

ISSUES & DEBATES



# Otto Wagner

Reflections on the Raiment of Modernity

*Edited by Harry Francis Mallgrave*

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#### **ISSUES & DEBATES**

A Series of the Getty Center Publication Programs

*Julia Bloomfield, Kurt W. Forster, Thomas F. Reese, Editors*

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**Otto Wagner**

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Reflections on the Raiment of Modernity

*Edited by Harry Francis Mallgrave*

Otto Wagner: Reflections on the Raiment of Modernity

Edited by Harry Francis Mallgrave

This volume, the third in the series ISSUES & DEBATES, evolved from an international symposium titled "Otto Wagner and the Genesis of European Modernism," which was held at the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Santa Monica, California, 3-5 November 1988.

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Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

(Background image) – Detail of Postsparkasse.

Photo: Courtesy Yukio Futagawa, © Retoria.

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## PREFACE

The essays included in this volume grew out of a symposium hosted by the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, which was held in Santa Monica in 1988. The essays compose not so much a record of the symposium as an extended distillation or refinement of the discussion: several essays mirror closely the symposium papers, while others have been completely rewritten, in some cases on a new theme. One new paper (by J. Duncan Berry) has been added to the original agenda. In addition to the authors presented here, other very important contributions were made at the conference by Eduard Sekler, Stanislaus von Moos, Tilmann Buddensieg, Roula Geraniotis, Donald Genasci, Carl E. Schorske, and Kurt W. Forster. I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone – then and now – who participated in the discussions and to Julia Bloomfield, Lynne Kostman, Benedicte Gilman, and Michelle Ghaffari, under whose scrutiny and skill this book has come into being.

As a note to the reader, I would like to clarify that the decision to spell Neorenaissance, Neobaroque, and Neogothic as solid compounds is a conscious one, following contemporary German precedents. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the presence of these movements was widely accepted, and debate was often vigorously pursued as to their respective attributes and merits.

–H. F. M.

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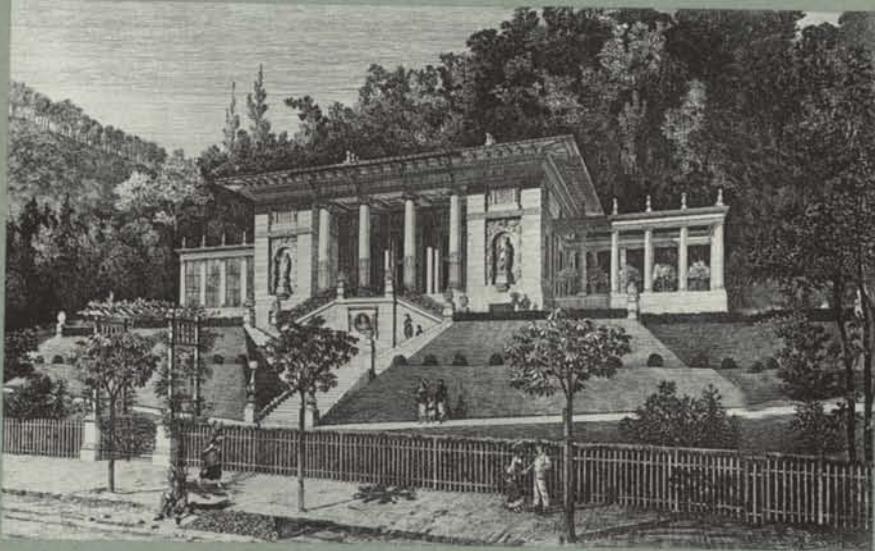
## INTRODUCTION

*You see, it's like a portmanteau...*

– Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*

At first glance the historical persona of Otto Wagner heaves into view excessively transparent. This ebullient child of the Ringstraße and its era, this – the original – proselytizer of the ethos of architectural modernity initially seems to present the historian with few riddles. Over the course of a lifetime that spanned from 1841 (the year of Karl Friedrich Schinkel's death) to 1918, Wagner amassed an unusually rich corpus of architectural designs and writings. His built works alone constitute a veritable textbook of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century stylistic tendencies: successively and sometimes concurrently exhibiting features of the Renaissance, the Baroque, the (first) Empire, the Secession, and Modernism. His relatively concise body of theory, comprising the different versions of his homily on *Moderne Architektur* (1896, 1898, 1902, 1914) and the written explanations that often accompany his designs, is always straightforward and coherent; his didactic and, to use his own words, “practical – one might almost say military approach” to design and its elucidation permitted no attempt to bemuse the reader or enhance the author's own architectural (intellectual) standing.

It is, however, when we juxtapose and attempt to align the silhouettes of Wagner's architectural production and literary pronouncements, when we make an effort to peer behind his professional and professorial visage and grasp his ruling thoughts and labyrinthian intentions, that the architect and his oeuvre become problematic. How do we, for instance, reconcile Wagner the failed titular architect of the imperial household (Renata Kassal-



1. Otto Wagner,  
first Villa Wagner, Hüttelbergstraße 26,  
Vienna, 1886.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

Mikula) with Wagner the evolving modernist (Werner Oechslin), Wagner the new urban exponent of tradition and monumentality (Peter Haiko, Fritz Neumeyer) with Wagner the pragmatic realist (August Sarnitz, J. Duncan Berry, Stanford Anderson). Finally, how do we square all of these characterizations with Wagner the perpetuator of the – to our unfortunate way of thinking – “apocryphal” mask (Iain Boyd Whyte, Ákos Moravánszky)? As if grappling with Proteus on the beach, we find ourselves, in our sealskin disguise of historical pursuits, confronting not a figure of fixed dimensions and form but now a serpent, now a leopard, now a boar of divinatory wile. And the more desperately we clutch at these fickle images, the more phantomlike the watery appearances become. Wagner’s artistic labors and their logical underpinnings, to the historian’s chagrin, simply defy categorization.

Yet if we struggle long enough with these apparitions, we eventually come to fathom that the problem lies less with the seeming contradictions posed by this particular architect and more with the historical backdrop of this period, that is to say, more with our difficulty in delineating even the most basic tendencies of his artistic context. Despite the immense outpouring of historical effort that has been heaped upon the development of Western architecture during the last hundred years, very little attention has been paid to this time. There are various explanations for this oversight, not the least of which is modern architecture’s peculiar version of Adam’s Fall: the heinous crime of infecundity (if not infelicity) said to have been committed in this quaint period of late historicism or early Modernism (by whatever face we choose to view it). And yet we remain deceived by our own century’s polemics. We seem fated, like some tragic hero impelled by the gods’ fury, to play out our modern – now postmodern – destiny, always in ignorance of the precise nature of this shadowy artistic transgression.<sup>1</sup>

In 1926 the Berlin historian Hermann Schmitz wrote a lengthy retrospective essay on the main figures of German architecture of the prior sixty years.<sup>2</sup> With a few exceptions (Gottfried Semper, Friedrich Schmidt, Joseph Olbrich), Schmitz’s list today seems to be little more than an inventory of little-known or altogether forgotten designers. What recent architectural textbook (in English or German) has made, for instance, more than a passing reference to the works of Johann Heinrich Strack, Christian Friedrich Leins, Martin Gropius, Paul Wallot, Gabriel Seidl, Friedrich Thiersch, or even Alfred Messel? Is our lack of attention due to our superior erudition and refined powers of discrimination? Or is it not possible that in our highly

selective reading of the past, we have repressed the original contributions, with all the lessons they may have to offer, of some of the best-educated architects that have ever practiced their craft?

This Stygian historical situation finds little illumination when we consider the fate of a few of the more astute theorists and critics of the last thirty years of the nineteenth century: Constantin Lipsius, Georg Hirth, Adolf Göller, Paul Sédille, Cornelius Gurlitt, Julius Meier-Graefe, and Richard Streiter. None of these writers has been the topic of sustained historical discussion, yet a careful reading of all, as several of the following essays will argue, is necessary if we are to gain even a rudimentary understanding of the origins of modern theory. Richard Streiter's brilliant commentary of 1898, *Architektonische Zeitfragen* (Contemporary architectural questions), is a striking case in point.<sup>3</sup> Who can read this early homage to modern architecture – the analysis of the transformed political, social, and technological conditions; the plea for truthful, economical, and purposeful forms; the commitment to simplicity and the cultivation of a modern “sense of form” – and not be struck by how thoroughly the polemics of the 1920s had been rehearsed, and in some cases even more eloquently stated, by this scorned generation of so-called eclectics. Streiter's informed inquiry also gives lie to the hornified ideological framework of Modernism laid down earlier in this century, which presumed all innovation to stem from some massive rupture or “break” with the immediate artistic past. Even more instructive for our purposes is Streiter's double critique of Wagner's modernist paradigm: his criticism of an artistic theory that was too “tectonic” in its prosaic inclination and of an artistic practice that was too “traditional” in its allowance of symbolic forms. It is only from such a perspective that we can begin to follow the argument, which J. Duncan Berry develops in his essay below, that it was Wagner's very “unexceptionality, now quite impossible to recover, that rendered his mature radicality intelligible.” Contemporaries of Wagner, who were able to interpret the architect's work without our idolatrous fascination with “pioneers” and “stars,” understood the nuances of this point quite well.

Yet another factor clouding our vision in this matter is the question of Wagner's historical standing – the “not-yet” character (Oechslin) of his modernist program. This appraisal, so popular in the 1920s and 1930s, likewise had its beginnings in Wagner's lifetime; it was a view already taking shape and gaining substance in Hermann Muthesius's polemical tract of

1902, *Stilarchitektur und Baukunst* (Style-architecture and the building-art).<sup>4</sup> Behind it lay a judgment of the nineteenth century as an era devoid of all artistic invention and myopic in its vision. From our more detached historical vantage point, it is easy to understand why critics of late historicism had to portray the fascination with the Renaissance, for instance, as some kind of intellectual pretense or affectation, a fashionable garment that was casually picked up, artistically worn until it became tattered, then unceremoniously discarded for the Baroque, the Empire, the Jugendstil, or simply something new. Whereas Muthesius's explanation was in this regard certainly expedient as a rallying cry, we must now admit that it also fatuously and intentionally simplified the dynamics of architectural change, an art whose production, especially at a monumental level, has always been controlled by higher economic, social, and even moral interests. The pall of morality, in fact, was one of the most compelling attributes of Muthesius's beloved "English house," that paradigm of bourgeois virtue that he sought to transplant to the suburbs of Berlin.

Among the many higher interests driving architectural change, one of the most compelling was that anxiety voiced by Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc in his twelfth *Entretien*, the fear that the architectural profession and its values were collapsing in the wake of the more efficient building methods of engineers. It is only when we begin to probe the extensive ramifications of this very real concern that we begin to sense what violent economic and industrial pressures were affecting the practice of architecture, what a tenuous division of labor ultimately separated this generation of highly trained artists from the more rationally inclined pretenders to the constructional throne. Not only were the most creative architects of the second half of the nineteenth century suddenly compelled to mediate between what Friedrich Nietzsche facetiously referred to as the "good taste" of the new middle class, the supercilious demands of parvenu clients, the constraints of burgeoning governmental regulation but also, quite rightfully, the assault on their financial extravagance, which was highlighted by the new and comparatively inexpensive "engineered" structures: bridges, railway stations, arcades, and exhibition halls. Architects were quite aware that their vaunted artistic autonomy would be seriously challenged unless such enterprises were placed under their professional authority. The struggle for such authority, moreover, was not some abstract, ideological confrontation of benign social forces but a fight for professional survival: the very

survival of art itself in the eyes of many architects. Thus the question that we find continually being raised in the last decades of the century was not so much how a future architecture might overthrow the iconographic system upon which the profession's artistic education had for centuries been predicated; rather, it was how this privileged system, accoutred with all the fine artistic nuances that had evolved within the nineteenth-century discourse, might be transformed into a radically new and meaningful architecture, one whose artistic premises were intrinsically superior to the purely constructional alternatives. For what must now be judged very superficial reasons, this desire on the part of architects of the second half of the nineteenth century to "live freely" with *and* without history has often given rise to the perception of a rift dividing theory from practice – a split that Sigfried Giedion more famously drew between "thinking" and "feeling."<sup>5</sup> It was only with the presumption of such a break that the first modern historians could explain why those "progressive" architects of the nineteenth century (progressive from the functionalist perspective of the first seventy years of this century) were content to operate within the formal confines of historicist practice.

But this supposition of a rift dividing theory from practice is as tenuous, if not historically as mendacious, as the presumption of modern architecture's break with its past. It overlooks the fact that architects have always been eager to promote the public perception of such a breach, especially in those historical periods in which change has been most extensive. On a practical and polemical level, the insistence on this gap or rupture provides the architect with the license to engender change. Architecture, however, is an entirely different matter when practiced at one's drafting table in the solitude of one's studio; then this split between theory and practice of necessity becomes truly inconceivable. It is only when we distinguish between such public stratagems and their theoretical underpinnings that we can appreciate Wagner's rather impious (and not infrequent) allusions to the "battlefield" of art and his precocious claim in 1898 of the victory of the Modern Movement.<sup>6</sup> Only when we shed our historical naïveté in this regard can we seriously entertain the possibility – contrary, perhaps, to all that we have been taught – that the creative fire of architectural invention did not extinguish itself in the second half of the nineteenth century after all. What expired, instead, was the ability to read and appreciate the subtle wealth of this generation's practice and innovation.

This last point can be illustrated, albeit only imperfectly, by considering the mid-century notion of “dressing,” or *Bekleidung*, a concept worked out separately in the architectural writings of Carl Bötticher and Gottfried Semper, which was later of paramount importance to the development of Wagner’s architectural conception.<sup>7</sup> Imbued as we are today with the architectural virtues of fitness, function, and practicality, the concept of an artistic “dressing” almost defies comprehension. Although developed by Bötticher and Semper in very different ways, the notion unfolded for both on two levels: first in the power of architectural form to express its tectonic or constructional purpose (in Bötticher’s theory, for example, the way in which the curvature of a classical molding visually conveyed the intensity of the force or load placed upon it); second in the way in which architectural “dressings” of a higher order, such as a superimposed triumphal arch, a decorative wreath, or any plastic or painted detail, might communicate some other formal purpose. For Semper this “dressing” of a higher order was even capable of transcending its symbolic content, such as when – in his view – the brilliant polychrome dressings of Hellenic architecture came to “mask” the material reality of the marble, thereby allowing “form” (in a second masking of the figurative mask) to appear as a dematerialized, autonomous creation of man. Today we must be very careful to distinguish this Semperian notion of a “dressing” (with all its sartorial allusions) from our more materially laden concept of a “cladding.” For the nineteenth century, the *Kunstform*, or artistic dressing, typically did not clad, conceal, or deceive; it, like our clothing, rather mediated between a form’s existence and the world and signaled a specific meaning that the designer sought to evoke.

In his own monumental practice, Semper advanced this concept to near its artistic limit (only Charles Garnier perhaps exceeded him in this respect) with a complex multivalent orchestration of symbolic effects (on both the tectonic and allegorical level) that can only be described as “theatrical” – theatrical in the positive sense of the Greek word *théatron*, a place to view, to behold. It was certainly no coincidence that Semper was esteemed in his age first and foremost as the architect of richly appointed theaters. He prepared vast allegorical schemes for the Hoftheater in Vienna, the unrealized Festspielhaus in Munich, and the two operas in Dresden. His design for the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (fig. 2), certainly well known to Wagner, was likewise artistically “enhanced” (to borrow Haiko’s term) with various themes and subthemes, presenting horizontally, vertically, and

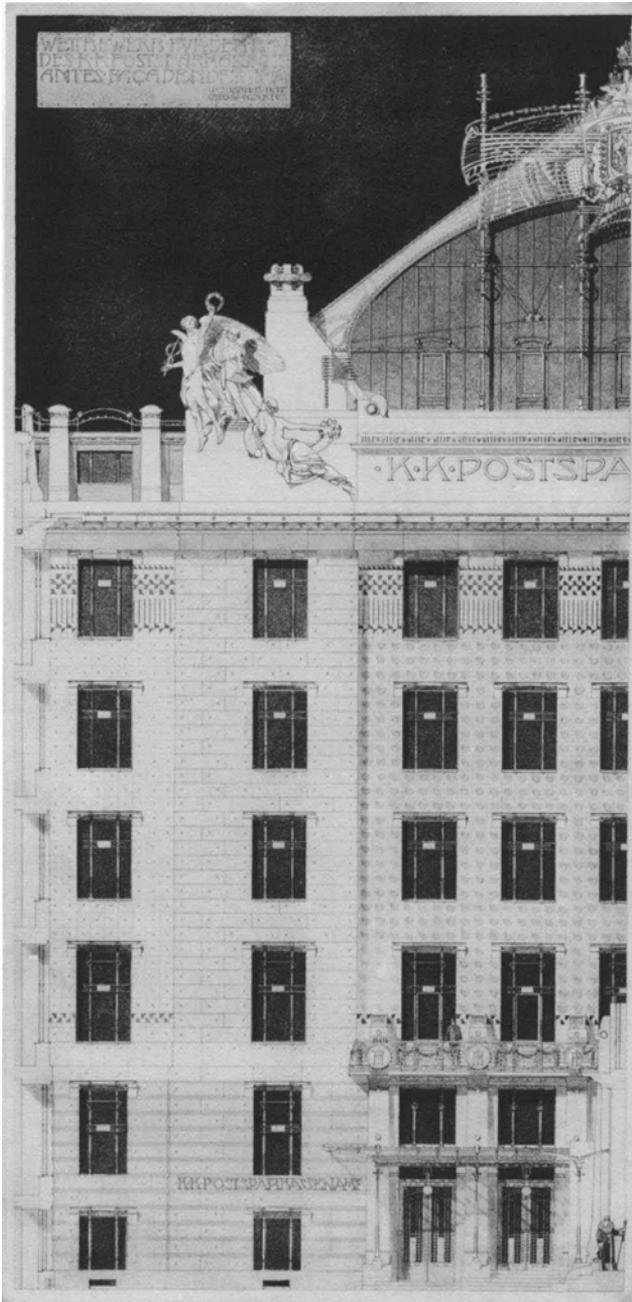
chronologically his elaborately conceived history of art.<sup>8</sup> To categorize such an artistic conception as simply “eclectic,” as we in our manifest arrogance have been prone to do, is to undervalue woefully the building’s purposively “encrusted” and original content. In seeking its artistic ancestry, we might look first to a similar architectural approach concomitantly being practiced in France (where Semper was trained), and second to that more general line of development taking its start in the elaborately outfitted temples of classical antiquity but given an altogether new turn in nineteenth-century German practice. The classical and Christian allegories of Western art with which Semper dressed his Dresden Gallery (1846–1855) conceptually owe much to the processional narrative murals with which Schinkel invested the main facade of his Altes Museum (1823–1831). Wagner inherited the very same artistic conception.

