the two disciplines have some general concerns in common. Occasionally these intersections are transparent in the literature. For instance, despite a rigorous separation of prehistoric archaeology from historic art history in Scandinavia,⁶ a recent issue of the popular Norwegian archaeological journal, *Spor*, devoted an entire issue to the topic ‘Kunst som Kommunikasjon’ (Art as Communication), with articles on Prehistoric, Bronze-age, Viking-period, and medieval art.⁷ A further overlapping of interests can be seen in another publication for the interested public, the Swedish *Populär Arkeologi*, as in an article concerning the iconography of a Gotlandic picture stone.⁸ Although iconography as defined by Irwin Panofsky is most often associated with art history,⁹ there is a continuing interest in such studies within archaeology.

In the mid 1980s, Brunilde Ridgway was asked to write an essay summarizing and evaluating current research on ancient art for the celebrated art historical

⁴ D. Freedberg, ‘Context, Visuality, and the Objects of Art History’, *Art Bull.*, 76 (1994), 394.

⁵ R. S. Nelson and R. Shiff (eds.), *Critical Terms for Art History* (Chicago, 1996), 47.

⁶ Although in the U.S. and on the Continent, medieval art is often assumed to begin after the late Roman period in the 4th century A.D., in Scandinavia, medieval art commences exclusively with the introduction of Christianity in the 11th century. Art before Christianity is usually studied by Scandinavian archaeologists specializing in the Iron Age whereas art after the period of conversion is studied by art historians.

⁷ ‘Kunst som Kommunikasjon’, *Spor*, 13:1 (1998).

⁸ L. Hermodsson, ‘Ormhäxa eller Gudagestalt?’, *Populär Arkeologi* 16:1 (1998), 24–27.

⁹ E. Panofsky, ‘Iconography and Iconology’, 3–17 in *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1939).

journal, *The Art Bulletin*. She said that she approached the 'task with considerable misgivings' partly because she considers herself an archaeologist.¹⁰ While some of her observations are specific to ancient art of Greece and Rome, I believe that she successfully addressed some of the traditional intersecting concerns of art historians and archaeologists. Therefore, I would like to summarize some of her remarks.

Ridgway states that one of the most traditional concerns of art history has been attribution.¹¹ This was especially the case in ancient art, with scholars attempting to attribute works to groups or sometimes even to a single so-called master. Connoisseurship of the type practiced by Sir John D. Beazley for Greek vases involved recognizing 'hands' and formulating such attributions.¹² Ridgway admits that such lines of inquiry are rarer than they once were, even for ancient art, although general attempts to identify working methods and practices or styles are becoming more common.¹³ Iconography — in particular, subject identification and provenience — is highlighted as another major concern of both fields.¹⁴ Ridgway also points out that although traditional concerns with chronology and style often relied upon relative dating by art-historical methods in the past, now they can be informed by absolute dating through multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary archaeological studies. An increased interest in technical processes that were involved in the creation of artwork is another trend identified by Ridgway. Multi-disciplinary research often makes use of sophisticated modern technology such as metallurgical studies and isotopic analysis of marbles. Finally, she mentions the 'sociological' and 'anthropological' tendencies in art history that explore distribution patterns and economic or administrative systems, such as investigations of workshop production, mass production, stockpiling, quarry organization, and export and trade that are so important for understanding ancient culture.¹⁵

'Style' and 'typology' are topics relevant to any time period — not just the ancient world — in which the proximity of the paired disciplines of archaeology and art history is revealed. Uses of the word 'style' are often very imprecise and subjective, but a definition of style can be broad enough to encompass different shades of meaning to express the idea of styles of different persons, periods and places. One of the 'fathers' of art history, Heinrich Wölfflin,¹⁶ viewed style as a concept unique to each age, and he treated the history of art as the 'development of style' suitable to each age, with the layered ideas of 'personal style, the style of the school, the country, and the race'.¹⁷ Although his deterministic sense of style as

¹⁰ B. S. Ridgway, 'The State of Research on Ancient Art', *Art Bull.*, 68 (1986), 7–23.

