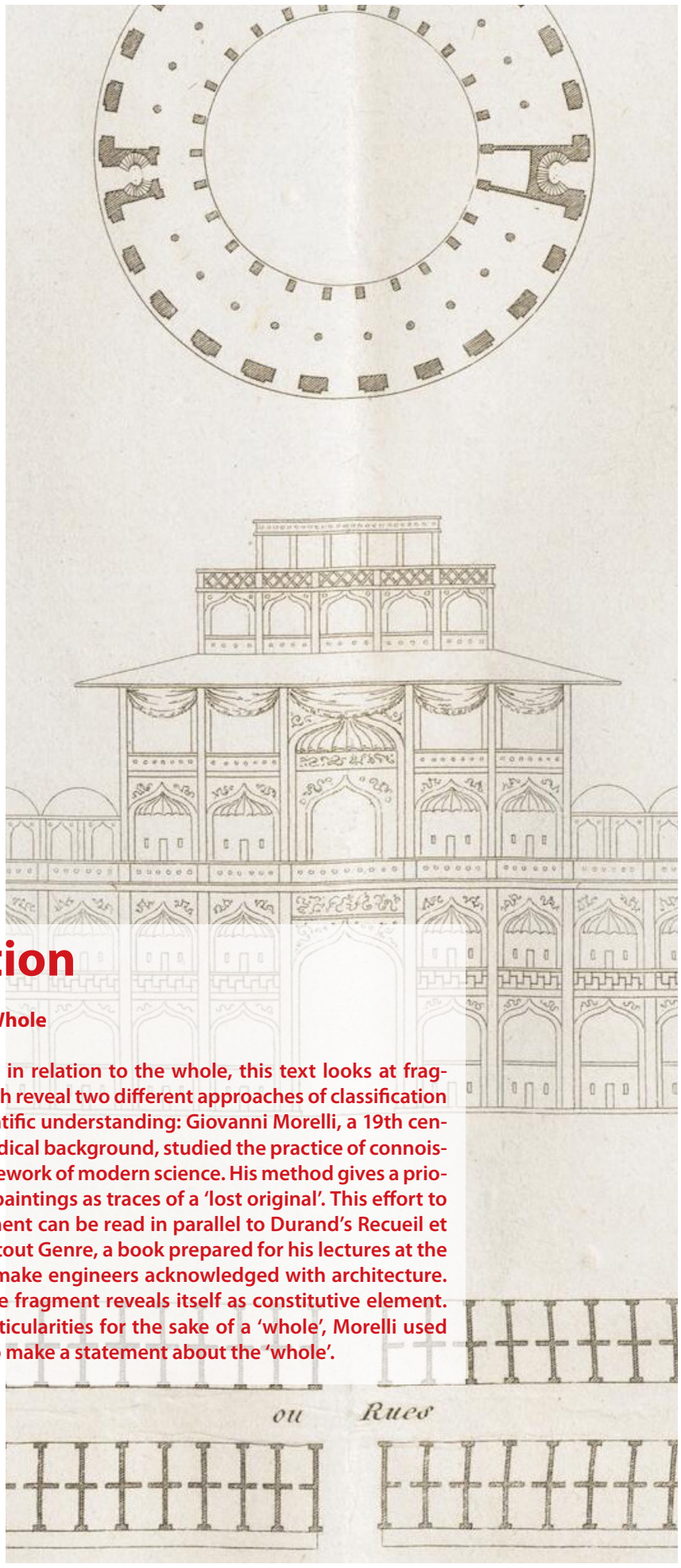

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Classification

The Fragment and the Whole

Perceiving the fragment in relation to the whole, this text looks at fragments as key points which reveal two different approaches of classification within the scope of scientific understanding: Giovanni Morelli, a 19th century scholar having a medical background, studied the practice of connoisseurship within the framework of modern science. His method gives a priority to the fragments of paintings as traces of a 'lost original'. This effort to systematize true judgement can be read in parallel to Durand's Recueil et Parallèle des Edifices de tout Genre, a book prepared for his lectures at the École Polytechnique to make engineers acknowledged with architecture. In Durand's ordering, the fragment reveals itself as constitutive element. While he eliminated particularities for the sake of a 'whole', Morelli used particularities in order to make a statement about the 'whole'.