Still another nineteenth-century concept that should be approached with caution is the term “realism.” In German architectural theory of the last years of that century, this concept (which also had a long pedigree) supplanted Semper’s formal model of the Renaissance but not his underlying approach to design. Like its ideological successor, *Sachlichkeit* (the unpretentious, straightforward solution to a problem), the term “realism” was employed in several ways. Although derived in part from the French literary and artistic debate of the 1860s, as well as from Semper’s highly influential writings, the idea underwent various conceptual permutations in the 1880s. It then came to signify not only the demands for greater constructional economy, efficiency, practicality, convenience, and health but also — and this point should be underscored — the dressing of these new formal solutions with an expressive vocabulary of symbolic motifs, ornaments if you will, that could articulate the constructional innovations as well as accommodate selected elements from the traditional treasury of art. Hence the polemical banner of realism came to be hoisted by those attempting to invest indigenous architecture with simple functionality and local color as well as by those who, like Wagner, worked from a culturally more urbane vision, an artistic perspective that was comfortable with placing wreath-bearing angels alongside such technologically inspired motifs as gilded, ornamental bolt heads (fig. 3). This was, in fact, the inconsistency in Wagner’s theory and practice that Streiter first pointed out in 1898, but the latter’s architectural position (he had worked under Paul Wallot on the Berlin Reichstag) was in truth not far from that of Wagner. Streiter’s insight, in any case,

2. Gottfried Semper, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, 1871–1891. Zurich, Semper-Archiv, Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur, ETH-Zürich.



INTRODUCTION



3. Otto Wagner,  
Postsparkasse, Vienna, 1903-1912.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

reveals the very high level of the architectural debate taking place.

Hence this most profound “break with the lithic age” (Boyd Whyte), this generation’s attempt to make real the changing relationship of mask and frame (to outfit architecture with a new cut of clothing, as it were), was on the one hand a response to the professional anxiety voiced by Viollet-le-Duc and on the other a conscious effort to imbue the creation of a truly modern architecture with new poignancy or cultural relevancy. Once again, we can find ample precedents for this very delicate task, ranging from Schinkel’s acknowledgment of his failed experiment with “radical abstraction” (circa 1830) to Bötticher’s first glimpse into the “colossal emptiness” of a nonhistorical or nonrepresentational art (1846).<sup>9</sup> If the second half of the century (dominated in architecture by Semper’s lead) can be seen as an attempt to salvage for this art remnants of its former humanist or figurative values, it should never be regarded as some kind of rearguard activity. Against the specter of a “content-less” art raised by post-Hegelian thought – from the psychological realism of Johann Friedrich Herbart to the abstract formalism, or “visibility” (*Sichtbarkeit*), of Conrad Fiedler – we have an equally fertile second line of development taking shape during this period, led by Robert Vischer, Heinrich Wölfflin, and August Schmarsow, all of whom drew in part upon the thought of Semper.

Robert Vischer’s theory of “empathy” (the psychological projection onto or reading of human emotions in worldly phenomena) forms a critical segment of this fascinating ideological circle. In 1872 Vischer predicated his notion of empathy on the architectural meditations of his more famous father (Friedrich Theodor), who in turn had cited (in 1851) the ideas of Bötticher. Two years later Robert Vischer came to realize that the genesis of this line of thought actually lay, at least in part, in the Romantic musings of Schinkel, whose writings had been posthumously assembled by Alfred Wolzogen in 1862.<sup>10</sup> It was Robert Vischer’s theory, along with the parallel development of similar ideas by Semper, that then gave rise to Wölfflin’s psychology of architectural form and Schmarsow’s phenomenology of architectural space – long regarded as decisive “breaking points” by twentieth-century historians. And it was the writings of these last two philosophers of art that finally brought the concept of empathy back into architectural parlance in the late 1890s, as reflected in the writings of August Endell, Henry van de Velde, and Richard Streiter. Here, in the 1880s and 1890s, we find the crossover points between these aesthetic tendencies and

twentieth-century visions of abstract art and architecture.

Instructive in this regard is Gurlitt's remarkable critique (1887) of the architect Adolf Göller's model of formal change.<sup>11</sup> Göller had sought to explain the development of architectural form by focusing on what he termed the "art of visible pure form," that is to say, the symbolically meaningless play of abstract lines and tonal variations. Within this framework he posited two dialectical concepts as governing the process of formal change: first the creation of a collective "memory image" (*Gedächtnisbild*), whereby a form becomes culturally accepted as correct or beautiful in its proportions; second the baneful effect of "jading" (*Ermüdung*), whereby we eventually tire of a given form and seek out proportional variations. This gradual alteration or intensification of form, however, is finite in its course. Eventually no more intensification is possible, and we adopt a new (and generally simpler) formal paradigm. Göller insisted that this psychological process, conceived concomitantly with Wölfflin's more heralded psychology of form, explained once and for all how stylistic change in architecture came about. He was far less certain, however, in predicting the course of contemporary developments.

Gurlitt's very positive review of Göller's essay turned on what he felt to be the two major insights contained therein. First he pointed out that Göller's hypothesis of a collective "memory image" (to some extent, Gurlitt argued, an extension and replay of the aesthetic dispute between François Blondel and Claude Perrault during the 1670s) leveled all historical styles (an innovation later attributed to Alois Riegl) in that each period's appreciation of a style was now coupled with its particular formal sensibilities. Second, and more importantly, Gurlitt noted that Göller's — essentially Kantian — accentuation of the beauty of pure form (seen by Göller in Persian carpet designs) upended the Hegelian hegemony of the arts, whereby beauty was always dependent on the saturation of form with spiritual or ideal content. This momentous conceptual development, he argued further, had important architectural implications. Architects had traditionally sought truthful expression in their designs; each part of a building and the whole had to express a function. But the tasks of modern buildings and their parts had now grown too complex, Gurlitt insisted, to be functionally represented in this way. Moreover, this present-day emphasis on honesty of expression was leading architecture into visual monotony, for it robbed architects of their long-standing privilege to engage in pure formal play. Gurlitt's only

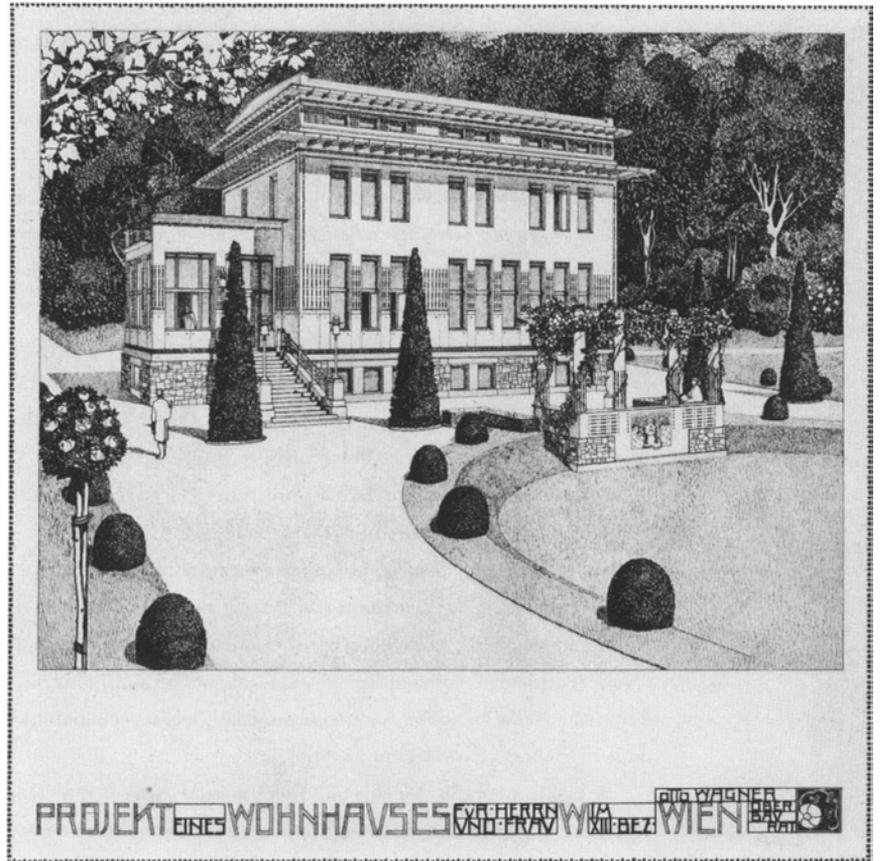
criticism of Göller's theory was that it had restricted the notion of pure form to architecture, whereas when the same appreciation of abstract form was extended to sculpture and painting, he forcefully concluded, it would yield "a far richer booty."<sup>12</sup>

We do not know if Wagner read Gurlitt's analysis, which was published in the architectural journal *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, but a similar artistic defiance — a persistent probing of the boundaries of formal exploration and expression — certainly resonates in Wagner's practice and writings. Behind it lay another ideological underpinning of architectural realism: the suppression of the aristocratic notion of "high art" (for Gurlitt exemplified in the "content-laden" manner of Peter Cornelius) in favor of a middle-class (*bürgerlich*) emphasis on everyday life. This was the social leveling caused by the ascendancy of socialist and egalitarian forces, which Wagner, Gurlitt, and virtually everyone else of their generation attributed to the phenomenon of the "great city," or metropolis (*Großstadt*). For Wagner, this new democratic value entailed not only rejecting the architectural extravagance of Vienna's "Potemkin villages" but also paying the strictest attention to a building's comfort, cleanliness, and convenience. Rooms in the great city were to be amply lighted and ventilated; they were to be appointed with simple, practical furnishings, conforming in character to the equally new "checkered breeches" of their modern urban inhabitants. Even though this almost ritualistic plea for simplicity echoed across European theory from the writings of William Morris to Henry van de Velde, we still find it awkward to situate it within its architectural context. One reason for this, I think, is the fixation that many modern historians and apologists have had on the visually seductive profusions of Art Nouveau, the Jugendstil, and the various Secessions. These are, as everyone will agree, very important artistic events, but they are better appreciated, as various of the following essays will argue, when seen not as the waves but as the whitecaps of more significant realist undercurrents. The polemics of realism preceded these developments (the young van de Velde liked to view himself as a member of the realist movement), and the chant of realism (soon to become the cacophony of *Sachlichkeit* with Muthesius as its lead percussionist) rather quickly brought the whole affair to a close. By 1898 Streiter could refer to this infatuation with symbolism only as a "mannerism and affectation" and "dilettantish arrogance."<sup>13</sup> Muthesius was far more caustic in his vivid denunciation of 1900, characterizing the "*Decadenz*" and "*Fin-de-siècletum*" as a

radical affront to the “original democratic tendency of the time.”<sup>14</sup> It was also, we must remember, Muthesius’s all-out onslaught upon these tendencies in 1902 that eventually convinced Wagner to change the title of his book *Moderne Architektur* in the fourth edition by substituting the word *Baukunst* (building-art) for the term *Architektur* (now corrupted, Muthesius had argued, by its symbolic and stylistic associations).<sup>15</sup>

When the “fin-de-siècle” appellation is affixed to Otto Wagner, as has been done in countless glossy picture books (and, to be sure, I distinguish these from Carl E. Schorske’s excellent seminal studies on this theme),<sup>16</sup> it fundamentally distorts his artistic intentions and burdens him, as Stanford Anderson notes in his essay below, with absolutist cultural notions and false artistic hubris. At the very least, such epithets hopelessly fracture his theory and practice, naturally doing much harm to both. Wagner was indeed a proud artist with a high (Semperian) regard for art, but we should be very careful to distinguish the “reincarnation” of Fischer von Erlach from the stolid professor who on one October evening in 1894 discarded the architectural curriculum of the Hapsburg Empire’s premier academy of art and substituted his own “modern” agenda.

In the end, the problem of defining the variable aspects of Wagner’s vision for a modern architecture is not unrelated to the problem of delineating the many faces of modernity itself, that is, before the notion and its ideology became filtered, *ausgespielt* as it were, as dogma. Do we dwell on his efforts to salvage representational and monumental values for the new architecture or do we emphasize the other constructional and practical aspects of his theory? Do we look back to the artistry and Palladian motifs of the first Villa Wagner in Hütteldorf (1886) or ahead to the cubic purity of his second villa (designed in 1905) in the same suburb (figs. 1, 4)? If we are to attain any measure of success and acquire more than a superficial understanding of our past, then it is perhaps necessary, as J. Duncan Berry suggests, that the notion of modernity undergo a certain “destabilization” of meaning. For the problem of explicating the many facets of Wagner’s vision of architectural modernity is actually not so different from the semantic task posed to Humpty Dumpty by Alice in *Through the Looking-Glass*, that of deciphering the meaning of the many unfamiliar words of the poem “Jabberwocky.” “You see,” he said in reflecting on a single word, “it’s like a portmanteau – there are two meanings packed up into one word.”



4. Otto Wagner,  
second Villa Wagner, Bujattigasse, Vienna,  
designed 1905; built 1911–1912.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

## NOTES

1. There are, of course, important exceptions to this historical failing, most notably Kurt Milde's *Neorenaissance in der deutschen Architektur des 19. Jahrhunderts: Grundlagen, Wesen und Gültigkeit* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1981); Valentin W. Hammerschmidt's *Anspruch und Ausdruck in der Architektur des späten Historismus in Deutschland, 1860-1914* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985); and Renate Wagner-Rieger's series *Wiens Architektur im 19. Jahrhundert*, 11 vols. (Vienna: Hermann Böhlau Nachf., 1969-).

2. Hermann Schmitz, "Hauptströmungen der deutschen Architektur während der letzten sechzig Jahre," *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 60, no. 1-2 (January 1926): 3-16.

3. Richard Streiter, *Architektonische Zeitfragen: Eine Sammlung und Sichtung verschiedener Anschauungen mit besonderer Beziehung auf Professor Otto Wagners Schrift Moderne Architektur* (1898), in *Richard Streiter: Ausgewählte Schriften zur Aesthetik und Kunst-Geschichte* (Munich: Delphin, 1913), 55-149.

4. Hermann Muthesius, *Stilarchitektur und Baukunst: Wandlungen der Architektur im XIX. Jahrhundert und ihr heutiger Standpunkt* (Mülheim-Ruhr: K. Schimmelpfeng, 1902).

5. Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1941), 13.

6. Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1988), 57.

7. The notion of *Bekleidung* appears in nearly all of Semper's writings, beginning with *Die Vier Elemente der Baukunst: Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Baukunde* (Braunschweig: Vieweg und Sohn, 1851). For Bötticher, the notion is developed first in *Die Tektonik der Hellenen*, 2 vols. (Potsdam: Ferdinand Riegel, 1844-52), and second in his often overlooked *Der Baumkultus der Hellenen nach den gottesdienstlichen Gebräuchen und den überlieferten Bildwerken dargestellt* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1856).

8. The iconography for this building has been explicated by Manfred Semper in *Die k. k. Hofmuseen in Wien und Gottfried Semper: Drei Denkschriften Gottfried Semper's* (Innsbruck: A. Edlinger, 1892) and more recently by Alphonse Lhotsky, "Die Baugeschichte der Museen und der neuen Burg," in Fritz Dworschak, ed., *Festschrift des Kunsthistorischen Museums zur Feier des fünfzigjährigen Bestandes* (Vienna: Ferdinand Berger, 1941).