¹¹ Ridgway, *op. cit.* in note 10, 8.

¹² J. D. Beazley, *Attic Black-figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford, 1956), and *Attic Red-figure Vase-Painters*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1963).

¹³ Not just for ancient art, but also as in my research on Scandinavian gold bracteate jewellery: N. L. Wicker, 'On the Trail of the Elusive Goldsmith: Tracing Individual Style and Workshop Characteristics in Migration Period Metalwork', *Gesta*, 33 (1994), 65–70.

¹⁴ Ridgway, *op. cit.* in note 10, 9–10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13–15.

¹⁶ E. H. Gombrich champions Hegel as the 'father' of the discipline rather than Wölfflin or Winckelmann; see 'The Father of Art History': A Reading of the Lectures on Aesthetics of G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), in *Tributes: Interpreters of Our Cultural Tradition* (trans. A. Wilkes, Ithaca, 1984), 51.

¹⁷ H. Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, rpt. (trans., M. D. Hottinger, New York, 1950), 6.

peculiar to a particular age was quite rigid, later art historians built on his ideas. Meyer Schapiro's more general operational definition of 'style' refers to the conventions of how something is done repeatedly, thus allowing art historians (as well as archaeologists) to use the same word to refer to different senses of the meaning of 'style'.¹⁸ The art historian Sir Ernst Gombrich declared that style governs the preferences and choices that are made,¹⁹ and his explanation was echoed by Leonard Meyer's definition of style as 'a replication of patterning, whether in human behavior or in the artifacts produced by human behavior, that results from a series of choices made within some set of constraints'.²⁰ This interpretation encompasses the archaeological as well as the art historical meaning of the term, demonstrating that both disciplines essentially refer to the same concepts.

Timothy Taylor claims that the designation 'style' has been substituted for the word 'art' by archaeologists who are attempting to be more 'culturally sensitive', as if 'art' is a word to shun.²¹ Although Dorothy Washburn actually uses the term 'art' in her archaeological investigation of *Structure and Cognition in Art*,²² Margaret Conkey and Christine Hastorf's *The Uses of Style in Archaeology* avoids reference to 'art' except in the explicitly art historical paper by Whitney Davis that attempts to explicate art historians' perspectives on style for an archaeological readership.²³ More pointedly, Christopher Carr and Jill Neitzel's *Style, Society, and Person: Archaeological and Ethnological Perspectives* eschews any mention of 'art'.²⁴ Archaeologists seem to feel more comfortable using the terminology of 'style' rather than 'art', or perhaps they hold a fundamental prejudice against art, even though the phrase 'art and archaeology' is a familiar pair of words that are often inextricably bound.²⁵

Traditional art history and archaeology also converge in their use of typologies, especially in the German (or Germanic) tradition of description and organization in archaeology and art history, as examined by James Whitley.²⁶ The contributions of 19th-century Scandinavian archaeologists such as Christian Jürgensen Thomsen, Bernhard Salin and Oscar Montelius were instrumental in laying the foundations for typological classifications that remain the groundwork for European archaeology.²⁷ In addition, they were critical for the development of art-historical methods — even today, Salin's animal styles are referred to in art

¹⁸ M. Schapiro, 'Style', 287–312 in A. L. Kroeber (ed.), *Anthropology Today* (Chicago, 1953).

¹⁹ E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, rev. ed. (Princeton, 1969), 21.

²⁰ L. Meyer, 'Toward a Theory of Style', in B. Lang (ed.), *The Concept of Style* (Ithaca, 1987), 21.

²¹ T. Taylor, 'Excavating Art: The Archaeologist as Analyst and Audience', in 'Viewpoint: Is There a Place for Aesthetics in Archaeology?', *Cambridge Archaeol. J.*, 42 (1994), 252.

²² D. Washburn, 'Toward a Theory of Structural Style in Art', 1–7 in D. Washburn (ed.), *Structure and Cognition in Art* (Cambridge, 1983).