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The borderline between natural sciences and human sciences (or as it is sometimes seen, between science and everything else – social sciences, arts, humanities) has long been a difficult area, and is likely to remain so.[1]

According to Carlo Ginzburg, the differentiation between natural sciences and human sciences is not a recent debate, and the border between them does not have a clear-cut definition. He also claims that this distinction is further grafted as one between science and arts, social science, or humanities. With the Galilean understanding of science, the observable and the methods of science had become superior. Thus, the observation and empirical study gained significance to reach accurate and true knowledge. Producing knowledge that depended on data gathered also puts an emphasis on the practices of classification, taxonomies and cataloguing as the tools and main features of 17th century science.[2] This understanding should extend and increase its impact until the mid-19th century.[3]

Things are collected, observed and classified – this is the absolute way to construct knowledge within the framework of modern science. The obsession of classification and cataloguing turns into a solid rule to produce knowledge. It is the claim of this paper that classificatory and taxonomic tables of scientific understanding represent the ground where fragments and the whole are related. Both are bonded within the space of these analytic tools.

Understanding the practice of classification as a relational system in which the fragment and the whole are structured, this text aims to illustrate and compare the impact of science on art and architecture focusing on the fragment in relation to the whole. The fragment is aimed to be resolved as the key figure through which the divergence of the impact of the scientific turn on these two domains is read. In order to examine the fragment-whole relation within the borders of taxonomic tables, the French architect Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand (1760–1834) and the Italian-German art historian Giovanni Morelli (1816–1891) are chosen as the two distinct tracks. Although the contexts in which Durand and Morelli operated were quite different, it is possible to observe the dominant impact of science on other fields during the transition from the early 18th century to the 19th century. Durand compiled the book *Recueil et Parallèle des Edifices de tout Genre, Anciens et Modernes* with the urge to systematize and rationalize both the architectural production and knowledge in 1800. Morelli, with a similar urge to scientificise the discipline of connoisseurship, wrote the book *Italian Painters: Critical Studies of Their Works* in 1880.

The specific relation of these two authors to science is significant for this paper, in order to look at fragments within the framework of particularity against generality. These two scholars and their books are treated as instances that represent the impact of science on two domains of art and architecture dominant in the 19th century. The two books and their author's approaches are engaged firstly with regard to the similarity of visualization, which reveals an attempt to present the act of classification in the form of almost scientific tables of natural history. Secondly, the paper examines the divergence of them in terms of the fragment-whole relation set in their understanding. Apart from presenting a complete genealogy which would encompass different classification practices throughout history, it is the focus of this paper to represent two distinct approaches that both reveal the impact of the scientific turn in two domains, architecture (Durand) and art (Morelli).

Morelli: The Science of Connoisseurship – Fragments as Representative Elements

The origin of the word connoisseurship comes from *conoistre*, meaning "to know".[4] Supporting that, the dictionary meaning of the word is "a critical judge of any art" and "one well-acquainted with any of fine arts and a critic in matters of taste". In his introduction written for the anthology *Art History and Its Methods*, Eric Fernie mentions connoisseurship as one of the main elements of Giorgio Vasari's (1511–1574) approach to history of

art. Fernie defines connoisseurship as the process of "making judgements about the quality of artists' works for purposes of attribution and to decide whether they should form part of the canon of great works of art".[5] Connoisseurship furthermore requires a *sensitivity* to form and a close examination and analysis of the works of art to identify styles of schools, artists, and periods.[6] The emphasis in this case lies on making a true judgement which will define the canonical examples of the periods, schools or the artists. Connoisseurship is, therefore, basically the practice of attributing the *true* value to a work of art. In addition, what is important for Vasari according to Fernie, is the existence of an expert "eye" in order to detect the hand of the artist and to differentiate the copy from the original.[7] This eye is not an ordinary eye, but has to be an educated eye with an *intuition* on performing art physically. Considering the dictionary definition underlining *taste* and Vasari's emphasis on *sensitivity* together with an expert "eye" to reach a true judgement, it is possible to say that the practice of the connoisseur contains intuition and a certain level of subjectivity.

These connotations explicate Morelli's adoption of scientific methods and empirical roots in his approach. Despite subjective connotations such as taste or intuition in Vasari's approach, the 19th century scholar Morelli studied the practice of connoisseurship within the framework of modern science. Before Morelli, true attribution is possible by evaluating the general impression of the work and by reading the documents related with the work. With his method, the work of art and its inner consistency are favoured. The study of form and technique is favoured as opposed to pure intuition and written document.[8] In parallel to the dominant tendency starting in the mid-19th century to adopt scientific techniques of narration and to promote empirical information together with factual accuracy, Morelli developed a method to make a true judgement, to rule out subjectivity and the possibility of making false judgement in the process.