9. See Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Aus Schinkels Nachlass*, ed. Alfred von Wolzogen (Berlin: R. Decker, 1862; reprint, Munich: Mäander, 1981), 2: 211-12; Carl Bötticher, "Das Princip der hellenischen und germanischen Bauweise hinsichtlich der Übertragung in die Bauweise unserer Tage," *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* (1846): 111-25. The latter essay has recently been translated by Wolfgang Herrmann in *In What Style Should We Build? The German Debate on Architectural Style* (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1992), 147-67.

10. Robert Vischer, "Der ästhetische Akt und die reine Form," in idem, *Drei Schriften zum ästhetischen Formproblem* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1927), 52. In explaining his concept of empathy, Vischer quotes at length the passage in which Schinkel speaks of the apparent motion of Gothic architecture and the formal repose of Greek architecture (see Schinkel [see note 9], 3: 370, sec. 37). The young philosopher also drew upon another passage from Schinkel at the end of his essay (p. 54). Robert Vischer first cited the architectural passages (secs. 553–73) of his father's *Ästhetik oder Wissenschaft des Schönen* (Reutlingen: C. Mäcken, 1846–1857) in the preface to his *Über das optische Formgefühl: Ein Beitrag zur Aesthetik* (Stuttgart: Julius Oscar Galler, 1873). Friedrich Theodor Vischer had referred to the "organic" metaphors of Friedrich Schelling and Friedrich Schlegel in addition to the "epoch-making" work of Bötticher.

11. Cornelius Gurlitt, "Göller's ästhetische Lehre," *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 21, no. 101 (17 December 1887): 602–7.

12. *Ibid.*, 607.

13. Streiter (see note 3), 79–80.

14. Hermann Muthesius, "Englische Architektur: M. H. Baillie Scott," *Die Kunst* 2 (1900): 5: "Dieser urwüchsige, demokratische Zug, dem wir hier an einer der wichtigsten Kunstbewegungen der Gegenwart begegnen, steht in einem recht eigentümlichen Gegensatz zu der Decadenz und dem *Fin-de-siècle*, in dem sich einige unserer kontinentalen Kunstströmungen gefallen" (This original, democratic tendency that we encounter in one of the most artistic movements of the present, very much stands in opposition to decadence and the *fin-de-siècle* into which some of our own continental artistic movements have descended).

15. Otto Wagner referred to his "error," pointed out by Muthesius, in the fourth edition of his book, published in 1914, when he changed its title from *Moderne Architektur* to *Die Baukunst unserer Zeit* (The building-art of our time). See Wagner (see note 6), 142.

16. Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980).

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PART I  
OPPOSED OR CONFRONTED?



1. Otto Wagner,  
entry baldachin for Princess Stephanie of  
Belgium, 1881.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

Renata Kassal-Mikula

OTTO WAGNER'S UNSUCCESSFUL  
*PARALLEL-AKTION*<sup>1</sup>

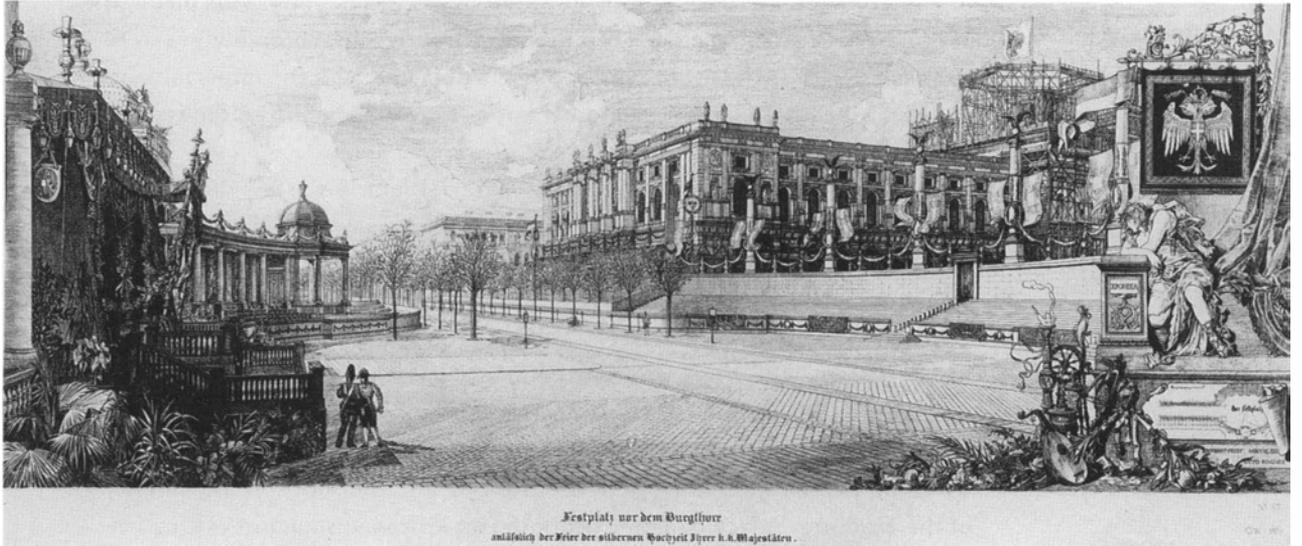
The professional life of Otto Wagner is marked by extreme productivity. His most famous works – the Vienna Stadtbahn, the Church Am Steinhof, the Postsparkasse, and the two apartment houses on the Linke Wienzeile – are somewhat deceptive in evaluating his career in that the number of his unexecuted projects far exceeded his realized designs, and many of his ideas have survived only as architectural drawings. Wagner's professional strategy was not simply to sit back and wait for competitions or commissions to come his way but rather to prepare designs on his own initiative and to attempt by means of word and image to interest potential clients in his artistic productions.

The modern transportation building, the modern church, the modern bank, the modern apartment house – all combine to create the impression that Wagner was exclusively interested in the needs of the anonymous crowd and the well-functioning metropolis. This is not so. The following inquiry will consider a second track of Wagner's development, one that was always present in his work and that shows him to be an architect bound to tradition and aspiring to princely patronage. Born and educated in a period that was very active in terms of art – the foundation and filling in of the Ringstraße from 1859 onward – Wagner's lifelong goal was to become the architect of the imperial household. Thus we see him addressing himself in his artistic efforts to the leading officials of the huge Hapsburg Empire, powerful figures serving Emperor Franz Josef I (fig. 2).<sup>2</sup>

Scholarly investigations of the last few years have mainly, and rightfully, concentrated on establishing Wagner's importance to Viennese Modernism circa 1900, or rather his influence beyond the boundaries of the Hapsburg



2. Photograph of Emperor Franz Josef I  
(1830-1916).  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



3. Otto Wagner,  
festival on the Ringstraße in front of  
the Burgtor with the incomplete  
Kunsthistorisches Museum in the  
background, 1879.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

Empire. Many aspects of his oeuvre have still been inadequately considered and detailed investigations are few.<sup>3</sup> This essay, by no means a complete analysis, will list and discuss both the actual and the desired points of contact between Wagner and Emperor Franz Josef; these run through Wagner's artistic career like a red thread. Initially such interchanges were connected with social events and jubilees associated with the imperial family. Later the architect on various occasions took it upon himself to recommend to the emperor the most diverse ideas.

Wagner's first connection with the imperial family was his design of a temporary pavilion for the silver wedding anniversary of the imperial couple in 1879 (fig. 3). The client was the city of Vienna, which had commissioned its most famous painter, Hans Makart, to plan an enormous costumed procession along the Ringstraße. Makart's successful staging of the event, which allowed the Viennese bourgeoisie a unique opportunity for self-display, greatly impressed itself on the consciousness of the era. Makart engaged Wagner from the Künstlerhaus for this artistic spectacle. Across from the Hofmuseen, in front of the Burgtor and therefore in the vicinity of the Hofburg Palace, Wagner proposed an elliptical structure with a festival tent in the center.<sup>4</sup> The event's official publication describes Wagner's architectural contribution.

Because the stone facades of the Hofmuseen, which are executed in the noblest style of the Renaissance, dominate the area around the Ringstraße with their highly ornate reliefs and statuary, it was impractical to create an artistic effect appropriate in character. In order to achieve a harmonious impression, the artist thus made use of an old architectural license for the festival building and exploited an architecture of appearance. He gave the ensemble the illusion of a stone building and thereby brought it into stylistic harmony with the museum buildings.<sup>5</sup>

This description could well have been penned by Wagner himself, since it goes on to compare him with his sources of inspiration, Gottfried Semper and the other successful Ringstraße architects. Notwithstanding the ephemeral character of the festival structure, this relatively young architect, who up to this point in his career had built mainly apartment houses and had proposed only a few monumental projects, knew how to achieve an optimal effect by means of refined articulation. The emperor's tent stood between

the lateral wings of simulated stone architecture. Its stately appeal was marked by the use of red and velvet. The emperor himself insisted upon a sumptuous shade of red, which was the favorite color of the epoch. In the two domed pavilions flanking the tent, Wagner showed himself to be a designer concerned with functional considerations: he glazed the pavilions to shelter the imperial family in case of bad weather so as not to jeopardize the continuation of the pageant (fig. 4).

Just as Wagner employed Renaissance forms on the outside of the pavilions to allude to the adjacent Hofmuseen, he found it necessary in the formal repertoire of interior furnishings to compete with the bourgeois style of living that Makart had created for Ringstraße society. Expensive Gobelins and other tapestries, china vases with tufts of feathers and palm branches, and trophy arrangements taken from the city's arsenal formed a picturesque *horror vacui*. The interior furnishings of Wagner's tent closely resembled in spirit Makart's famous painting of his own studio. The typical "upward leveling" (*Nivellierung nach Oben*) of the period, however, led Wagner to make the bourgeois style of the furnishings appear suited to the domestic needs of the emperor.

Wagner's success with the procession of 1879 brought with it the bestowal of "honorary" citizenship. Two years later, in 1881, he received another commission from the city for a temporary festival structure. He designed the entry pavilion of Princess Stephanie of Belgium, the fiancée of Crown Prince Rudolf (fig. 1). Following ancient Hapsburg protocol, the princess stayed in the suburb of Wieden before making her formal entrance into the capital where she would ultimately reside. The welcome was performed in this case by the mayor under an immense baldachin supported by columns placed in front of the Elisabethbrücke, the ceremonial entrance bridge over the Vienna River.<sup>6</sup> Wagner modeled the canopy on a local monument of semisacral character, the Baroque wedding fountain on the Hohen Markt, a work by Fischer von Erlach. The allusion to this masterpiece of Baroque urban architecture demonstrates Wagner's sympathy for the genius loci of the old imperial metropolis, especially for the Baroque architect Fischer von Erlach.

In view of the turn that Wagner's artistic career would later take, it is fair to ask what value these works had for Wagner himself. In the first volume of *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Some sketches, projects, and executed buildings), 1889, where Wagner expressed the desire "to

illustrate his viewpoint through some trials and achievements,” he devoted two pages to the 1879 pageant and one page to the wedding pavilion for the princess and crown prince.<sup>7</sup> His subsequent reference to these projects on his calling card of 1911 reveals that he never suppressed them, despite his later artistic goals.

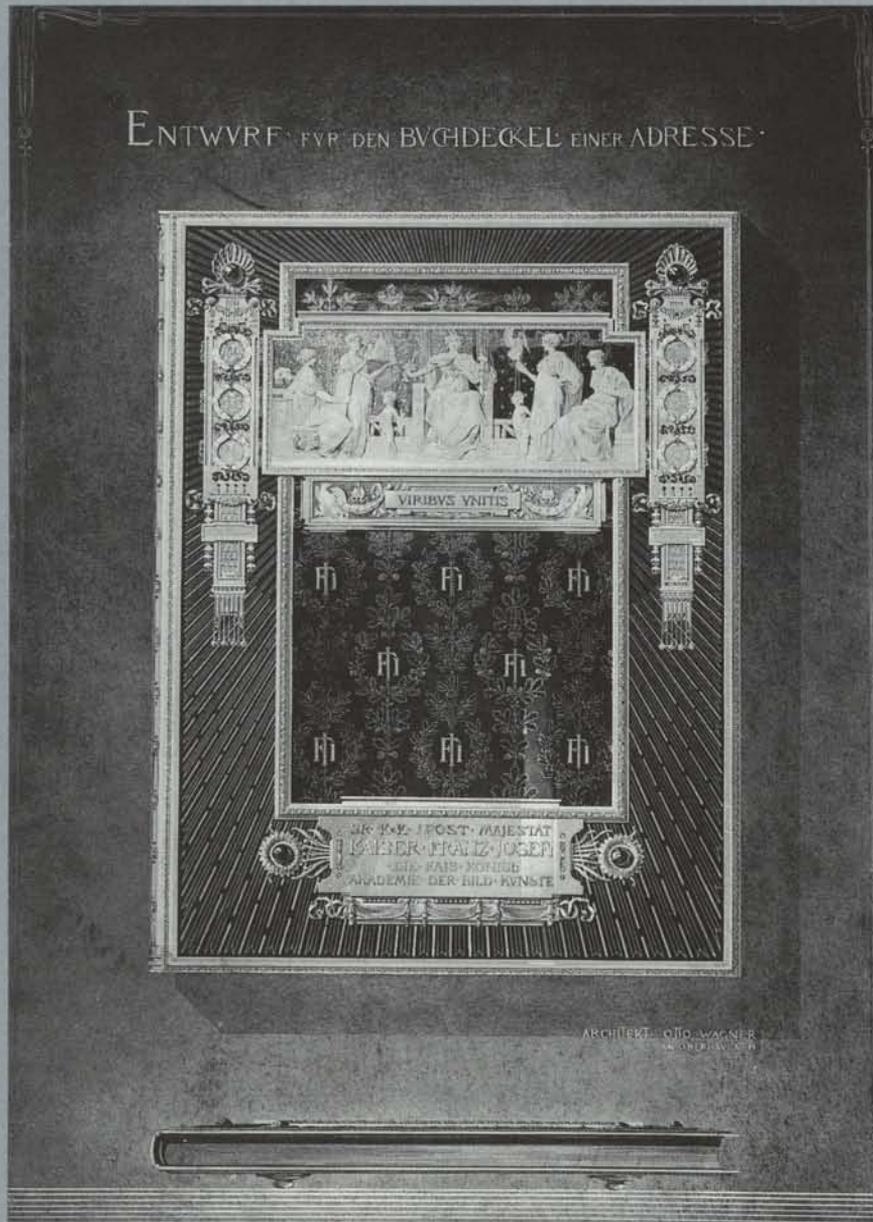
Wagner’s third commission directly connected with an imperial jubilee came in 1898. On behalf of his colleagues at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna, where he had been a professor since 1894, Wagner undertook the task of designing a sumptuous codex for the fiftieth anniversary of the emperor’s reign (fig. 5).<sup>8</sup> With the participation of his students, among them Jože Plečnik, Wagner was responsible for the technical execution, the layout of the text and illustrations, and the design of the cover and title page. Wagner’s typical style of expression is discernible in the wording of the text. He reserved plate 33 (fig. 6) for one of his own designs, referred to as *Ein Theil von Wiens Neugestaltung* (A part of Vienna’s redevelopment), in which he presented an extensive city-planning proposal titled “Ausgestaltung der Quai des Donaukanales, neue Aspern- und Ferdinandsbrücke, Regulierung des Stubenviertels” (Development of the quays along the Danube Canal, the new Aspern- and Ferdinandsbrücke, and the planning of the Stubenviertel).<sup>9</sup> The text summarized the latest revitalization efforts, which had changed the metropolis dramatically.

The rendering displays works of gigantic scale: Vienna’s water supply, the control of the Danube River, the organization of the street grid (the completion of which is presently taking place in the heart of the city), and the transformation of an entire urban quarter. All fill the beholder with admiration and respectful gratitude toward the emperor, under whose powerful aegis these works of peace could arise. Already the outermost walls of the old city have fallen, and its colossal body extends itself from the slopes of the mountain to the banks of the river.<sup>10</sup>

Wagner skillfully linked his imperial homage to the creation of the Ringstraße, although he had not been architecturally involved with its earlier development; he believed, however, that his chances for participation in such projects would be improved by emphasizing his ideas on city planning. Thus, he carved his name into this sumptuous codex as the person who would bring the finishing touch to the Ringstraße in the Stubenviertel and



4. Otto Wagner,  
details of festival tent and pavilions  
(Wagner portrays himself in the bottom  
right-hand corner of the sketch), 1879.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



5. Otto Wagner,  
design for the book cover for the laudatory  
address of the Akademie der bildenden  
Künste presented to Emperor Franz  
Josef I, 1898.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.
6. Otto Wagner,  
development of the quays along the Danube  
Canal, 1897. From *Reproduktion der  
Huldigungs-Adresse der Akademie*  
(Vienna: Akademie der bildenden Künste,  
1898), pl. 33.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

AVSGESTALTUNG DER QVAI  
DES DOMIV. CANALES  
NEVE ASPERNIT-D. P. DI IN DER TICHE  
REGULIERUNG DES SIBERNIERELS  
VON GIO. WAGNER.



