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J. Strzygowski and the Austrian origin of Non Western art history

Abstract

This paper explores Strzygowski's formation as an historian of non-western art in the period of the late Habsburg Empire, emphasizing his dependence on various 'friends' and cultural brokers, most of them cultural nationalists, who supplied him with information and images. I attempt to show how Strzygowski mustered a tremendous amount of this data in order to make his assault on Roman 'Power Art,' and in the process laid the foundations for a non-western art history that was at once highly original, and highly irresponsible. The paper shows how greatly he appealed to cultural nationalists of all sorts after WWI, in an era in which western culture and its values were under even more serious assault.