We [connoisseurs] are thrown either upon tradition, or upon the general impression when we have to pass judgement on them [art works], and as the intuitive faculties differ in each individual, the conclusion arrived at must necessarily be of the most varied nature.[9]

Morelli touches upon that issue in a text which he wrote as Ivan Lermolieff, a fictive Russian scholar. It is written in the form of a conversation between Lermolieff and an Italian educated man. In the above statement of the Italian man regarding the practice of the connoisseur, Morelli emphasizes the relation between judgment and intuition. He continues by saying that the conclusions arrived through intuition differ and vary. In this point of view, there is almost no possibility of arriving at an absolute truth.

Considering the anxiety to eliminate indeterminate conclusions, Morelli systematized ways to understand a work of art and the way to give it a true attribution. Using details of a painting as starting points, he decomposed it into fragments in order to analyse and classify those bits and pieces – as a precondition to make a statement on the whole. What he offered to overcome indefinite statements, is to give value to the fragment as representative of the whole. Fragments of paintings, especially those which seem insignificant, are extracted from the whole, abstracted in the form of a diagram, and classified according to their makers. Morelli related the whole – the painting and the oeuvre of the maker – with fragments such as hands or ears. Therefore, his method is based on the classification of shapes.

Morelli's method proposes a repeatable process which will eliminate the range of subjective judgment. Thus, the practice of connoisseurship emulates the scientific narration that emphasizes factual accuracy. As visual evidence of this convergence, the pages from the book *Italian Painters* resemble any page of a natural history book: like a catalogue, a collection ordered according to a rationale. Compilations of decomposed bits and pieces of paintings are ordered in relation to their maker in order to ensure the truthiness of his

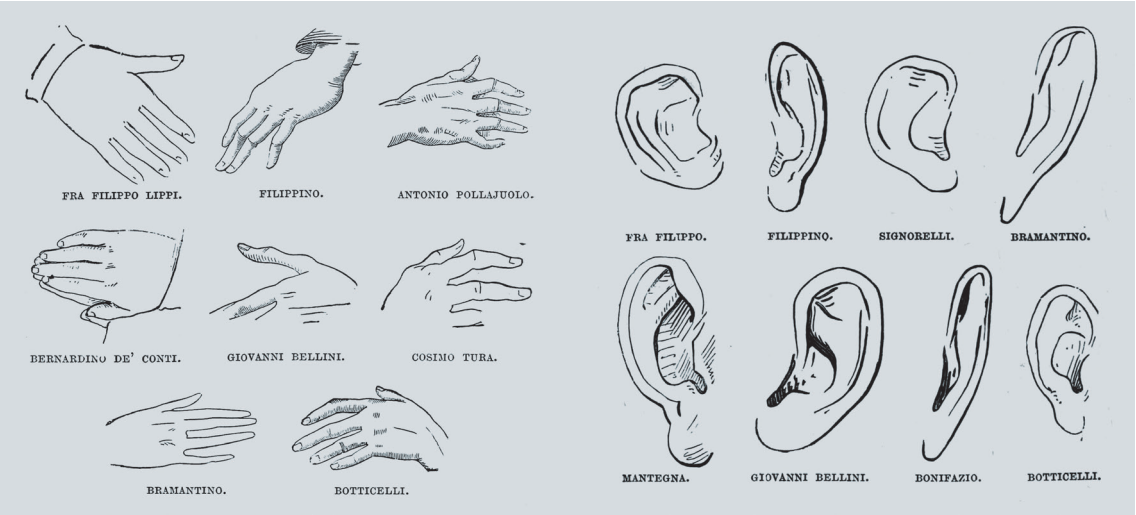

Fig. 1. Plate showing the representative fragments of certain paintings to evaluate the whole. Source: Giovanni Morelli: *Italian Painters: Critical Studies of Their Works*. London: 1900. 77–78.

statement (fig. 1). Rather than paying attention to overall composition, colour usage or decorative elements, Morelli asserted that the true being (or the character) of an artist yields itself in seemingly negligible details. For the art historian Edgar Wind, "Morelli cherishes the authentic fragment as the trace of a 'lost original'."[10] He adds that, although the original work of art is subjected to distortions by clumsy copyists and restorers, the authentic fragment is powerful enough to detect this "lost original".[11]

It is believed that these details are executed so instantly that any copyist could not imitate the spontaneous brushstrokes of the artist. Thus, in order to give a true attribution to the work of art, Morelli collected the fragments from paintings of renowned artists and grouped them in order to reveal similarities and differences within these groups. Those fragments are details which he thought that the artists had executed swiftly and subconsciously, which is why they, according to Morelli, reflect the true character of the artist and the work. In that way, the art historian morphologically analysed parts of paintings which mirror the hand of the artist in a most accurate sense. No reduction, simplification or omission is made. At that point, particularities of the fragments take the power for Morelli's method.