MAI

1897

along the quays of the Danube Canal, linking the two terminal points of the Ringstraße to land and water. This magnificent rendering therefore demarcates Wagner's city planning ambitions at the end of the nineteenth century.

At the time that he was working on this codex, Wagner's dreams for the Ringstraße can already be compared with his realization of modern city planning concepts for the Stadtbahn. In 1898, however, we find Wagner also concerned with a related building, the user of which was not the anonymous populace of the metropolis but the emperor and his highest court.

The Hofpavillon, or Imperial Station, was built as part of the Vienna Valley Line (Wientallinie) extending toward Hütteldorf, running parallel with the Vienna River and past the Schönbrunn Palace.<sup>11</sup> It might be noted that at the beginning of the 1870s Wagner had proposed a splendid boulevard in this location, connecting in a dignified way the summer (Schönbrunn) and winter (Hofburg) residences of the Hapsburgs. At the two corners of the Imperial Park, at Hietzing and Meidling, major stations were built in the mid-1890s, but the area around the entrance to the palace remained untouched by the new transportation line.

In 1896, two years after work on the Stadtbahn had begun, the Hofpavillon came up for the first time as an architectural issue in connection with the Hietzing Station. In the second volume of *Einige Skizzen, Projekte und ausgeführte Bauwerke*, 1897, Wagner published a total of four views of the Hofpavillon. In August of 1897 the station was given a specific building program. We learn from the official minutes of the planning meetings that the cost of the project was to be paid for by reductions in the suburban and belt lines. Wagner therefore proposed budget cuts in other areas to finance the construction of the Imperial Station. Undoubtedly he alone was responsible for the decision. The infrequency with which the station would be employed was also anticipated; we know for certain of only two occasions on which the monarch used it. On 16 July 1899 he boarded a train to inaugurate the Lower Vienna Valley Line and at the same time traveled the completed Suburban Belt (Vorortelinie) and Upper Vienna Valley Line. On 12 April 1902 he rode out for the first time to the Danube Canal Line (Donaukanal-Linie).

In *Ver Sacrum*, 1899, we learn of Wagner's rationale for building the station.

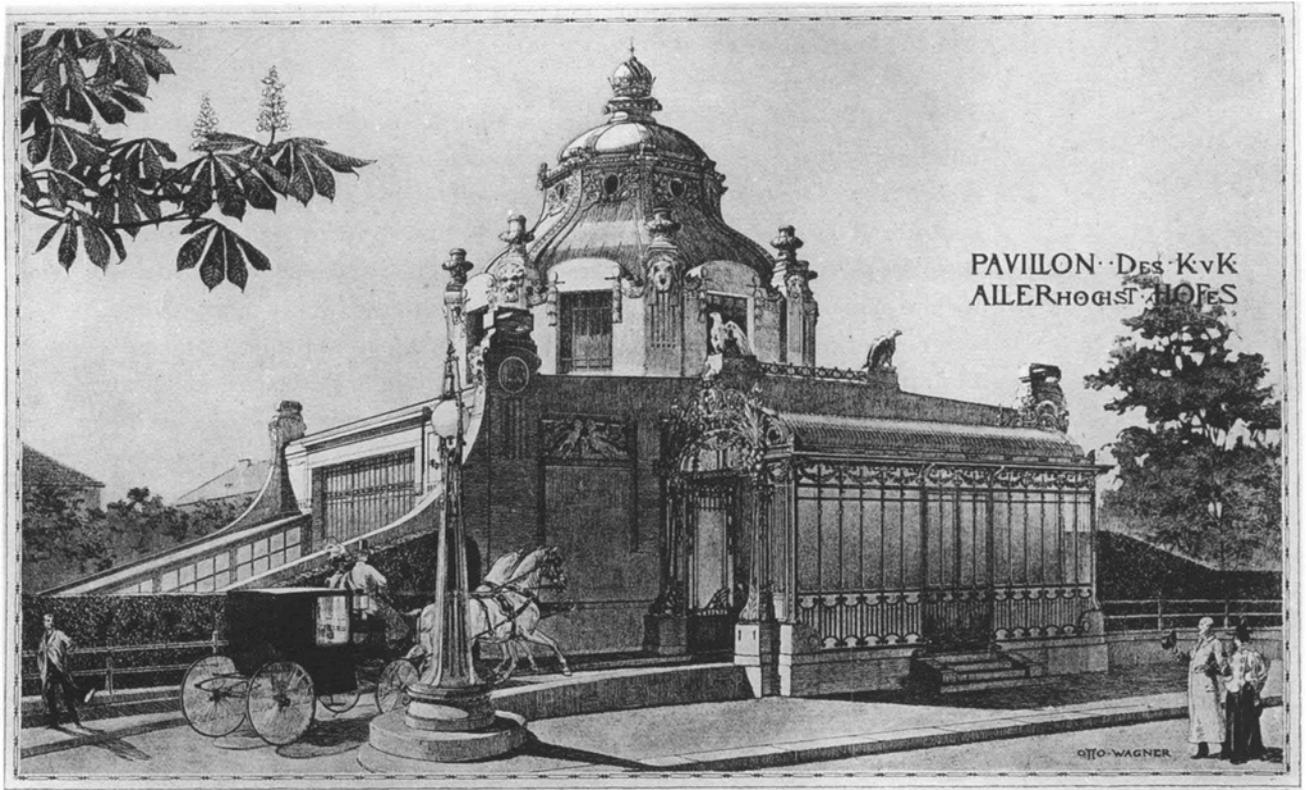
On a train from the heart of the city out toward the wooded Vienna Valley, one goes past the recently opened arm of the Vienna Stadtbahn at the emperor's

established summer residence at Schönbrunn. Here the Austrian emperor spends a large part of the spring and autumn entertaining. Because the crowned heads of state who visit Vienna reside here occasionally, there was the need to build a royal station next to Hietzing for the use of the monarch and his honored guests.<sup>12</sup>

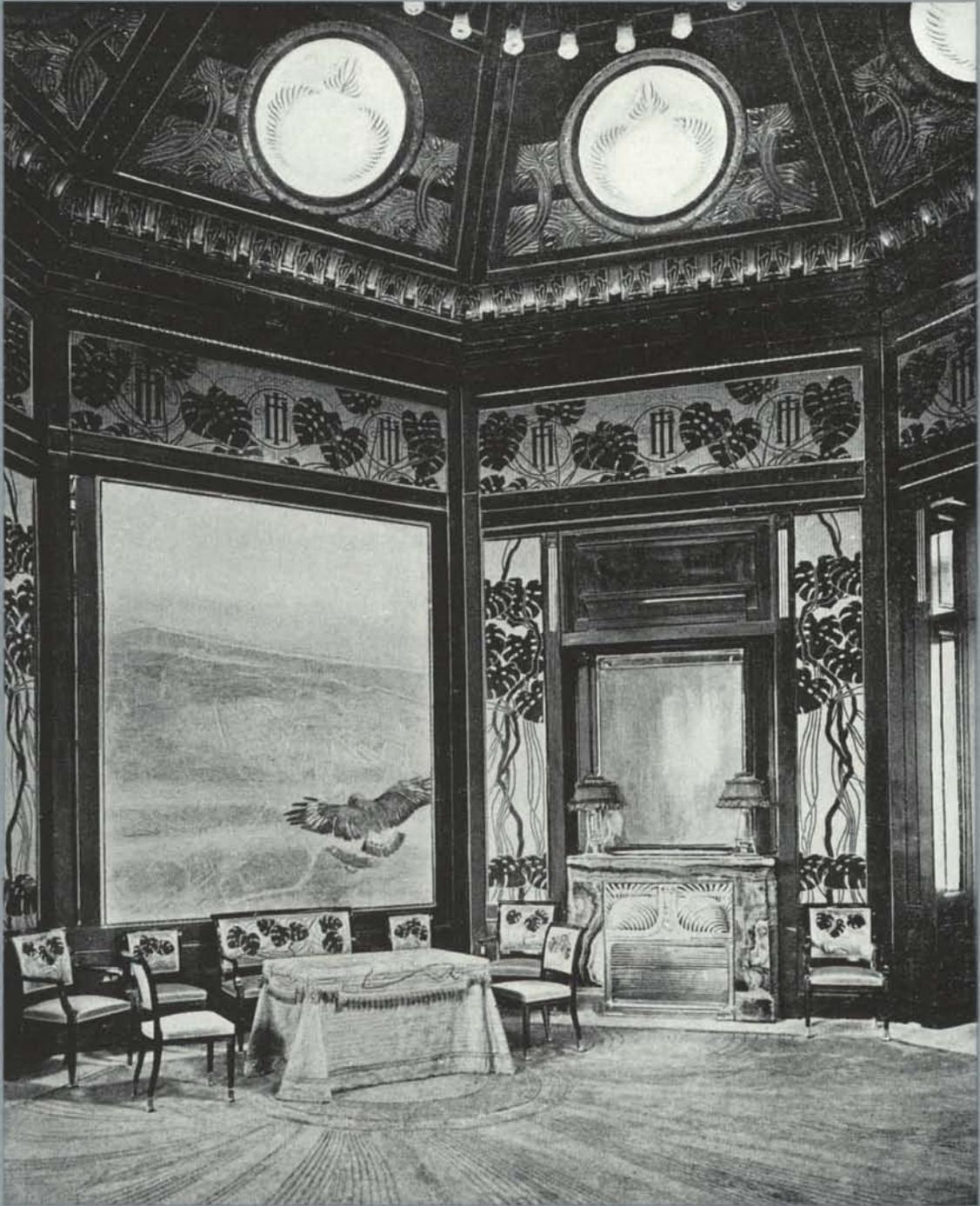
The character of the Hofpavillon is completely different from that of other Stadtbahn stations (fig. 7). In plan and elevation, Wagner returned to a design feature that he had used for decades on religious edifices, the domed, centralized building. The building's highest space, under the dome, houses the emperor's octagonal waiting room. Around it are grouped other rooms for the emperor, his escorts, and attendants. With the highly ornate dome Wagner expressed the level of dignity that he felt to be appropriate for this building.<sup>13</sup> For its exterior motif, he reached back to the native imperial architecture of the Baroque – to Fischer von Erlach and indirectly to Saint Peter's in Rome. This worthy formula appeared essential to the architect in view of the station's users and especially given its proximity to the emperor's summer palace. At the same time Wagner succeeded, as the designer of a prominently situated Stadtbahn station, in erecting a monument to himself.

To accommodate the arriving vehicles, Wagner built an entrance canopy of glass and iron; this allowed the honored persons to enter and exit the station protected from the elements. A plate from the second volume of *Einige Skizzen, Projecte und ausgeführte Bauwerke* shows how Wagner imagined the scenario. It depicts an elegant royal carriage with its horses at full trot arriving from the Schönbrunn and entering the covered waiting area where the passengers disembark to their new mode of transportation. And since we know that Wagner used these impressive drawings to promote his ideas, we can see why the architect felt it important to stress the utility of the solution and emphasize its functionality.

Inside the station, Wagner's design was not in the formal vocabulary of late historicism but was rather in a modern Secession style. The furnishings owe much to Joseph Maria Olbrich and Leopold Bauer, who were employed in Wagner's office and studio. In the choice of materials and color harmonies, we find the formal motifs of the Secession treated in a most meticulous way (fig. 8). The attention that Wagner gave to this ingenious use of modern motifs is again revealed in the article in *Ver Sacrum*. Above the image of the waiting room the article explains:



7. Otto Wagner,  
the Hofpavillon on the Vienna Valley Line  
(Wientallinie) near Schönbrunn, 1896-1897.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



When later artistic investigation comes to speak of how our art regained its health, that is, how it once again became directed by the purpose of the work, then this room will perhaps be cited as a textbook example. For it is, in its brilliant attention to the smallest detail, nothing other than that which nature teaches us with intimate understanding – form fashioned by the behavior of its occupant. Opposite the entrance, for example, there is a table draped with an original tablecloth. The table is not in the center of the room but pushed more toward the back wall. Whoever has had a chance to observe the behavior of the monarch upon entering a room devoted to such purposes can at once imagine how he will pace the room with his quick and elastic step, how he will stop by the table and lightly rest the fingers of his right hand on it, the left hand on his saber hilt, while awaiting the announcement that everything is ready for departure. To shorten these seconds of waiting, he will cast a glance at the work of art.<sup>14</sup>

The work of art referred to was a bird's-eye perspective by Carl Moll of the entire Stadtbahn system. The article continues:

The knotted carpet that entirely covers the floor of the salon turns out to be another incredibly ingenious solution. Its decorations actually point toward the various doors of the room from the emperor's place at the table. Radial lines emanate from this location toward the sides, separated from one another only by thin gussets, filled in with an ornamental composition of philodendron leaves.

The philodendron ("love of trees") is the basic ornamental motif for the entire room, perhaps an allusion to the ruler's well-known love of nature and yearning for the forest.<sup>15</sup>

The loggia attached to the waiting room likewise served a particular function. "Even this loggia has a serious purpose and is far from simply pursuing a decorative intent. It often happens that the monarch in the final minutes before his departure wants to write down a telegram or a command. For such occasions, a writing table is set up in this loggia, upon which is placed a lighting fixture exactly like the lamp found on the monarch's desk in his present residence."<sup>16</sup>

Thus it is not surprising that the unnamed author of this article made the following summation: "When we see the enormous mental energy ex-

pended, how everything is made with extraordinary practicality, then we can believe that the high gentleman for whom this building was designed must be praising it in high terms, especially since it was unnecessary to enlist foreign workers, and since its materials, like the workers, are without exception domestic.”<sup>17</sup>

Wagner appears to have been well versed in the ceremonial details as well as in the personal peculiarities and industrious working habits of the monarch, and it was on this basis that he developed his architectural scheme. Representation and function were thereby brought into accord. The importance of the Imperial Station for a superordinate artistic goal was also clearly noted in the article. “Modernity has achieved, in a realm until now foreign to it, a glorious and – one might well hope – momentous victory.”<sup>18</sup> This assessment, as later events will show, was too optimistic. Wagner’s joining the Secession had negative ramifications in that the imperial court remained forever closed to him as a source of commissions. It was not even helpful that he employed only domestic workers and indigenous materials, even though the emperor looked upon the advancement of national industrial forces as his own special concern.

We find the same attention given to practical needs in another contemporary but unexecuted design, the project for the Capuchin Church and Imperial Crypt, in which Wagner dedicated himself to the final affairs of the Hapsburgs (fig. 9).<sup>19</sup>

With the sudden death of Empress Elisabeth on 10 September 1898, Wagner felt compelled to propose this project. He turned his attention with this monumental design to the city center, whose buildings at that time were restricted to apartment houses and commercial structures. It is – for the present – unclear whether Wagner, as was so often the case, acted on his own initiative or whether a renovation was considered by the imperial building committee. The Capuchin Church, which had been entrusted with the Imperial Crypt since the seventeenth century, was quite small; its plain frontage facing Neuen Markt was built in the period of early historicism (1842–1844).

In his exposé, Wagner disclosed the reasons that led him to prepare this design.

Certainly every Austrian and above all every Viennese has felt a sense of embarrassment that the earthly remains of our dynasty are interred in such an unworthy manner. A cellar afflicted with efflorescence – for how else is



9. Otto Wagner,  
design for the reconstruction of the Capuchin  
Church and Imperial Crypt, 1898.  
© Dr. Georg Wick.  
Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina.

the space to be described – serves this purpose presently. The situation prompted me several years ago to approach high officials with a proposal in this regard. Because of the departure of so many members of the imperial household and the passing of Her Majesty, the erstwhile empress and queen, I must raise the question again and join it with the renovation and creation of a worthy monument, illustrated in the accompanying studies.<sup>20</sup>

The expansion of the crypt was to be carried out underneath the cloister garden. The chamber was to be well lighted, well ventilated, and dry – concerns typical for Wagner, who was fanatical about hygiene. The principal element of the ensemble was the church, flanked by two apartment houses. The income from the living units and ground-floor businesses was to aid in financing the project. The apartment house on one side was to be the home of the custodians of the crypt, the Capuchin friars. The covered entry for the honored members of the court was to be on Gluckgasse, leading directly into the church. Wagner provided for a larger turning radius in the inner courtyard to accommodate carriages.

For the Capuchin Church, Wagner also used a dome and a centralized floor plan, the leitmotifs that he used for religious buildings throughout his career. The choice of materials for the outside covering, however, was innovative. He planned to sheathe the building with stone panels, copper reliefs, and groupings of bronze statuary. He thus anticipated the materials that he proposed for two later monumental projects, the church Am Steinhof and the Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum. Like the Berlin cathedral, the dome was octagonal in plan; the ribs and the cross were to be electrically illuminated. “It is assumed that on high feast days and during funerals the lights will be turned on. The selection of colors for the church will be extremely dignified by virtue of the materials – a light-colored granite with a dark bronze and partially gilded copper coping.”<sup>21</sup> Whether the emperor, who was also the highest guardian of the funeral ceremony, would have approved of such a theatrical effect is questionable.