²³ W. Davis, in M. Conkey and C. Hastorf (eds.), *The Uses of Style in Archaeology* (Cambridge, 1990), 18–31.

²⁴ C. Carr and J. E. Nietzel (eds.), *Style, Society, and Person: Archaeological and Ethnological Perspectives* (New York, 1995).

²⁵ Titles of books linking the two terms, such as J. G. Pedley, *Greek Art and Archaeology*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, 1998), are too numerous to cite.

²⁶ J. Whitley, 'Art History, Archaeology and Idealism: The German Tradition', 9–15 in I. Hodder (ed.), *Archaeology as Long-Term History* (Cambridge, 1987).

²⁷ C. J. Thomsen, *Guide to Northern Archaeology* (London, 1848); B. Salin, *Die Altgermanische Thierornamentik* (Stockholm, 1904); O. Montelius, *Dating in the Bronze Age with special reference to Scandinavia* (Stockholm, 1986, trans. H. Clarke, originally published in Swedish in 1855).

history texts.²⁸ The line between the two disciplines was perhaps not so firm in the last century, but the work of these Germanic scholars is still indispensable to both archaeologists and art historians.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE CONTRAST BETWEEN ART HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

A set of essays grouped under the heading 'Is There a Place for Aesthetics in Archaeology?' in a recent issue of the *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* begins with the statement that 'many early excavators were little more than art historians who saw the recovery of works of art as their main objective'.²⁹ I would characterize these individuals as treasure-hunters rather than either art historians or archaeologists. Although the assertion apparently was meant to criticize the archaeologists ('excavators') of that era, it also condemns art historians of both then and now. When art history is mentioned in an archaeological milieu, it is often in a condescending or patronizing manner. In an extended discussion in the newsletter, *The European Archaeologist*, Martin Rundkvist and John Collis also disparage art history, as is currently fashionable. Rundkvist begins by equating 'traditional archaeology' with 'the history of art'.³⁰ John Collis responds by describing art history as a paradigm that he says was 'dominant in the 19th century but still is very much with us'. As examples, he declares that 'the art-historical approach was concerned with subjects such as the development of the plans of Roman villas, regional styles of mosaics', or, one could add, styles of painted Greek pottery. According to Collis, 'these were very much areas of interest for upper-class, and especially "imperialist", historians'.³¹ In the next issue, Rundkvist stresses that archaeology through the 1960s 'has much more than the art-historical aspect to offer', and implies that art history is 'implicit and fuzzy'.³² While it may be true that 'imperialist' art history was dominant in the 19th century and that art-historical theory was only implicit in that period,³³ it is a fallacy to imply that art history has not changed since then. It would be more useful to compare 19th-century art history with 19th-century archaeology, or 20th-century art history with 20th-century archaeology.

THE EXPANSION OF ART HISTORY

The range of objects and scope of subjects pertinent to art history has expanded since the 19th century, and the range seems to be ever-growing with

²⁸ D. M. Wilson and O. Klindt-Jensen, *Viking Art* (London, 1966).

²⁹ 'Is There a Place for Aesthetics in Archaeology', *Cambridge Archaeol. J.*, 4 (1994), 249.

³⁰ M. Rundkvist, 'The Struggle for Theoretical Correctness in Swedish Archaeology', *The European Archaeologist*, No. 8 (Winter 1997), 12. (Originally published as 'Kampen för "Teoretisk Korrekthet" inom Arkeologin', *Formvården*, 90 (1995), 253-56.)

³¹ J. Collis, 'North vs. South and Commercial Archaeology', *The European Archaeologist*, No. 9 (Summer 1998), 5.

³² M. Rundkvist, 'Some Musings of an Inveterate Empiricist: A Reply to John Collis', *The European Archaeologist*, No. 10 (Winter 1998), 10.