A morphological study was performed by Morelli in order to overcome subjective, unstable and *false* judgements on the work of art. By employing this method, dependent on a systematic approach, anyone who has the capability to think clearly and reason correctly can be a connoisseur.[12] It is possible to relate this with modern science's exclusion of the body, the subject, in order to reach a *true* conclusion. As in the same line, reflecting the functioning principles of modern science, Morelli's method also depends on empirical data gathered from paintings themselves. Even "the books are apt to warp a man's judgement".[13] Knowing the fact that Morelli was educated as a medical doctor, Ginzburg constructs a resemblance between the Morellian method and the act of diagnosis in terms of employing a similar processing.[14] In a way, he diagnoses the parts of the paintings to evaluate the authenticity of the work or the true maker.

Considering the main objective of Morelli's study and his method, it can be said that the scientific understanding and its way of producing knowledge through analysis, observation, and classification is adopted. The painting's fragments, together with their particularities, are isolated and used as representatives of the maker. Fragments are utilized here to say a word on the whole. Fragments are the representatives which characterize the whole.

Durand: Typology and Systematisation – Fragments as Constitutive Elements

In a sense, Morelli and Durand lived and produced more or less within similar time periods. The similarity between the two scholars' major works is worth to be analysed, and Morelli's

effort to systematize the practice of connoisseurship can be read in parallel to Durand's *Recueil et Parallèle des Edifices de tout Genre, Anciens et Modernes*. This book was prepared during the time when Durand gave lectures at the École Polytechnique – thus, it defines a spot of interaction where architecture and science converge. The *Recueil* has also been supplemented with another book, *Précis des Leçons d'Architecture*. These two books are configured, respectively, as sole illustrations and textual definitions. The *Recueil*, the illustrated version of Durand's teaching, will be the main object for the comparison of the way how Morelli treated fragments and their particular characteristics with Durand's visualization of architectural information. As much as Morelli's book, the *Recueil* resembles a catalogue in which buildings are collected, drawn, and then ordered according to a rationale.

Each page presents a systematic overview on the architectural production of the past. The drawings are orthographic, and they are placed on the page as if they illustrate an instance of a particular type. Also, on each page the evolution and variation of this instance into a rather complex one is visible. Each page of this book acts as a table through which the relations between these instances can be read. The page layout itself conveys a sense of evolution, a progressive way of architectural production. Therefore, by looking at the pages of the *Recueil*, it is possible to see the progression of a building type from its most basic version to its most complex composition. The tables speak for the constitution of certain types and their variation, and the pages are treated as systematic tables to reach the general principles of architecture by Durand.

Thus, each instance is a fragment of a larger and more complex organization. The fragments depicted in the pages create a table-like organization, a relation of variation and progression. The fragments reveal themselves as constitutive elements for the whole (fig. 2).

Durand based his teaching upon a typological study. This idea of type is also related to the act of thinking in groups, which aims to organize fragments according to a general rule.[15] When the main focus is to display such a general rule, however, the omission or reduction of individual details and characteristics become inevitable. Particularities and individual values of works are flattened in order it to fit into a system which is regulated by hidden grids, visible in the structure of the pages. In other words, they are erased for the sake of a general principle which can be applied to many cases and offer a generic solution.

This way of perceiving and producing architecture should later be criticized by 20th century scholars, as it was considered as too restricted and mechanized.[16] Furthermore, the diagrammatic plans of certain structures in the *Recueil* are simplified and regularized.[17] In order to achieve a clear, non-subjective construction, Durand subjectively eliminated all the details which he considered negligible and insignificant.