Not only the selection of exterior materials but also the choice of interior decorations anticipated future designs. Aluminum reliefs were to be applied to white surfaces; white, gray, and black were the only colors to be used, creating the impression, in Wagner’s words, of “high solemnity and profound sadness.” Materials that the architect employed for functional reasons a few years later in an institutional church and a post office, here appeared

appropriate to him for a Hapsburg funerary church in the city center.

The commemorative work giving rise to his design — the sculpture depicting Elisabeth, situated behind the high altar — he described as follows: “It is conceived as a portrait figure resting on a sarcophagus, over which an angel holds a laurel crown. The monument of white marble, illuminated by a rich light source, will produce a very grand and sublime effect. The source of illumination is a unique window in the form of a halo, which shines down upon the monument.”<sup>22</sup> In this case Wagner was alluding to the tomb and altar stagings of the Baroque, especially those of Bernini. Wagner was also seeking to amend the traditional funeral ceremony.

After all funeral guests and functionaries have taken their places, the cortege moves forward and the hearse drives under a canopy, twenty meters long and four meters wide, which is supported by cables strung perpendicular to the main doorway. The canopy can be mounted and removed in thirty minutes. The coffin, stopping at the long axis of the church, is in this way protected from precipitation. The coffin will then be received by the high clergy, lifted up by the functionaries assigned to it, and placed on the catafalque in the middle of the church near the entrance to the crypt. There it receives the benedictions. After the benediction, the high clergy lead it down the magnificent staircase into the crypt. During the entire function, it is unnecessary for the persons performing the ceremony to turn or rotate, and all parts of the memorial service will remain visible to everyone attending.<sup>23</sup>

Wagner’s design operated on two levels. On the one hand, he sought to lend a new functional logic, a combination of sublimity and simplicity, to the long-established Hapsburg funeral ceremony. On the other hand, he was intent on investing dynastic ideas with a new splendor, in the same way that the Berlin cathedral (for which Wagner prepared a design in 1891) symbolized a young Hohenzollern state in need of representation.

We know that Wagner was able to present at least the first project for the Capuchin Church and Imperial Crypt to the director responsible for the management of the emperor’s private financial matters. Because there is a second design, he apparently had to take into account desired cost reductions. The design, however, was never realized. The survival of numerous plans for this monument attests to the project’s high personal value for Wagner, even though he kept them for naught. They signify as well Wagner’s

strong personal wish to be the architect to the emperor.

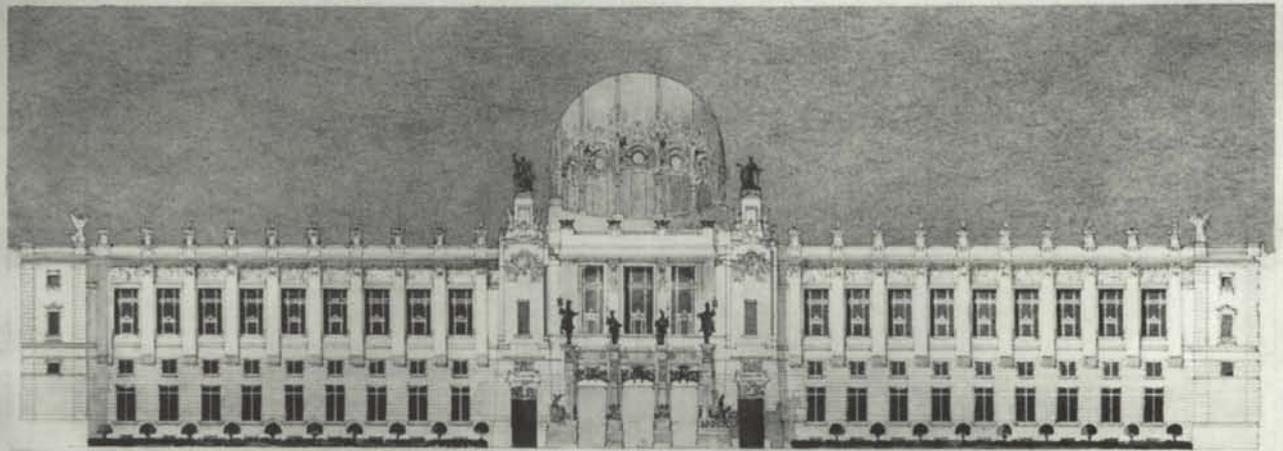
With the next design, we find him concerned with one of the central tasks of the Ringstraße – the completion of the Hofburg (figs. 10, 11). As might be expected, his Hofburg proposal was not detailed.<sup>24</sup> What remains of the plans is a few pencil sketches and some beautiful but small sheets representing various stages of the design. Moreover, there is no indication that Wagner ever presented his plans to Hofburg officials. A presentation drawing has nonetheless survived.<sup>25</sup> A self-contained group of designs is dated 1895, but its Secessionist character suggests possibly a later date, circa 1898.

In what stage of completion was the Hofburg at that time? What plans were under discussion? Semper's design for the Imperial Forum had been submitted in 1869. The two museums built by Semper and Karl von Hasebauer were finished, and the new Hofburg Palace was under construction. All in all these colossal building undertakings were in a critical phase, however, because the emperor had long since lost interest in them.

For his forum project, Semper had returned to themes of the Baroque and late antiquity; he deemed a certain monarchical pathos in the palace's exterior to be entirely appropriate for what was then the oldest imperial residence in Europe. If this design pleased the emperor, it would not be unfair to claim that the emperor himself had demanded such an imperial tradition or that he identified himself with a quasi-sacral rank in an idealized image of the Roman Empire. Semper seems initially to have given no thought to the distribution of rooms in this colossal new building. Aside from the centrally located, domed throne room, all rooms in the original floor plans were unspecified. Only in 1880, when the museums were under roof, was the next building phase started and Hasenauer put in charge of preparing more complete plans for the new Hofburg.<sup>26</sup>

The Imperial Forum was the logical heart of the Vienna Ringstraße, by virtue of its size and urban location. Yet its content – Semper's artistic power notwithstanding – could scarcely conceal the frailty of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, which was already slipping into crisis. The emperor directed his affairs from two writing tables, one in the Hofburg and the other in the Schönbrunn. In the final analysis, the existing square footage of the two residences was sufficient. The atmosphere of a new beginning that propelled the construction of the Ringstraße had long lost its vitality in the house of Hapsburg.

JUDIE·ZUM·AUSBAU·DER·K·U·K·HOFBURG·MDCCCXCVIII



TRONN(SALEAU)

VERLAG VON  
K. U. K. HOCHSCHULE FÜR KUNST UND  
ARCHITECTUR W I E N

III OTTO WAGNER III

10. Otto Wagner,  
design for the expansion of the Hofburg  
building containing the throne room, 1898.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



Despite all these personal and political drawbacks, it does not seem odd that a Hofburg project would form part of Wagner's oeuvre. Without it, he would certainly have relinquished a part of his monumental claim to the Ringstraße. In one sketch Wagner prepared a front elevation of the throne room. The building was elongated, almost monotonous in its form with a dome over the throne, which was located on the main upper level and reached by a luxurious oval staircase. In another sketch he concerned himself with the connection of the forum project to Lastenstraße. As with many other earlier projects, Wagner also proposed the dismantling of the royal stables of Fischer von Erlach in order to build a new museum with a prominent central pavilion. Yet if his project had any chance of being built, then Wagner, like all the other architects before him, would have had to satisfy the emperor's wish to preserve the old stables and keep the view relatively free.

From Semper's forum project, Wagner borrowed the motif of building a bridge over the street, and like the later project for the Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum, this connecting bridge was to be built of glass and iron. Given the polemics surrounding the Stadtmuseum, it is probable that such construction near the Hofburg would have led to even more lively debate.

It is also open to question whether Wagner was using this design to promote himself for the position of supervisor of building works, which was left vacant after Hasenauer's death in 1894. This position was finally awarded to Friedrich Ohmann in 1899. It is doubtful, however, if Wagner would have been interested in the management of the earlier design, and it is also possible that the fiftieth jubilee of the emperor's reign in 1898 played a role in the origin of the Hofburg project. Wagner could not, in any case, make the effort to come up with a truly new conception of the unresolved artistic questions. His project leaves the impression of being simply a late homage to the artistic vision of Semper.

Another perspective drawing of 1892–1893 from his master plan proposal for the city appears to be of great interest in this regard.<sup>27</sup> In this earlier scheme for an impressive termination of Maria Theresien-Platz, we find the combination so typical of Wagner: he devoted himself not only to the design of a monumental building but also to the solution of traffic problems, by proposing a tram line on Lastenstraße instead of on the Ringstraße. As always, he showed himself to be a prudent, ever-thoughtful city planner.

Here, it is more necessary than ever to undertake nothing that could disfigure, even to the slightest degree, the most beautiful square in the world. The solution is complex and closely related to the expected disposition of the sides of the most sacred court. Since it raises, on the one hand, the question of the eventual rebuilding of the royal stables and, on the other hand, the eventual enlargement and connection of the museums with a gallery for cartoons, Gobelins, sculpture, etc., the issue of the tram tracks must be resolved in such a way that it does not influence future solutions.<sup>28</sup>

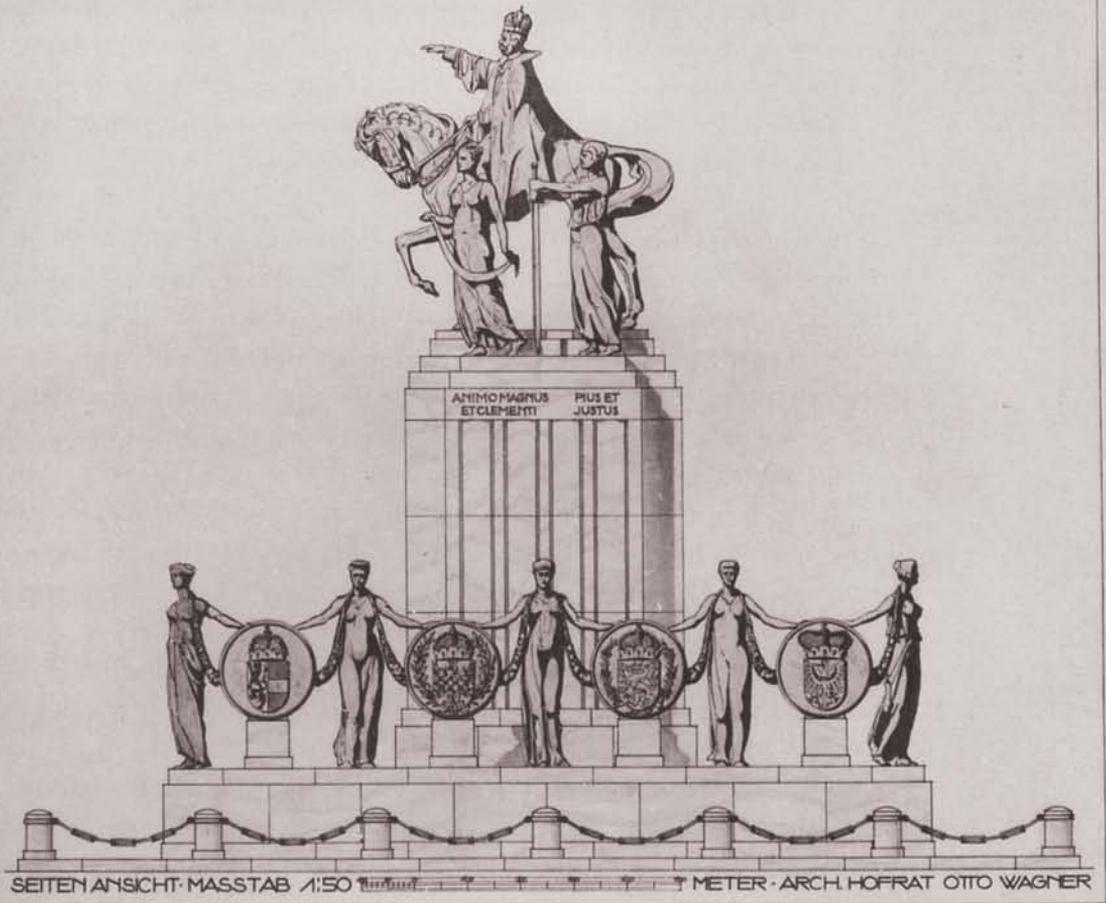
Even though the solution to a traffic problem came to the fore, Wagner, by interjecting his museum project, viewed himself as the person who would bring to a completion the stately imperial architecture. Perhaps Wagner's interest in the project grew out of the completion of the Hofburg wing on the Michaelerplatz tract by Ferdinand Kirschner. The section along the Museumsstraße would have enclosed the Hofburg complex at the far end of the forum.

If the clarification of Wagner's Hofburg project undoubtedly needs further investigation, the prize-winning Hofburg project by one of Wagner's students, Josef Hannich, who was awarded the 1912 Hagenmüller Prize by the Akademie faculty, reveals that both Wagner and his students concerned themselves with the Imperial Hofburg until a very late date, although any rationale for completing this architectural task had long been missing.<sup>29</sup>

After this survey of a few of Wagner's works that can in the final analysis be subsumed under his dream of the Ringstraße, we might glance at a few other designs for smaller monuments. In the vicinity of the Imperial Forum, opposite the monument of Maria Theresia, Wagner proposed an equestrian statue of Emperor Franz Josef immediately after the death of the monarch on 21 November 1916 (fig. 12).<sup>30</sup> Another design for an imperial equestrian statue had been prepared by Wagner in 1895 and was likewise to be situated on the Ringstraße between the Vienna Rathaus and the Burgtheater (fig. 13).<sup>31</sup> Wagner referred to statues in his proposed master plan as essential, formative elements in modern city planning. "They are, so to speak, the focal points of urban art and without doubt will be accepted by all as edifying in every respect."<sup>32</sup> Such a statement is especially true in the case of a monument to the monarch.

The fountain dedicated to Franz Josef that Wagner designed in 1905 for the west end of Karlsplatz was also conceived as an urban focal point

STUDIE FÜR DAS KAISER FRANZ JOSEPH DENKMAL



12. Otto Wagner,  
design for a monument dedicated to  
Emperor Franz Josef I, 1917.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



13. Otto Wagner,  
design for a monument dedicated to  
Emperor Franz Josef I, 1895.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

MONUMENTALBRUNNEN  
AM KARLSPLATZE IN  
WIEN

ZUR FEIER DES  
60 JÄHRIGEN  
REGIERUNGS  
JUBILÄUMS

KAISER FRANZ JOSEF I.



OTTO WAGNER 1905

(fig. 14).<sup>33</sup> In the proposal accompanying his project, Wagner justified the fountain as a monument to commemorate the sixtieth jubilee of the emperor's reign in 1908. The choice of person to be depicted in this case is immaterial, since Wagner proposed a statue of Mayor Karl Lueger in the same spot in a later design for the square.

Wagner also proposed a statue of the emperor for the landing of the staircase in the vestibule to the Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum (see p. 72).<sup>34</sup> This project, together with the museum's special reception building for the monarch and his guests, was for several years the subject of intense debate (see pp. 52–83).

All of these monuments remained unexecuted. Yet Wagner would not have been Wagner if he had not persisted in making new proposals for Hapsburg buildings and monuments. It happened for the last time in his essay "Wien nach dem Kriege" (Vienna after the war), published in 1917 – the third year of the war and the year before the architect's death.<sup>35</sup> The proposed building program skirted the issue of the decline of the Hapsburg Empire and spoke of an imperial monument, the rebuilding of the Hofburg, and a Hapsburg Museum.

A postscript – "Ein Hohenzollern-Museum ist in Berlin schon mit Erfolg entstanden" (A Hohenzollern Museum has already been built in Berlin with great success) – perhaps provides a key as to why Wagner continued over so many decades to plan for the imperial house. In addition to the wish to be artistically represented on the Ringstraße alongside the architects Semper, Hasenauer, Theophil von Hansen, Heinrich von Ferstel, and Friedrich von Schmidt, there was Wagner's loyalty to the emperor and his fascination with the (apparent) ideological power of the Hohenzollern state and the architectural dynamism of Berlin.

With his designs, Wagner wanted to celebrate his dreams of Hapsburg glory, and he expected to receive the commissions to represent them directly from the hand of the highest representative of the dynasty. Franz Josef, however, believed he could best preserve his empire through his immense personal energy, and he left the improvement of his capital and city of residence to open competitions. Thus Wagner failed as the new Fischer von Erlach; the "*Parallel-Aktion*" of the architect proved unsuccessful.

14. Otto Wagner,  
design for a fountain dedicated to Emperor  
Franz Josef I on the Karlsplatz, 1905.  
Vienna. Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

## NOTES

1. Robert Musil, in his novel *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (The man without qualities), 1930–1943, illuminated the spiritual panorama of the dying Danube monarchy in particularly sarcastic terms. He described the early preparations for the seventieth anniversary of Franz Josef's ascension to the throne (which would have taken place in 1918) as a “parallel action.”

2. Franz Josef I (1830–1916) became the emperor of Austria and the Hapsburg Empire in 1848.

3. See Peter Haiko and Renata Kassal-Mikula, *Otto Wagner und das Kaiser Franz Josef Stadtmuseum: Das Scheitern der Moderne in Wien*, exh. cat. (Vienna: Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, 1988).