³³ J. Elkins has asserted that art history's empiricism and implicit avoidance of theory is an essential characteristic of art history: 'Art History without Theory', *Critical Inquiry*, 15 (1988), 358.

current investigations of material culture. No longer are art historians only upper-class gentlemen interested in the arts of their 'imperialist' world, as portrayed by Collis. For example, an art historian in South Carolina is investigating the production of enslaved potters on American plantations³⁴ — research that could just as easily be described as archaeological rather than art historical. Current investigations of kitsch and popular culture have enlarged the art-historical base for the modern period; a similar broadening is also noticeable for earlier periods, as reflected in the title of a not atypical session, 'Production and Social Reproduction in Early Medieval Secular Objects' at last year's International Congress on Medieval Studies.³⁵ With the expansion of subjects into material culture has come a questioning of the role of canonical objects such as statues of the Virgin Mary and monuments such as medieval cathedrals. Elite forms of medieval art, such as Chartres Cathedral, represent only part of the artistic production of the Middle Ages. Lisa Ticknor has offered recognition that 'the role of canonical objects . . . is a critical issue' in art history,³⁶ while Anne Higonnet has remarked that 'the point is hardly to stop studying elite art forms, but rather to consider them as dominant modes of visibility within the larger field of visual culture'.³⁷ The focus on an example of 'minor' textile arts in a book entitled *The Rhetoric of Power in the Bayeux Tapestry* might have been surprising a generation ago, but now it is published as part of the influential series, Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism.³⁸ Disagreement about what constitutes the 'minor arts' has long been an issue for the study of medieval art, and this arena is especially fruitful for cross-fertilization of art-historical and archaeological methods and theories. The overlapping of interests of art historians and archaeologists is inescapable in the study of medieval artefacts and artworks, and as art historians consider less 'elite' objects, the line between art history and archaeology narrows.

THE PARADIGMS OF ART HISTORY: 'TRADITIONAL ART HISTORY' VS. 'THE NEW ART HISTORY'

John Collis described art history as a 'paradigm' that was dominant in the previous century.³⁹ However, there is no single line of inquiry, no single entrenched paradigm of art history; on the contrary, there are as many ideological and theoretical paradigms within art history as there are within archaeology. What has been called 'traditional art history', with an emphasis on the 'visual supremacy' of connoisseurship, style, and formal analysis,⁴⁰ is being replaced by several critical

³⁴ The research of J. B. Koverman, a graduate student in art history at the University of South Carolina, is summarized by Z. Ingalls in 'A Slave, A Poet, a Potter: Preserving the Legacy of David Drake', *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 44:47 (July 31, 1998), B-8-B-9.

³⁵ A session sponsored by the International Center for Medieval Art at the 33rd meeting of the International Congress on Medieval Studies held at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 1998.

³⁶ L. Ticknor, 'The Impossible Object?', *Art Bull.*, 76 (1994), 404.

³⁷ A. Higonnet, 'On the Object', *Art Bull.*, 76 (1994), 399.

³⁸ S. Lewis, *The Rhetoric of Power in the Bayeux Tapestry* (Cambridge, 1999).

³⁹ J. Collis, *op.cit.* in note 31, 5.

⁴⁰ K. Moxey, *The Practice of Theory: Poststructuralism, Cultural Politics, and Art History* (Ithaca, 1994), xi; V. H. Minor, *Art History's History* (Englewood Cliffs, 1994), 129-41.

and pluralistic art histories, including, among others: Marxist, semiotic, psychoanalytic, sociological, feminist, and deconstructionist art history.⁴¹ The 'new art history' with its various theories and debates may be disconcerting for 'those who hold the traditional expectations for formal analysis and connoisseurship, conventional iconography, and a little history'.⁴² Art historians are extremely aware that 'the field of art history, the objects of art history, and the ends of art history are newly in question',⁴³ but this debate apparently has not been widely noticed by archaeologists. In recent years, many American art historians, not just classicists like Ridgway who focus on ancient art, have moved beyond problems of attribution, provenience, chronology and style to concerns with audience and patronage, workshop organization, production and distribution, and the status of the artist or artisan — topics that have more conventionally been examined by archaeologists.

