

*Typologie in der Frühen Neuzeit: Genese und Semantik heilsgeschichtlicher Bildprogramme von der Cappella Sistina (1480) bis San Giovanni in Laterano (1650).* Alexander Linke.

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This Heidelberg dissertation is the first attempt at providing a systematic answer to the question of what role was played by the principle of typology in early modern art. Alexander Linke categorically rejects the view that typological art was primarily important in the Middle Ages. And, indeed, the figural orientation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is now experiencing a revival and is characterized, as opposed to the typology of the Middle Ages, by great flexibility, a high degree of visual evidence, and a tendency toward secularization.

Following older forms of study, Linke sees typology not only as a “form of thinking,” but especially as a visual principle. In two introductory chapters the author concisely presents the results to date in defining the concept, on the techniques of presenting typology, and on the history of typological exegesis and art. The different emphasis

placed on typology by Luther and by representatives of the Counter-Reformation are briefly discussed. Two spotlights by Linke, on the reflection and suppression of the image potential of typology in the early modern age, are important. On the one hand, he introduces the Jesuit Louis Richeome, who around the year 1600 explained typology in particular as a phenomenon of sensual perception and thereby won an echo from the artists of the seventeenth century. On the other, Linke interprets the notable absence of typology in the influential discourse on the early modern history painting, as presented by Vasari or in the Paris academy, as a “calculated displacement process against typological thinking” (73).

The major part of the work is dedicated to a series of six works of highly varied prominence. Two chapters deal with the decoration of the Sistine Chapel. The frescoes of sidewalls, as well as Michelangelo’s ceiling and Last Judgment, are examined consequently for the first time under the paradigm of typology. This does not give rise to any fundamental new insight, but it does lend some interesting accentuations. For the comparison of scenes from the lives of Moses and Christ, for example, Linke notes that, due to the “abstract, strongly ideologized program contents” (292), the possibilities of visual typology have been scarcely utilized. As regards Michelangelo’s ceiling frescoes, the author makes a convincing reference to the sidewall frescoes as an “en-bloc” typology, and is also able to show how the composition of the Last Judgment takes up and surpasses the individual recounts of the sidewalls and the ceiling.

Another chapter treats the lost paintings of the *Galerie des cerfs* in the ducal palace of Nancy, at the order of the Lotharingian duke Antoine le Bon (from 1524), known only from the design drawings. In this eccentric series an analogy is made between images from the life of a stag — and from the stag hunt — and scenes from the life of Christ. In an excellent analysis, Linke precisely presents the position of the eccentric program of images between the salvation history, courtly representation, and satirical alienation of the typological principle. By contrast, Tintoretto’s life’s work in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, a nonplanned series of paintings extended for over two decades, serves for the author as proof of the flexibility of visual typology. The series of paintings, already destroyed by fire at the beginning of the eighteenth century and difficult to reconstruct from the sketches of Rubens in the Antwerp Jesuit church (from 1620), appear at first sight as a conventional, typological program of images, in which Linke, however, convincingly creates a subtext that presents the Counter-Reformation as a new salvation history. Finally, the decoration of the nave of San Giovanni in Laterano in Rome (around 1650) proves to be a quasi-scholarly reconstruction of a late antique typological program by the Vatican librarian Annibale Albani, who subjected the artists and thereby the visual typology to rigid control.

Linke’s exceedingly thorough analyses, undertaken in a context of conscientious source evaluation, are convincing almost throughout. The scholarly proceeds are immense, and remain unaffected by small weaknesses and gaps: the upgrading of the Old Testament in the early modern typology is ascertained but not explained (this also applies to the importance of typology for the relationship of Christianity to the Jewish

religion); the greater independence of visual typology in the early modern age, as compared to the Middle Ages, remains a hypothesis, and two of the six cycles analyzed oppose it; all of the examples given derive from Catholic Europe; and as for how the single panel painting that was so important for the Renaissance and Baroque periods assimilated the typology remains almost entirely unexplored in this work on cycles. In this context, Linke was unable to write a history of typological art in the early modern age. But he has made an indispensable contribution to this end and has done pioneering work in presenting the paradigm of typology, neglected by previous research, as a fundamental visual discourse for early modern art. In a summary at the end of the work Linke sees lines of development down to Heinrich Wölfflin and to contemporary popular imagery: a history of typological art in the modern period also remains to be written.

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