4. Otto Wagner, *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Author, 1889), pls. 62–63. E. V. Humphrey, trans., *Sketches, Projects and Executed Buildings by Otto Wagner* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 73–74. Otto Antonia Graf, *Otto Wagner: Das Werk des Architekten* (Vienna: Hermann Böhlau Nachf., 1985), 1: 31–33.

5. Graf (see note 4), 1: 31–32: “Gegenüber den im Styl der edelsten Renaissance hergestellten Hofmuseen, deren mit Reliefs und Figuren reichgeschmückte Steinfassaden die ganze Umgebung der Ringstraße beherrschen, war es aber ohne Beeinträchtigung, der künstlerischen Wirkung nicht ausführbar, diese auch dem Charakter des Materials entsprechend zu gestalten. Um einen harmonischen Eindruck zu erzielen, machte der Künstler von der Freiheit der alten Baumeister Gebrauch, bei Festbauten sich der Scheinarchitektur zu bedienen. Er gab der gesamten Anlage das Ansehen von Steinbauten und brachte diese in stylistischer Beziehung mit den Gebäuden der Hofmuseen in Übereinstimmung.”

6. Graf (see note 4), 1: 41–43. See also Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, inv. no. 96.014.

7. Wagner (see note 4), pls. 61–63.

8. Graf (see note 4), 1: 300–301. See also Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, inv. no. 96.021/12.

9. Graf (see note 4), 1: 288–98: “Ausgestaltung der Quai des Donaukanales, neue Aspern- und Ferdinandsbrücke, Regulierung des Stubenviertels.” See also Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, inv. no. 96.288.

10. *Reproduktion der Huldigungs-Adresse der Akademie* (Vienna: Akademie der bildenden Künste, 1898), 34: “Wohin der Blick fällt, stellen sich Werke von gigantischer Größe dem Auge dar – Wiens Wasserleitung, die Regulierung des Donaustromes, der Ausbau des Bahnnetzes, dessen Vollendung im Herzen der Stadt sich eben vollzieht, die völlige Umgestaltung ganzer Stadttheile erfüllen den Betrachter mit Bewunderung und ehrfürchtigem Dank gegen den Fürsten, unter dessen mächtiger Ägide diese Werke des Friedens entstehen konnten. Schon sind die äußersten Wälle der alten Stadt gefallen, und bis an die Hänge des Gebirges, bis an die Ufer des Stromes dehnt sich ihr Riesenleib!”

11. Graf (see note 4), 1: 215–20. See also Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, inv. no. 77.261 1.

12. *Ver Sacrum* 2, no. 8 (August 1899): 3: “Auf seinem Zuge aus dem Herzen der Stadt nach dem waldigen Wienthale führt einer der neu eröffneten Arme der Wiener Stadtbahn an dem alten kaiserlichen Lustschlosse Schönbrunn vorbei. Hier pflegt der Kaiser von Österreich einen grossen Theil des Frühjahrs und des Herbstes zu verbringen. Deshalb und da auch gekrönte Häupter, die in Wien zu Gäste weilen, mitunter hier wohnen, ergab sich die Nothwendigkeit, nächst Hietzing eine Hofhaltestelle der Stadtbahn zum Gebrauche des Monarchen und seiner hohen Gäste zu schaffen.”

13. Wagner was forced to reduce the amount of detailing on the dome during its construction.

14. *Ver Sacrum* (see note 12): 5–6: “Wenn die Kunstforschung späterer Zeiten davon sprechen wird, wie die Kunst unserer Zeit daran gesundete, dass sie sich wieder von dem Zweck ihres Werkes leiten liess, dann wird dieser Raum wohl oft als typisches Schulbeispiel angeführt werden; denn er ist in genialer Consequenz bis zur kleinen Einzelheit hinab nichts anderes als das der Natur mit intimem Verständniss abgelauschte und Form gewordene Gehaben seines Bewohners. Da steht z.B. dem Eingang gegenüber mit einer originellen Decke behangen ein Tisch, nicht im Mittelpunkte des Raumes, sondern mehr gegen die Rückwand geschoben. Wer je Gelegenheit hatte, das Gehaben des Monarchen beim Betreten eines solchen Zwecken dienenden Raumes zu beobachten, kann sich nun sofort lebhaft vorstellen, wie er mit seinen raschen, elastischen Schritten den Raum durchmisst, bei dem Tischchen halt macht und jetzt, die Finger der rechten Hand leicht darauf gestützt, die Linke am Säbelgefäss, die Meldung erwartet, dass alles zur Abfahrt bereit sei. Diese Secunden des Wartens dem Monarchen durch den Anblick eines Kunstwerkes zu kürzen, lag nahe.”

15. *Ver Sacrum* (see note 12), 6: “Eine unglaublich geniale Lösung im erwähnten Sinne hat der Knüpfteppich, der den ganzen Boden des Salons bedeckt, erfahren. Es ist nämlich thatsächlich decoriert durch die Wege, welche der Kaiser von seinem Platze am Tischchen aus nach den verschiedenen Thüren des Raumes hin nehmen kann. Strahlenförmig schiessen von diesem Punkte die Leitlinien nach all den verschiedenen Seiten hin und lassen zwischen einander nur schmale Zwickel frei, welche durch ein aus Philodendronblättern gebildetes Ornament ausgefüllt werden.

Der Philodendron (‘Baumlieb’) ist überhaupt das Grundmotiv für den ganzen ornamentalen Schmuck des Raumes, wohl eine Anspielung auf die bekannte Naturliebe und Waldessehnsucht des Herrschers.”

16. *Ver Sacrum* (see note 12), 7: “Auch diese Loggia hat einen ernsten Zweck und ist weit entfernt bloss decorative Absichten zu verfolgen. Oft kommt es nämlich vor, dass der Monarch in den letzten Minuten vor seiner Abfahrt noch ein Telegramm oder einen Befehl niederzuschreiben wünscht. Für solche Gelegenheiten nun ist in dieser Loggia ein Schreibtisch aufgestellt, welcher als Beleuchtungskörper genau eine ebensolche Lampe trägt, wie sie sich auf den Arbeitstischen des Monarchen in seinen jeweiligen Aufenthaltsorten vorfinden.”

17. *Ver Sacrum* (see note 12), 9: “*Sieht man wie alles das durchdacht, mit welchem immensen Aufwand von Geist und welcher ungeheuren Erfahrung das alles gemacht ist, dann glaubt man gerne, dass der hohe Herr, für dessen Gebrauch das Gebäude bestimmt ist, sich darüber ausserordentlich lobend geäußert habe, zumal da es nicht nothwendig war, ausländische Kräfte heranzuziehen, sondern Material wie Arbeit durchweg dem Inlande entstammen.*”

18. *Ver Sacrum* (see note 12), 3: “*Die Moderne hat auf einem ihr bisher fremden Gebiet einen herrlichen und, man darf wohl hoffen, folgenschweren Sieg errungen.*”

19. Graf (see note 4), 1: 341–50. See also *Graphische Sammlung Albertina*, Arch. Z. inv. 9744.

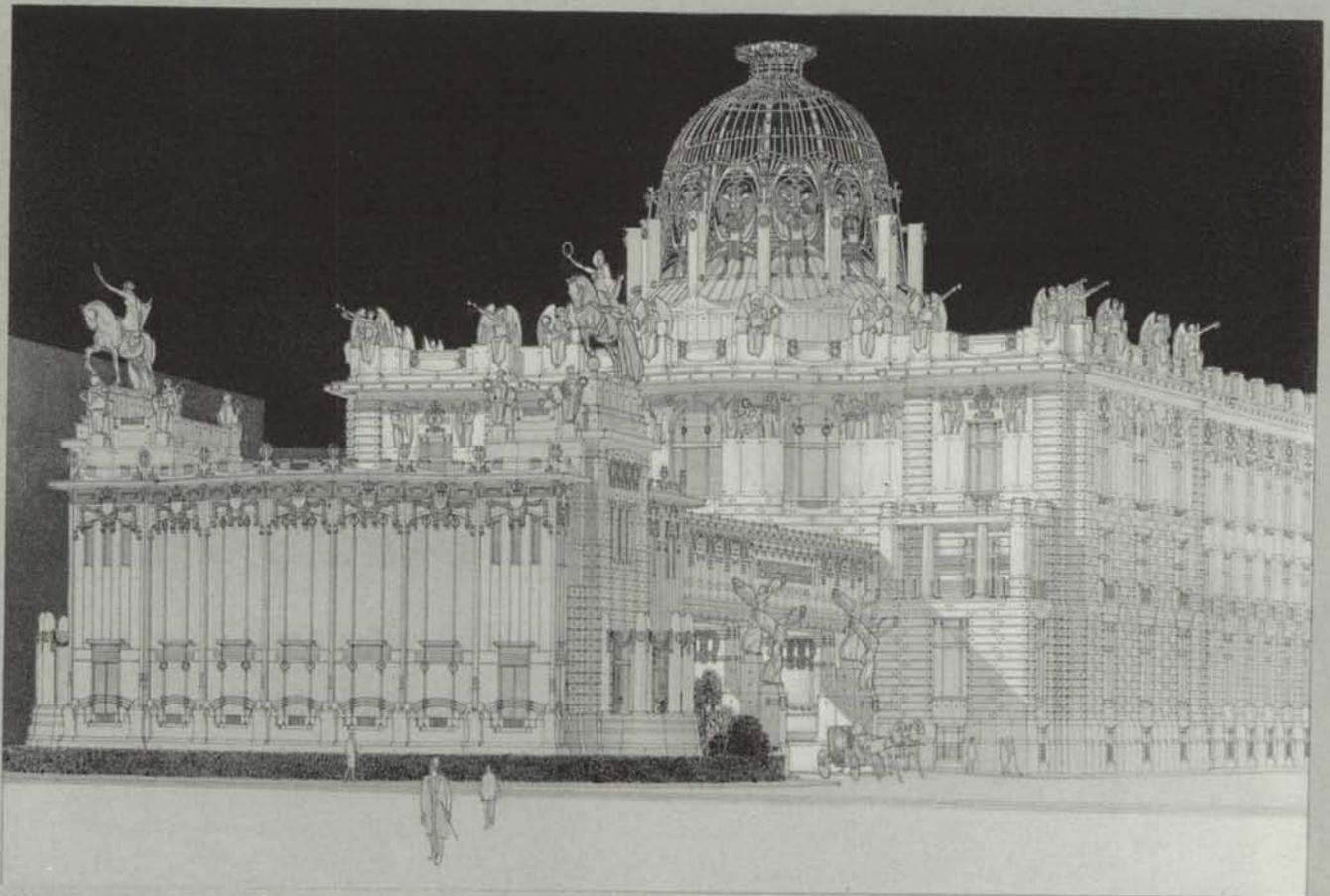
20. Graf (see note 4), 1: 341: “*Gewiß hat es jeder Österreicher und vor allem der Wiener stets peinlich empfunden, daß die irdischen Reste unserer Dynastie in so unwürdiger Weise beigesetzt sind. Ein mit Mauerfraß behafteter Keller, denn anders ist der Raum nicht zu nennen, dient gegenwärtig diesem Zwecke. Vor Jahren schon veranlaßte mich der Umstand, hohenorts mit einer diesbezüglichen Vorstellung heranzutreten. Anläßlich des Ablebens so vieler Mitglieder des Kaiserhauses und des Hinscheidens weiland Ihrer Majestät der Kaiserin und Königin glaubte ich die Frage neuerdings aufwerfen zu müssen und mit dem in beiliegender Studie veranschaulichten Neubau die Schaffung eines würdigen Denkmals zu vereinen.*”

21. Graf (see note 4), 1: 344: “*Es ist angenommen, daß an hohen Normaltagen und bei Trauerceremonien diese Lichter erstrahlen. Die Farbwirkung der Kirche wird bei den angenommenen Materialien, lichter Granit mit dunkler Bronze und teilweise vergoldeter Kupferabdeckung eine überaus würdige sein.*”

22. Graf (see note 4), 1: 346: “*Dasselbe ist als eine auf dem Sarkophage ruhende Portraitgestalt aufgefaßt, über welche ein Engel den Lorbeerkranz hält. Das Denkmal aus weißem Marmor wird sich mit der überreichen Lichtquelle des Raumes zu großer erhebender Wirkung verbinden. Die erwähnte Lichtquelle ist durch eine eigentümliche Fensterform zu einer Glorienschein, welcher auf das Denkmal herabsinkt, ausgebildet.*”

23. Graf (see note 4), 1: 346: “*Nachdem alle Trauergäste und Functionäre ihre Plätze eingenommen haben, fährt der Leichenconduct vor und zwar unterfährt der Leichenwagen ein 20 m langes und 4 m breites Velum, welches senkrecht auf das Hauptportal gegen den Platz zu auf Drahtseilen gespannt ist. Die Auf- und Abnahme des Velums wird 30 Minuten Zeit beanspruchen. Der in der Kirchenaxe ruhende Sarg ist dieser Art gegen atmosphärische Niederschläge geschützt. Von der hohen Geistlichkeit wird derselbe empfangen, und von den hiez zu bestimmten Organen gehoben und auf dem im Mittel der Kirche befindlichen Katafalk und Gruftabgang stehen und nimmt die Einsegnung vor. Nach der Einsegnung führt die hohe Geistlichkeit den Conduct über die Prachtterre in die Gruft. Während der ganzen Function ist keine Schwenkung oder Drehung der die Ceremonie durchführenden Personen nothwendig und allen Anwesenden bleiben alle Theile der Trauerfeierlichkeit völlig sichtbar.*”

24. Graf (see note 4), 1: 338–40. See also Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, inv. no. 96.004 1.
25. Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, inv. no. 119.248/2. See also Graf (see note 4), 1: ill. 510.
26. Elisabeth Springer, *Geschichte und Kulturleben der Wiener Ringstraße: Die Wiener Ringstraße – Bild einer Epoche* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1979), 2: 333–36.
27. Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen, Projecte und ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1897), 2: pl. 13. See also Humphrey (see note 4), 93.
28. Graf (see note 4), 1: 107: “*Es ist also hier mehr als je geboten, Nichts zu unternehmen, was einen der schönsten Plätze der Welt auch nur im Geringsten verunzieren könnte. Die Lösung kann nun mannigfacher Art sein und steht im innigen Zusammenhange mit den zu erwartenden Anordnungen von Seite des Allerhöchsten Hofes. Da aber einestheils der eventuelle Umbau der Hofstallungen, andernteils die eventuelle Vergrößerung und Verbindung der Museen durch einen Galeriebau für Cartons, Gobelins, Plastik, etc. in Frage kommt, so müsste die Tracenführung der Bahn eine solche sein, welche keine der künftigen Lösungen beeinflusst.*”
29. *Das Ehrenjahr Otto Wagners an der k.k. Akademie der bildenden Künste in Wien* (Vienna: Schönthal, 1912), ill. 44–47.
30. Graf (see note 4), 2: 787–93. See also Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, inv. no. 96.013/6.
31. Graf (see note 4), 1: 254. See also Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, inv. no. 96.013/4.
32. Graf (see note 4), 1: 108: “*Sie sind sozusagen die Brennpunkte der Kunst im Städtebau; daß das von ihnen ausgehende in jeder Beziehung erhebend ist, dann als zweifellos angenommen werden.*”
33. Graf (see note 4), 2: 488. See also Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, inv. no. 77.264.
34. “Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum, Engerer Wettbewerb, Vestibül und Stiegenhaus,” *Der Architekt* 8 (1902): ill. 65a.
35. Graf (see note 4), 2: 773.



1. Otto Wagner,  
Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien,  
"corrected" project, 1903.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

Peter Haiko

THE FRANZ JOSEF-STADTMUSEUM:  
THE ATTEMPT TO IMPLEMENT A THEORY  
OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE

“How surprised, for example, would the masters Michelangelo and Fischer von Erlach have been, had they been asked to build their creations in the Gothic style!”<sup>1</sup> That lapidary response was given by Otto Wagner in the first decade of this century; it was issued not only in reply to the Viennese art world but also to the political combatants, newspaper critics, and all others who felt called upon to venture a judgment on that ever-elusive question: in what style should we build the Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien (fig. 2)?

Planned for the Karlsplatz, the Historisches Museum was visually to enclose the so-called jewel of Baroque Vienna, the Karlskirche of Fischer von Erlach. It was therefore, as the competition program specified, to form a “harmonious grouping” with the church.<sup>2</sup> It is not surprising that this prominent site – in itself extremely controversial – acted as a catalyst to an already furious debate in Vienna between the “phalanx of tradition” and the exponents of modernity.

Wagner first presented a museum project to the public in 1900, the year the idea of building a Historisches Museum on the Karlsplatz was first raised (fig. 3). Naturally he participated in the first stage of the open competition of 1901 with a preliminary project (*Vorprojekt*), which received first prize. He submitted an essentially new scheme for the limited competition (*engerer Wettbewerb*) of 1902 (fig. 4). This second stage ended with *éclat*: officially, Wagner did not place among the top three winners, and as a result, the jury, which was sharply divided over his entry, wrote majority and minority opinions.