The changes occurring within art history were already incipient in this discipline as well as others in the 1970s, although it was not labelled 'the new art history' until somewhat later.⁴⁴ The early calls to arms for a more informed theoretical backing of art history began to find written expression during the 1980s. In their 1996 *Critical Terms for Art History*, Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff list readings that illustrate this shift to an explicit interest in art-historical critical theory from 1972 through 1994 that draws upon perspectives from other disciplines such as literary criticism, women's studies and anthropology.⁴⁵

The result of these shifts of emphasis within the discipline of art history led to re-evaluation of the objects of concern for the field and the expansion of subjects from 'high art' to all of material culture. Marcia Pointon declares that:

Art History is not concerned exclusively — or even primarily — with what is often popularly understood as Art, with a capital A. That is to say that it does not only address 'high' culture and its objects. . . . To put this in a more recognizable historical framework, art historians concern themselves with visual communication whatever its intended audiences or consumers.⁴⁶

The emphasis on visual communication has opened up the range of material accessible to art historians to include areas of inquiry more traditionally considered by archaeologists. Pointon stresses that there is also 'debate about how this material ought to be used . . . by those specializing in other disciplines like Sociology,

⁴¹ B. Lang and F. Williams (eds.), *Marxism and Art: Writings in Aesthetics and Criticism* (New York, 1972); J. Wolff, *The Social Production of Art* (New York, 1984); M. Bal and N. Bryson, 'Semiotics and Art History', *Art Bull.*, 73 (1991), 174–208; J. Spector, 'The State of Psychoanalytic Research in Art History', *Art Bull.*, 70 (1988), 49–76; A. Hauser, 'Sociology of Art: Scope and Limitations', in *The Philosophy of Art History* (New York, 1959); id., *The Sociology of Art* (London, 1982); J. Wolff, *Aesthetics and the Sociology of Art*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor, 1987); N. Broude and M. D. Garrard (eds.), *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History* (New York, 1992); T. Gouma-Peterson and P. Mathews, 'The Feminist Critique of Art History', *Art Bull.*, 69 (1987), 326–357; L. Nochlin, 'Why Are There No Great Women Artists?', *Art News* (January 1971), 22–39; and P. Sheingorn, 'The Medieval Feminist Art History Project', *Medieval Feminist Newsletter*, 12 (1991), 5–10; J. Derrida, *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago, 1987, trans. G. Bennington and I. McLeod), reflected in K. Moxey, *The Practice of Theory: Poststructuralism, Cultural Politics, and Art History* (Ithaca, 1994); and D. Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Mediations on a Coy Science* (New Haven, 1989).

⁴² J. Varriano, in the foreword to V. H. Minor, *Art History's History* (Englewood Cliffs, 1994), viii.

⁴³ Ticknor, *op. cit.* in note 36, 404.

⁴⁴ Nelson and Shiff, *op. cit.* in note 5, xi.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, xv–xvi.

⁴⁶ M. Pointon, *History of Art: A Students' Handbook*, 3rd ed. (London, 1994), 1.

Psychology, History and Anthropology', as well as by art historians themselves.⁴⁷ The concern is mutual, and archaeologists are as likely to comment upon art history as the opposite.

Recently several archaeologists have debated the role of aesthetics in archaeology.⁴⁸ I would like to remind the readers that aesthetics is only one branch of art history, although aesthetics is sometimes confused with art history as a whole. Dealing with aesthetics brings us back to a consideration of which objects are under consideration — only certain artefacts are typically endowed with aesthetic value, though the distinction is culturally variable. Timothy Taylor has said that the fact that aesthetics is usually 'qualitative and unquantifiable' has kept its study 'on the sidelines of archaeological method and theory'.⁴⁹ Art history seems to have suffered the same fate as aesthetics, being treated with disdain and relegated to a subordinate position within a hierarchy of disciplines. Archaeologists seem much more comfortable when dealing with rational, countable data and scientific explanation in interdisciplinary archaeologies such as palynology, dendrochronology and other specialties. By contrast, they feel less at ease with aesthetics and with art history's visual literacy, which indeed requires a different type of competence than that to which word-based academicians are accustomed. Marcia Pointon has warned that 'acquiring an aptitude and a skill in looking critically at the artefacts of the past and the present that surround us . . . is not necessarily easy',⁵⁰ and visual literacy has often been deprecated rather than looked upon as a unique skill that requires specialized training.