The context in which Durand taught architecture conditioned his awareness of the limitations against the revolutionary power of architecture. At the École Polytechnique, working alongside some leading scientists and engineers of the day, he was in the position to observe the widening gap between scientific and technological definitions and the logical processes observed in architecture. Durand tried to bridge this gap, though he no longer cherished the illusion that architecture would even regain its dominance over engineering – a discipline that had been dynamized by its close ties with science.[18]

Architectural historian Antoine Picon, in his preface to the new edition of the *Precis*, emphasizes that Durand has been under the impact of both the era's dominant world view and the school he was teaching at. His belief in architecture or architecture's dominance was not valid from his point of view. Thus, he over-systematized production, eliminated details as well as other characteristics of buildings, and assimilated architecture and its productions into scientific projects. Apart from the literal evidence of being in close relation with the scientific

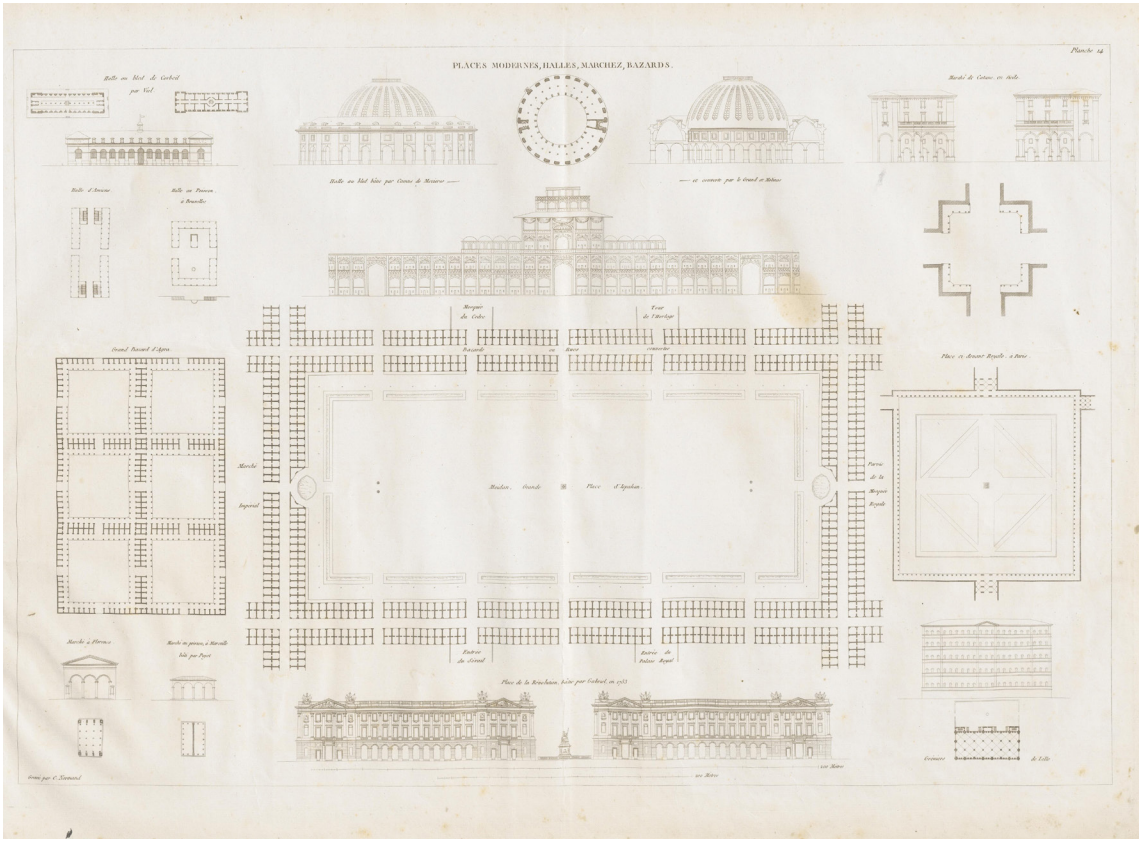

Fig.2. Plate showing the constitutive fragments of buildings to create the whole composition. Source: Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand: *Recueil et Parallèle des Edifices de tout Genre, Anciens et Modernes*. Paris: 1800. 14.

sphere and its developments, the urge to rationalize in Durand's work can be understood when one compares his understanding with classical formulations, that is: the classical orders of architecture as the one and only manner of production. What Durand does instead is to offer an alternative process for architectural production, the outcome of an analysis of architecture which is freed from pre-set orders. He analysed the buildings of the past, grouped them according to their types and related each instance of a type in the space of the page within a typological progression.