Over the course of the decade, up until 1912 in fact, Wagner continued

to prepare and refine two additional projects reflecting his latest ideas, each with several variants (figs. 5, 6). In 1910 he was even successful in erecting two bays of a full-scale model so as to test, as it were, the compatibility of his design with the Baroque Karlskirche (fig. 7). All of his efforts, however, were for naught, as Friedrich Schachner's design was ultimately selected (fig. 8).

The majority of Wagner's competitors in the project attempted to accommodate the Karlskirche by quoting individual Baroque forms. In taking this approach, they were completely committed to historicist principles. Wagner specifically opposed this architecture of accommodation. "It is appropriate here to underscore most emphatically that erecting a museum facade...in the style of the Karlskirche will necessarily lead to the most ridiculous consequences."<sup>3</sup> As Wagner saw it, "a truly artistic conception of the problem must define the height and silhouette of the building in such a way that they become an integral part of the whole, and a solution can only be attempted on the basis of these premises."<sup>4</sup> This meant that the new building should fit in with the macrostructure of the urban ensemble and not necessarily concern itself with the microstructure (fig. 9).

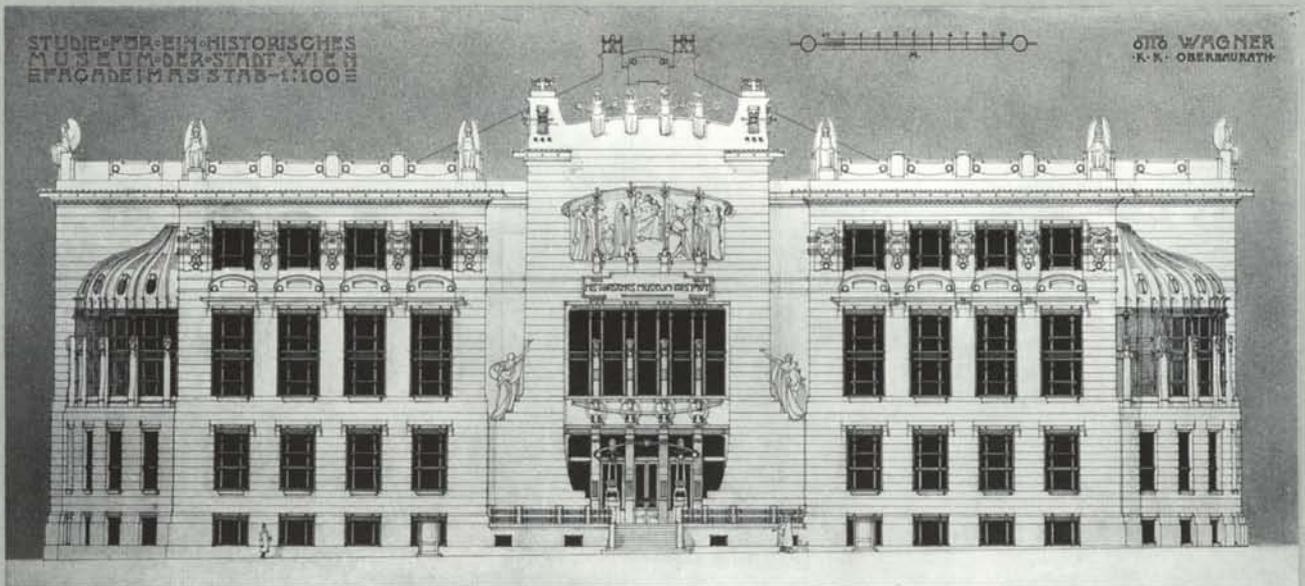
Wagner thereby adopted the basic conception of Fischer von Erlach, not in a literal manner but freely translated. He had argued as early as 1889 that modern architecture had to achieve a new independent style by "further development and transformation, along with the utilization of all motifs and materials."<sup>5</sup> It was essential for a new style, like every style before the advent of historicism, to represent its own time, for "artists [have always] sought to symbolize the expression of their contemporaries and their individual feelings in their works."<sup>6</sup>

In this city planning problem, however, Wagner was confronted with the artist against whom, perhaps along with Michelangelo, he had time and again striven to measure himself. Wagner may even unconsciously have viewed himself as the artistic reincarnation of Fischer von Erlach, since many of his contemporaries quite consciously celebrated this artist. Yet, unlike historicist practice, Wagner's emulation of the Baroque architect was not a self-denying communion with an idealized historical ego. It was instead a free-spirited search for an identification by way of artistically assimilating and also digesting the dominant (art/father) figure. The urban situation even appears to have taken on the role of a "setting" in his self-analysis. The direct confrontation with the past, cast in stone by the placement of



2. View over the Vienna River and Elisabethbrücke toward the Karlskirche.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

OPPOSED OR CONFRONTED?



3. Otto Wagner,  
study for the facade, Historisches Museum  
der Stadt Wien, agitation project, 1900.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.
4. Otto Wagner,  
main facade, Historisches Museum der Stadt  
Wien, limited competition project, 1902.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

THE FRANZ JOSEF-STADTMUSEUM





5. Otto Wagner,  
perspective view of main building with  
Court of Honor, Historisches Museum der  
Stadt Wien, "corrected" project, 1903.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



6. Otto Wagner,  
Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien,  
"corrected" project, second variation,  
without reception building, 1907.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



PAUL  
LEON  
KONSTANTIN  
MARENNE  
ESTIG  
TEN  
LEON  
LEON

THE SCHABEL  
KLAVERHALL

the museum, exposed everything that Wagner had repressed or denied since 1890. To allow himself further development in view of this past repression, refusal, and denial, he had to be able to live “freely” with history.

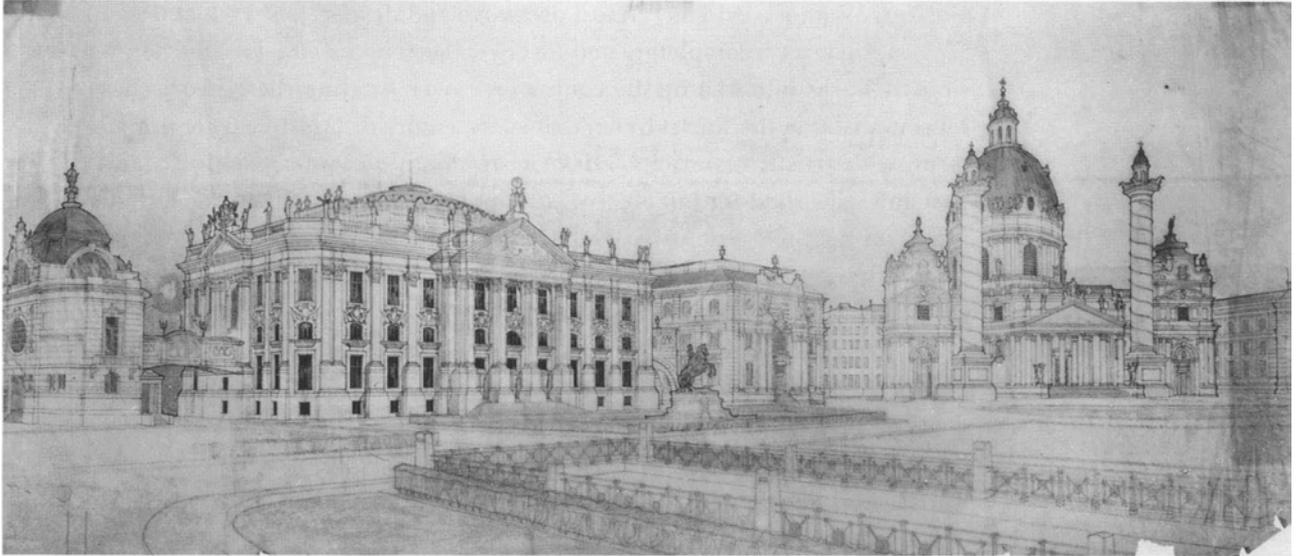
Thus Wagner’s evident, almost obsessive and desperate search between 1897 and 1900 for a completely new form – as seen in the efforts of the *Sezessionstil* – was followed by the controversy over locating the Historisches Museum next to the Karlskirche, that is, by a more or less casual coming to terms with artistic historicity. Historicism’s fictitious appropriation of the past and its wished-for but elusive attempt to gain an equal footing with it, as well as the no less delusive overcoming of the past by the *Jugendstil*, all stand opposed to Wagner’s momentous effort here to forge an identity by the positive assimilation of the past.

In the early stages of this self-analytical process, Wagner confronted the past anxiously; he placed a distance, as it were, between himself and Fischer von Erlach. Since this was not possible spatially, he had to do so visually (fig. 10). He argued that since we could only view the museum and the Karlskirche together from a distance, we merely needed to find a silhouette appropriate to the church, for “only with a correct line . . . will this most important showpiece, the Karlskirche, be shown to its full advantage.”<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to the historicizing, excessively stylized architecture of accommodation of many of his competitors, Wagner substituted a visual architectural harmony limited to the principal lines. Thus in the presentation drawings for the Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum (as the Historisches Museum was officially known), he attached great importance to the so-called “parallels.” Not surprisingly, he presented these in a way similar to a scissor’s cut. The details of the facade clearly and “naturally” faded against the dark background. In the “parallels” Wagner was able to show how modestly the museum related and subordinated itself to the Karlskirche by virtue of its height and articulation and, beyond that, how carefully he safeguarded the distance of respect – not only the spatial relationship but also the monumentalization – in terms of the church and the buildings flanking it.

Wagner, of course, justified this distancing functionally. Earlier, in his book *Moderne Architektur*, 1896, he developed the notion that the modern architect has to place great importance on the perspective effect and give proper emphasis to everything from one particular vantage point. He even brought history into play in a significant way. “Nearly all monuments show

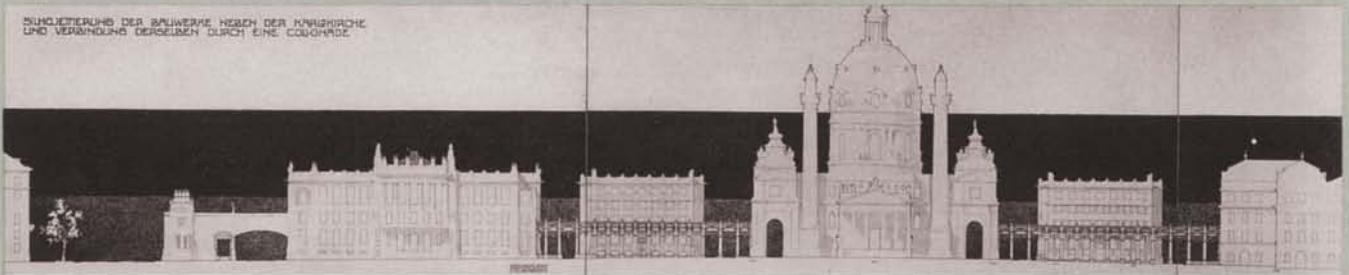
7. Otto Wagner,  
scale model of two bays of the Historisches  
Museum der Stadt Wien on Karlsplatz,  
January 1910.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



8. Friedrich Schachner,  
Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien,  
limited competition project, 1902.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



9. Otto Wagner,  
Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien,  
"corrected" project, 1903.  
From the memorandum "Der Karlsplatz und  
das Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum: Ein  
Beitrag zur Lösung dieser Fragen von Otto  
Wagner, Dezember 1903."  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



10. Otto Wagner,  
"parallel," Historisches Museum der Stadt  
Wien, preliminary competition project, 1902.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

what great value their designers placed on this condition. There are even examples in which the architect created limited viewing distances in order to force the viewer to consider the work in just such a way.”<sup>8</sup>

Yet the rejection of historicism and the realization of an architecture suited to its time also meant for Wagner an emphasis on construction and its – to some extent – excessive clarity, even if he could only give the appearance of such. It is fully understandable, then, that he wished to apply his modern way of building to the Historisches Museum, namely, by sheathing the masonry with panels of Laaser marble. Only in this way, he again explained, could he guarantee such necessary attributes as “permanence against the external influences, easy availability, the possibility of timely construction, and the lowest possible price.”<sup>9</sup> The modern way of building would allow the construction of the shell and the roofing to be completed within two years; since “the interior construction proceeds during the paneling of the facade . . . it is quite possible to complete the entire building within three and one-half years.”<sup>10</sup> Wagner strove for solutions that would “express the panel construction clearly in the facade.”<sup>11</sup> The metal bolts that appear on the face of the sheathing in later designs clearly reveal this intention and fully obey Wagner’s metaphoric functionalism (fig. 11).

By means of this aesthetic enhancement or idealization, Wagner attempted around 1900 to meet the demand he had put forth ten years earlier for a utility style (*Nutzstil*) as the future style. He defined this utility style – arising from the improvement and transformation of past artistic forms, the use of all motifs and materials, and the sensible resolution of all real or imagined needs of the time – primarily in terms of construction and purpose. “And if,” he said “we lend [to this utility style the] . . . search for inner truth as its ideal, it will not be lacking in aesthetic justification either.”<sup>12</sup>

In this way, the search for a new style transcended the immanent level of formal invention and became morally justified. Wagner’s striving for inner truth must, of necessity, lead to a new style. For the Historisches Museum and its adaptation to the Karlskirche, Wagner had “no doubt about which feeling was more correct,” that is, whether “to eliminate the iron girder from the construction process because the Baroque was unfamiliar with this material, or to use this material and replace the Baroque with another way of generating form.”<sup>13</sup> Style and construction must form a unity for Wagner; dressing new construction in an old stylistic garb – the lie –

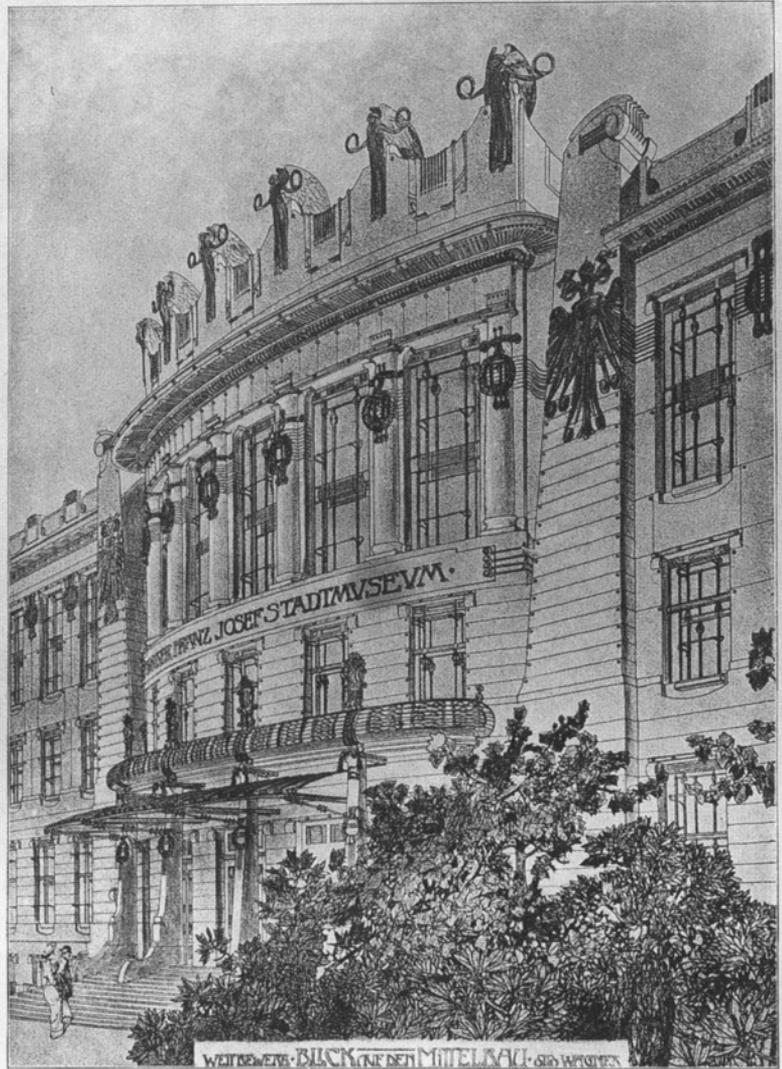
was indefensible and as reprehensible as a “Potemkin village,” an expression Wagner employed even before Adolf Loos.

Wagner’s conception of artistic inner truth implied a correspondence between construction and material. Since construction determines functional form and the art-form should be the product of the utility style, Wagner’s theoretical system simply meant that truth in architecture inevitably derived from the realistic utility style, while the dialectical inversion of this causal relationship was at the same time also true.

This striving for inner truth also pointed to a second essential basis of his architectural theory, namely, the artistic premise of “enhancing,” which is firmly rooted in tradition. Yet this ideal of the inner, that is, artistic truth now turned his architectural demand for realism back into a form of idealism. The irresolvable dialectic of idealism and realism set forth in his theory became the constituting factor in his conception of architecture. With his image of the architect as the personal and happy union of idealism and realism, he thus strove to raise this antagonism to the synthesis, mediating an “idealist” conception of architecture with a “realist” practice of it in the creation of a truly modern architecture.