André Grabar distinguishes between art history and aesthetics in a different way. In a 1994 article on 'Different But Compatible Ends', he discusses art historians' interest in what he calls the:

intersection of two different, if not divergent, histories. One is [the] *pre*-history [of an object], that is to say, everything that went into its being whatever it was at the moment of its first appearance to be used or seen. It includes its techniques of manufacture, the social and cultural contexts which affected it, the practices and aims of its artists, the ambitions and resources of its patrons, the models it used, and the identification of its time and place. Nearly every conclusion or statement within these categories of analysis can, at least in theory, be reached logically, rationally, and objectively, in the sense that such statements and most of such conclusions are true or false within existing evidence and can be modified by new evidence.

He continues by describing a *post*-history of an object, which:

begins with the first reaction of the first person to see something or to use it. . . . An almost infinite number of post-historical discourses are possible, as every generation, every subculture, and many individuals will always continue to reinterpret human creations according to their own needs and impulses and to react to them. . . . The finiteness and the theoretically logical rigor of [the] *pre*-history [of an artwork] is replaced in [its] *post*-history by the immense, constantly changing, and in some sense cumulative wealth of human taste and emotions.⁵¹

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴⁸ T. Taylor, M. Vickers, H. Morphy, R. R. R. Smith, and C. Renfrew in 'Viewpoint: Is There a Place for Aesthetics in Archaeology?', *Cambridge Archaeol. J.*, 4 (1994), 249–69.

⁴⁹ Taylor, *op. cit.* in note 21, 255.

⁵⁰ Pointon, *op. cit.* in note 46, 6.

⁵¹ O. Grabar, 'Different but compatible ends', *Art Bull.*, 76 (1994), 397.

The 'pre-history' of the artefact is based on the human desire to order and explain experience (or the interest in typological classification), while the 'post-history' of the artefact stems from 'aesthetic' impulses and seeks to evaluate objects. To Grabar's distinctions, I would add that the 'pre-history' of an object also includes the aesthetic impulse for the initial production of art. However, I believe that Grabar has correctly made an important distinction between aesthetics, which is not so closely allied with archaeology, and the rest of art history, which approaches many archaeological concerns with the object as examined in the late 1980s by Ian Hodder and Daniel Miller, among others.⁵² By separating these two spheres of art historical research, we can respond adequately to the misconceived charge that art history is 'fuzzy' and empirical — not features characteristic of Grabar's 'pre-history' of an object.

THE INTERDISCIPLINARY NATURE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Although we may concede that aesthetics lies mainly outside the concerns of archaeology, there is not much agreement on where archaeology ends and the rest of art history begins. Archaeology as a discipline is characterized by fluidity between fields and cooperative research. When 'interdisciplinary archaeology' was proposed as a session for the Twentieth Nordic Archaeological Congress held in Umeå, Sweden, in 1998, one could take it for granted that there would be papers about palynology, dendrochronology, osteology and other 'scientific' methods used in archaeology. Certainly much of the interest in interdisciplinary archaeology whether in Scandinavia or the United States has assumed a focus on the contribution of specifically 'scientific' disciplines to archaeology. However, I would characterize most of these collaborations with independent contributions from various researchers as 'cross-disciplinary' or 'multidisciplinary' rather than 'interdisciplinary'. These terms can be distinguished as follows:

Cross-disciplinary: Focus on the intersection of disciplines with common goals.

Multidisciplinary: Focus on parallel, independent studies addressing common research problems.

