

**ANALYSIS OF ORNAMENT,
CHARACTERISTICS OF STYLES:
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
HISTORY OF ORNAMENTAL ART**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649052066

Analysis of Ornament, Characteristics of Styles: An Introduction to the History of Ornamental Art by Ralph N. Wornum

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Cover @ 2017

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RALPH N. WORNUM

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ANALYSIS OF ORNAMENT

Characteristics of Styles

AN INTRODUCTION TO
*THE STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF
ORNAMENTAL ART*

BY RALPH N. WORNUM

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Tenth Edition

LONDON: CHAPMAN & HALL, LIMITED

1896

15/1/75

LONDON:
PRINTED BY J. S. VIRTUE AND CO., LIMITED
CITY ROAD.

TO VINU
AIRPORT LIAISON

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE following sketch is prepared chiefly as an introductory guide to aid in the adoption of some ready system in the study of Ornament. Though illustrated ornamental works exist in great profusion, they are generally on special monuments and localities, or extending only over very limited periods of time : and being, further, mostly of a purely illustrative character, without analytical description of the parts, they fail to impress on the mind of the student those elements which are the essential characteristics of the works, and distinguished their style. These characteristics, therefore, which are the very essence of the Art, are to be apprehended only by dint of great labour in the comparison of many costly publications, which, until lately, have been generally inaccessible even to the metropolitan student. But with access to such works, some systematic general guide is absolutely indispensable to enable the student to acquire a sound apprehension of his subject, with moderate labour, and within a moderate time.

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The knowledge of ornamental style is, doubtless, most readily imparted in a course of lectures, in which, by numerous illustrations on a large scale, including occasionally the objects themselves, the peculiar features of each style can be at once pointed out and fixed on the mind, through the facilities of immediate comparison. But this compendious abstract of the course of Lectures on Ornamental Art,—delivered by me originally at Somerset House, and subsequently at Marlborough House, under the direction of the Board of Trade Department of Science and Art,—in the absence of a more complete report, may serve in some measure as a substitute for the personal instructions of a lecture, by pointing out its sources, and enabling the Student to derive directly from the standard authorities in the Library of the Department such information for himself. The Student will find the most important works illustrating the subject enumerated in the text, to which he must refer for its complete illustration ; but he will find the most essential and characteristic elements of the styles, perhaps adequately illustrated by the few engraved cuts contained in the work, which have been chiefly executed from casts in the collections of the Department, by the female students of the Wood-engraving class at Marlborough House.

The accompanying Sketch, however, is not published as a report of the Lectures referred to: it is

simply a concise abstract of their substance, and is intended only as an introductory aid for the Student, to enable him to make profitable use of the works in the Library, in furtherance of an earnest study of Ornamental Art.*

R. N. W.

* See the *Account of the Library, &c., with a Catalogue of the principal Works, Classified for the use of the Visitors.* By Ralph N. Wornum, Librarian. London, 1855. The diagrams prepared by me for these lectures now form part of the property of this Library. The Lectures were originally delivered in the Government Schools of Design, both at Somerset House and in the provincial schools in England, Scotland, and Ireland, in the years 1848, 1849, 1850.

INTRODUCTION.

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ORNAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE history of art shows two great classes of ornamental styles—the *symbolic* and the *aesthetic*; that is, those which appeal to our understandings, and those which appeal to our feelings. We may term those styles symbolic in which the ordinary elements have been chosen for the sake of their significations, as symbols of something not necessarily implied, and irrespective of their effect as works of art, or arrangements of forms and colours. Those that are composed of elements devised solely from principles of symmetry of form and harmony of colour, and exclusively for their effect on our *perception of the beautiful*, without any further extraneous or ulterior aim, may be termed æsthetic.

Style in ornament is analogous to *hand* in writing, and this is its literal signification. As every indi-