Considering the pages of the *Recueil* and Durand's reduction of certain details, fragments for Durand were something to be neglected for the sake of a bigger purpose. In this case, it is the ultimate scientification and systematization. On the pages of the book, these fragments compose a type of building with its different variations. The way of architectural production is thus defined from part to whole.

Conclusion

The divergent point of the two tracks of scientification and systematization followed by Morelli and Durand becomes evident here. Both used fragments in order to evaluate or create a whole: Morelli used them as representative elements, as hints to evaluate the whole. The fragment is understood here as a part of a whole. Durand, on the other hand, used fragments to constitute a whole and to support a holistic understanding. Fragments are treated here as the compositional parts that constitute the whole.

Apart from how both scholars treated fragments, there is also another issue, that is, how they transformed the fragment within the frame of giving value to particular characteristics or within the process of producing general principles. Morelli's and Durand's works reflect the characteristics of a transition era in which scientific methods dominated the discourse. Morelli was an educated medical doctor, and Durand held lectures for engineers.

Both disciplines are still accepted as branches of science within today's understanding of the field. Thus, the Morellian method and Durand's *Recueil*

are perceived as interfaces where art-science and architecture-science meet. The fragments as key points reveal two different approaches of classification within the scope of scientific understanding.

In the process of adopting scientific methods, Morelli dwelled on minor details and paid attention to the way in which they were executed. Particularities were collected, and through comparing them, the method was developed, whereas Durand eliminated particularities. His fragments were simplified or regulated, since his main focus was the composition of the whole.

The two ways of adoptions reveal that, although principles and rules to produce knowledge within a field are set, the engagements of different fields result in different processes with different focuses. Morelli and Durand are two examples that help to compare and to contrast the impact of a dominant mindset in a specific era. The fragment is the key term to evaluate divergence points and similar attitudes within their formulation.

It is obvious that by its nature, the fragment refers to particularities. In this paper, these two instances – the Morellian method as well as Durand's *Recueil* – were treated as evidence to contemplate on the impact of scientific revolution on different productions. It becomes visible that in Morelli's case, the detail which was understood as trace of the 'lost original' was praised and analysed, while Morelli did not completely erase the intuition's place within the process of making true judgement.[19] Contrary to that, Durand erased the details in order to bridge the gap between modern technological developments and architectural knowledge production, ending up providing a systematization of architectural production with a reductionist understanding that turns architecture into the sphere of mechanical production.

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Notes

1 Carlo Ginzburg: "Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method." In: *History Workshop Journal* 9/1 (1980). 5–36, 7, URL: https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/9.1.5 (April 30, 2022).

2 Cf. David Freedberg: "Iconography between the History of Art and the History of Science: Art, Science, and the Case of the Urban Bee." In: Caroline A. Jones/Peter Louis Galison (eds.): *Picturing Science, Producing Art*. New York: Routledge 1998. 272–296, 288.

3 Cf. Peter Louis Galison: "Judgement against Objectivity." In: Jones/Galison (see note 2). 327–359, 332.

4 "Connoisseur (n.)." URL: https://www.etymonline.com/word/connoisseur (April 30, 2022).

5 Eric Fernie: "Art History and Its Methods: A Critical Anthology." In: Eric Fernie (ed.): *Art History and Its Methods: A Critical Anthology*. London: Phaidon 2013. 10–21, 11.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Cf. Eric Fernie: "Italian Painters." In: Eric Fernie (ed.): *Art History and Its Methods: A Critical Anthology*. London: Phaidon 2013. 103–115, 110.

9 Cited after: Ibid. 113.

10 Edgar Wind: "Critique of Connoisseurship." In: *Art and Anarchy*. London: Duckworth 1985. 32–51, 42.

11 Cf. ibid.

12 Ibid., 35.

13 Fernie 2013 (see note 8). 109.

14 Cf. Ginzburg 1980 (see note 1). 12.

15 Rafael Moneo: "On Typology." In: O*ppositions Reader: Selected Readings From a Journal For Ideas and Criticism in Architecture 1973–1984*, ed. by K. Michael Hays. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999. 22–45. 23.

16 Ibid. 32.

17 Leandro Madrazo: "Durand and Science of Architecture." In: *Journal of Architectural Education* 48, no. 1 (September 1994). 12–24, 13.

18 Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand/Antoine Picon: "Précis Of the Lectures on Architecture." In: *Précis Of the Lectures on Architecture*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute 2000. 1–68, 24.

19 Fernie 2013 (see note 8). 104.