Interdisciplinary: Focus on integrated, innovative approaches to problem-solving of combining resources (theoretical, methodological, factual) of different disciplines.⁵³

Truly interdisciplinary archaeology that focuses on integrated approaches to problem-solving should also embrace the humanistic disciplines, including art history when appropriate, as well as the scientific disciplines.⁵⁴ Interdisciplinary archaeology seeks to move forward to a fruitful dialogue by developing common ground between disciplines and often breaks new ground in the margins between the 'turfs' of existing fields.

⁵² I. Hodder (ed.), *The Archaeology of Contextual Meanings* (Cambridge, 1987); and D. Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (London, 1987).

⁵³ Engelmark and Linderholm, op. cit. in note 3, 11, after a manuscript by Noel Broadbent.

⁵⁴ When I was in the interdisciplinary graduate program in Ancient Studies at the University of Minnesota, we gave great weight to the distinction that interdisciplinary research happens in one person's head whereas multidisciplinary research involves two or more people.

With the close connections between medieval art history and medieval archaeology in terms of the material culture that is studied as well as traditional concerns of typology and iconography, these are ideal fields for interdisciplinary research. Each field could learn much from the other, particularly in Scandinavia where the chronological and religious division between archaeology and art history is so marked, with art before Christianity most generally left to the archaeologists and only art after the conversion studied by art historians.⁵⁵ Since the pre-Christian period in Scandinavia is prehistoric or at most proto-historic, it becomes apparent that the focus in art history there is more on the word 'history' than on 'art'. However, many of the concerns of art history and archaeology really are allied, and the medieval period can serve as a point of intersection for studies of art history and archaeology.

CONCLUSION: ARCHAEOLOGICAL ART HISTORY OR ART HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY?

Art history is no longer interested solely in describing and defining what something is — whether a palaeolithic cave painting, a neolithic battle axe, a Scandinavian gold bracteate, Chartres Cathedral, the Sistine Chapel, or a painting by Leonardo da Vinci. Traditional art history is now constrained by its history of 'privileging oil painting over drawing, flat surfaces over three-dimensional objects and fine art over material culture'.⁵⁶ Art history and archaeology touch upon each other and can learn from each other as well as other fields. New paradigms in both art history and archaeology have been borrowed from other disciplines, and the relationship between art history and archaeology continues to change as each of these fields is transformed. There should be a productive interdisciplinary dialogue between practitioners of these disciplines, with art historians bringing a distinctive view and understanding of visual culture.

Scholars who pursue their studies only within their own discipline with few digressions to examine other fields are in danger of being uninformed. When archaeologists decry art history as old-fashioned or out-of-touch, most often they set up a straw man by relying on outdated stereotypes of 19th-century art history. We should remember that it is just as easy to criticize 19th-century archaeology as a diversion for upper-class imperialists as it is to denigrate 19th-century art history. Nothing is served by showing disdain for a discipline without understanding the current directions of the discipline. Archaeologists would be well-advised to keep in mind that a recent glossary definition of art history tells us that:

the principal concern of art history has been the construction of historically grounded explanations for why cultural artefacts — works of art — appear as they do. The acknowledged object-domain of the academic discipline has varied from a select assemblage of materials considered to be of the highest quality (art or 'fine' art produced in the past or the present, to

⁵⁵ The dearth of Swedish art historians working on the earlier periods is curiously manifested when one considers that Signum's new series on Swedish art history turned to others besides Swedish art historians to write the first two volumes. Volume one, *Stenåldern, Bronsåldern, Järnåldern*, was written by three archaeologists, L. Larsson, T. B. Larsson, and B. Arrhenius, and volume two, *Vikingatidens Konst*, was written by a foreigner, Sir David Wilson.

⁵⁶ Pointon, *op. cit.* in note 46, 75.

the entire range of objects of human manufacture ('visual culture') playing roles in individual and social life.⁵⁷

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The presentation of an earlier version of this paper at the XX Nordiska Arkeolog Kongress at the University of Umeå in Umeå, Sweden, in August, 1998, was made possible by Professional Development funds from Minnesota State University, Mankato. I also would like to thank Dr Matthew L. Murray for reading and commenting upon a draft of this paper.

⁵⁷ D. Preziosi, *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford, 1998), 577.