Wagner founded his strict denial of historicism, so to speak, on “materialism.” In his view, “the selection of a historical style . . . influences the building’s structure and therefore its accommodation to purpose. To sacrifice structure for style is simply nonsense.”<sup>14</sup> Structure or construction now created the adequate style. In this way, Wagner’s theory anticipated the essential ideas of classical Modernism, although it placed the concepts in a very complex relationship. He still voiced the dichotomy of function and aesthetic, whereas later these would always be conceived as one, or at least not explicitly problemized. For Wagner – and this must be emphasized – the aesthetic experience was not, as it were, the automatic result of construction, for it was incumbent on the architect “to seek . . . the correct solution.”<sup>15</sup> With regard to the Stadtmuseum, the right solution meant “a good, main disposition of the floor plan,” likewise a “happy silhouetting of the building masses, . . . detailing understandable in itself,” and “logical construction and timely building execution.”<sup>16</sup>

Compared with the more materialistic conception of the art of architecture found in the preface to the first volume of *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Some sketches, projects, and executed buildings), 1889, the explanatory report issued with the first Stadtmuseum competi-



Wettbewerb für das Kaiser Franz Joseph-Stadtmuseum in Wien.  
Vom k. k. Oberbaurath und Professor Otto Wagner.

Verlag von Anton Schroll & Co., Wien.

11. Otto Wagner,  
view of central pavilion, Historisches  
Museum der Stadt Wien, preliminary com-  
petition project, 1901.  
From *Der Architect* 8 (1902), pl. 6.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.

tion project, formulated by Wagner more than ten years later, suggests a very different understanding of the interdependence of material demands and idealist (artistic) intentions. Notwithstanding his reiteration of the primacy of structure in the conception of the facade and of the desired renunciation of monumentality in a traditional sense, Wagner in 1901 made the unconditional artistic claim that “modern architecture” should emanate from accommodation to purpose. “Yet it would be wrong to believe that the proposed buildings cannot achieve the same high level as the Karlskirche itself. This is to be striven for and indeed it can and should be achieved by the architect.”<sup>17</sup> Thus Wagner’s understanding of functionality, purposiveness, and construction did not reject the artistic, aura-related enhancement of architecture. Quite the contrary, the satisfaction of this *necessitas* guaranteed it. The new aura defined itself “in an avant-garde way” by its apparent negation.

Yet to Wagner the constructional form was not identical with the artistic form; it only alleged to be. He did not define form as an unconditional result of purpose and construction, for the true architect “selects, specifies, perfects, or invents that method of construction that most naturally fits his image of what is to be created and best suits his nascent art-form.”<sup>18</sup>

Wagner expressed this postulate perhaps nowhere better than in the reception pavilion and the bridges that were to connect the individual buildings of the museum complex (fig. 12). The iron construction appears naked and unconcealed – but only seemingly; it stands out *de facto* by the high degree of aesthetic-artistic detailing, not by the necessity of the supposed formal invention. Yet it was just this glass-and-iron construction that became an architectural provocation to his contemporaries; in a way scarcely understandable today, it became the main point of attack for his critics. Even the supporters of his project felt compelled to admit that here Wagner may have “pressed his underlying stylistic conviction forward to its ultimate consequences” and that he may have achieved an architectural language with the glass-and-iron construction that “appears to be used with more consistency than artistic effect.”<sup>19</sup> Wagner’s critics derided it “as spoiled by the railwaylike dryness of its expression.”<sup>20</sup> To beat Wagner, as it were, with his own axiom of functionality, they criticized the lack of an inner rationale. Wagner, however, stated that he wanted to show by his glass-and-iron construction that this part of the complex (as opposed to the main building) did not sit on solid ground but on the vaults of the Vienna River



12. Otto Wagner,  
view from Canovagasse, Historisches  
Museum der Stadt Wien, preliminary com-  
petition project, 1901.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

and the Stadtbahn and therefore had to be as light and airy as possible.

In his own mind he employed iron in the project for the Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum so as “to enhance the building’s accommodation to its purpose,” for only by its use in the vestibule and stairwell could he limit “as little as possible the certainly desirable open view of the staircase and entrances to the exhibition rooms.” To overcome the public’s aversion to the use of iron he set for himself as a creative artist the task “of succeeding with time... in creating iron forms that appear monumental to the public.” Only the true architect, however, could produce the effect of “making what is unfamiliar in the use of such a material disappear.” Only the architect could do this, for “it has [always] been reserved for the artist to go beyond what is acceptable in this regard; all new forms had always and only been brought forth by artists.”<sup>21</sup>

Thus Wagner attempted to realize in his design for the Stadtmuseum the view expressed in *Moderne Architektur* that only the architect who upholds the unity of idealism and realism can achieve a modern architecture. He therefore described in greatest detail the necessity of using iron, but no less circumstantially how he wanted to enhance the artistic appearance of iron construction with the aid of ideals.

Almost symptomatically, one is tempted to say, Wagner started out by fabricating the iron structure in a way related more to the arts and crafts than to mass production, that is, with a “naturally very correctly executed work.” Then, he says, the iron structure

will be painted with several coats of paint and polished each time. The color will be white. After all the other construction workers have left the building, most of the surfaces thus prepared (the design of the structural forms has already been considered for the effect of small surfaces) will be decorated with aluminum and gilded bronze, bolted on as small pieces. Since these two materials are colorfast in a protected space, the iron construction will produce a lasting, rich, and sparkling impression. With the partially visible white base color and the other white decor of the room, it will certainly make a very elegant impression, such that, quite rightfully, an effect can result that has never before been achieved.<sup>22</sup>

Not coincidentally, Wagner ends his argument with a reference to the material’s almost housewifely middle-class (*hausfraulich-bürgerlich*) qual-

ity. “Such a decor will, I hope, make the iron respectable and in addition offer the certainly not to be underestimated advantage of easy cleaning.”<sup>23</sup> Here Wagner appeals to those virtues highly esteemed, even sensationalized, by Modernism around 1900, namely, cleanliness and hygiene. Moreover, the architect can also present his proposal as cost effective. Thus he “is able to announce that the cost of the iron construction, with all its effects,” will be small, “due to the elimination of a great part of the expensive stone construction.”<sup>24</sup>

To Wagner’s opponents, on the contrary, the staircase seemed “so ugly that even an ardent Secessionist would have to concede that such a staircase cannot be built in a palatial building.”<sup>25</sup> A museum as a palace stands opposed to the museum as a place of the everyday world (of commerce). In a significant way, one critic of Wagner’s iron structure felt himself reminded “of the fashion shops, great libraries, and department stores of Paris, such as *Au printemps*.” In the opinion of this critic, “it is even quite possible that precisely this last building had served him as a model.”<sup>26</sup>

With that, Wagner was also accused in one session of the city council of practicing a French architectural materialism. For the speaker, the entire Vienna Secession was “a French invention... a branch of the Naturalist school of nature and art,” ultimately, “nothing other than a branch of those ideas and thoughts introduced in France by Emile Zola and *en vogue* there since the 1880s.” During that decade, the city councillor continued, “the ideas for these types of buildings – these constructions of glass and iron – were in fashion, and the famous Hôtel [Castel] Béranger was built in Paris. Following this model, all others have been put up as poor imitations.”<sup>27</sup> Tradition and modernity in Viennese architecture were, for this speaker, the simple result of the travel agenda of the architect. “It cannot be a coincidence that in his whole life Wagner has never been to Rome, yet each year he travels to Paris to inspect Parisian buildings.”<sup>28</sup>

It was Wagner himself who in 1889 declared France to be a model for contemporary art. As he noted in the preface to the first volume of *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke*, the utility of style that he propagated showed that “the French, our teachers in the arts for the past two centuries, have once again pointed out the proper goals to us.” Specifically alluding to the Barbizon school and Impressionism, Wagner observed that “in the related art of painting, such Realism has already achieved a breakthrough,” and these “modern *plein air* genre pictures [seem] more [natural



13. Otto Wagner, view from the intermediate gallery into the vestibule and stairwell, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, limited competition project, 1902. From *Der Architekt* 8 (1902), pl. 65a. Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.

to us] than any historical paintings with their gigantic formats and their archaeological artistry.”<sup>29</sup>

In the same preface he rejected Viennese historicism and its primary orientation toward the Italian Renaissance (made manifest in the so-called Viennese style) and suggested a completely new geographical orientation for art. Modern urban centers should replace the centers of classical art. Wagner therefore programmatically condemned the traditional education of the architect. He regarded it as senseless for the student to make the obligatory tour of Italy “to record the usual, very wrongly selected architectural works,” thought of as a collection of architectural motifs “to be employed after one’s return on every occasion and *à tout prix*.” Such a tour, he concluded tersely, “can almost be considered a crime; certainly it is a mistake.” Rather, he recommended that a young artist, after a three-to-five month stay in Italy, should visit “the great cities and those places where modern luxury may be found...and there he might train himself completely by observing and perceiving the needs of modern man.”<sup>30</sup> The charge raised by the city councillor against Wagner’s travel habits therefore took aim at something larger than Wagner’s preference for specific cities. Rome or Paris – this became, so to speak, the crucial question. How do you square it with historicism?

The splendid staircase Wagner proposed for the Historisches Museum much more emphatically served the self-enhancement and self-affirmation of the bourgeois ego than historical examples – such as the monumental staircases of the Vienna Opera House or the Kunsthistorisches Museum – whose intended purpose was to “lift” the visitor from the trivial plane of reality (spoken of as street level) into the “high” sphere of art.

The spiritual awakening that occurred circa 1900 entailed the notion of a utopia where it was possible to permeate everyday life with art. It sought to deny uneasiness toward culture by essentially renouncing the work of culture. It follows from this that the contradiction between life and art in “modernity” becomes increasingly clear by virtue of the (total) design for life created by the artist. One imagines that everything can be raised to an aestheticized (everyday) culture and the reverse, that life itself can become a cultivated aesthetic. Accordingly, the museum should be a place where the (upper) middle class, relieved of the threatening possibility of the loss of self-presentation and self-representation, was once again elevated. Wagner artistically expressed this intention in his view from the intermediate gal-

lery into the vestibule and stairwell. The drawing (fig. 13) shows a woman of “better society” as she, forgetting the care of her child, becomes engrossed in the fascinating architectural production of Wagner’s staircase. Even the allegorical presentation affixed to the opposite wall (presumably an allegory of the arts), even the immense portrait of the emperor cannot diminish her fascination with the setting and the elegance of the staircase.

The artistic possibility of self-rapture and self-enjoyment, consciously conceded by Wagner to the (upper) middle-class social stratum, inevitably steered him in his staircase design to the comparable solutions of department stores. In the department store of 1900, shopping was supposed to become a “secret pleasure party” for the flaneur. Should not the consideration of works of art be as pleasurable as shopping? Or more importantly – in a significant reversal of accepted values – should not the museum now strive to offer the visitor qualities sensuously similar to department-store architecture?

Emile Zola’s description of a Paris department store could also apply to the central hall of Wagner’s museum. “To the right and left of the glassed-in gallery, other galleries, other halls glistened in the sun. . . . Immense metallic works rose up, ladders, bridges, which described an iron lacework in the air.”<sup>31</sup> Given the goals of art around 1900, including the notion of permeating life with its products, the real world of wares inevitably had to become one with the ideal world of art – naturally only as an intellectualized utopia. Only by viewing the conception in this light does it become clear why the criticism of Wagner’s proposal voiced during the city council session spoke of distinct borrowings from the architecture of the French department store, even if unconsciously they were also the essential intentions of modern architecture in a Wagnerian sense.

The stairwell occupying the central space in the limited competition project is just the beginning of Wagner’s reflections on how the architecture of the museum should take contemporary demands into account. Near the end of the intended reconciliation of life and art, in 1912, he designed the vestibule for the so-called Opus IV project, in which the staircase to art was flanked not by the traditional enhanced signs of grandeur, such as allegories of the arts, but by telephone booths (fig. 14).

Otto Wagner, notwithstanding all his modernity, was an artist anchored in the nineteenth century. He always tried in his “modern way of building” to preserve for the twentieth century that traditional quality highly valued

14. Otto Wagner, vestibule. Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien. “Opus IV.” 1912. Vienna. Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

THE FRANZ JOSEF-STADTMUSEUM



WETTBEWERBS-ENTWURF FÜR DAS KAISER-FRANZ-JOSEF-STADTMUSEUM · VESTIBÜL

by historicism, namely, monumentality — and with it the task of the monumental building. Not coincidentally, he was firmly convinced that sheathing a building with panels “enhanced” the monumental effect. No less surprising were his views concerning the exterior of the Historisches Museum, published in his “agitation project” (*Agitationsprojekt*). “Such a building, and we must expressly emphasize it here, must above all avoid the appearance of competing with the art museums, and this should be the special characteristic of this building. This conception therefore cannot justify a more elaborate development of the facade.”<sup>32</sup> In effect, the exterior of the museum should correspond to the documentary value of the objects displayed in it and to their secondary artistic value. In a time when late historicism was totally undermining the expressive possibility of the facade by its hypertrophy of ennobling elements and ornaments, Wagner was returning to an *architecture parlante*, to a speaking architecture capable of articulating its function, construction, and conception.

The highest goal for him — even if only in appearance — was the display of honesty; his functionalism can only be interpreted in this way. Instead of presenting a beautiful appearance, the Historisches Museum should appear in its everyday reality. Architecture’s artistic, aura-related enhancement of the facade had to be reserved for “high” art, the only realm where this aura can be historically justified.

But given this, the monumental building type, so significantly and ultimately fundamental for historicism, had to be functionally redefined by Wagner. No longer should the architectural transposition of the intended level of aspiration determine the monumental character of a building but rather the real value, so to speak, the value that society truly attaches to the content or the respective function of the building. As Wagner noted in *Moderne Architektur*: “As always...the striving toward truth must be the guiding star of the architect. Then the character and symbolism of the work will emerge virtually of their own accord: sanctity will be observed in the church, gravity and dignity in the governmental building, gaiety in the amusement park, and so on!”<sup>33</sup>

Two years after Wagner, Loos would formulate the same conviction. “Yet the artist, the *architect*, first senses the effect he intends to evoke and envisions the space he wishes to create. The effect he wishes to bring to bear on the spectator — be it fear or horror in a prison, reverence in a church, respect for the power of the state in a governmental palace, piety in a tomb, a sense

of homeyness in a dwelling, gaiety in a tavern” (Loos’s emphasis). The artist evokes this effect through the material and the form.<sup>34</sup>

Wagner and Loos were both fighting against the demise of representational architecture. Both wanted to restore to architecture the real social value due it. Architecture should – and this remains a much-discussed problem even in today’s postmodern era – mirror reality, but what is more, it should, as a realizable utopia, make visible not only the intentions but also the *necessitas*, the fulfillment of the necessities demanded by reality and accepted by the ethic of architecture.

Many of Wagner’s critics saw the museum’s dignified purpose threatened by modernity. “It does not look like a museum, certainly not a Vienna city-museum. No trace of gravity and dignity. In this work everything is bright and cheerful, gay and high spirited” (fig. 1).<sup>35</sup> Gold, in itself a materialization of costliness, had had its ennobling function suddenly denied in a pauper’s ostentation. “Golden balustrades, golden balconies, golden windows, everywhere an oriental excess of an otherwise valued metal. It blazes, it glimmers, it brags, as if Vienna had become a city of billionaires overnight.... There a life-size golden angel crouches, flaunting its great golden wings.”<sup>36</sup>

Gold, used by Gustav Klimt during the same period as an ornamental mask or cover for the body in his wife’s portrait, is derided in this criticism for its “veiling” function. Responding to the possible defense that “if too much gold is used on the building, all or part of it can be taken away,” the newspaper article went on to say that “by no means can such be attempted, for that would leave only a rather plain building skeleton without any monumental features, the all-too-well-known naked wall with window cavities, the enemy of the whole world.”<sup>37</sup>

Wagner introduced gold as the precious substance par excellence for creating a quasi-material refinement; it substituted for ornament while always remaining a metaphor. Wagner did not treat it as a purposeless addition to purposeful architecture in order to establish it as an art-form. His architectural art-form arose through the aestheticization of construction. Gold thus took on a very specific task: It elevated construction by means of an aura. Because of its magical, archaic quality, gold lifted constructional form above the level of engineering into the sphere of architecture. Construction thus became truly a (gold) treasure, immeasurably increasing the wealth of architecture.

Gold covered the construction, but it did not conceal it like “common,” traditional ornament. The modern ennoblement applied by Wagner did not transfigure the functional form but elevated it in a specifically material sense. Gold became the second skin. Only because of this could it be argued that by removing the gold, one would be left with only a naked building with many window cavities, something as unattractive as a “plain building skeleton.” The building without conventional decoration at this time was viewed as a body without clothing, as nakedness itself.

Just as clothing can define sociocultural position, so ornament, in a certain sociocultural ambience, “individualizes” architecture. Thus the house dressed only in gold and renouncing customary decoration is – so the critic says – “without a face,” yet also “without a spirit.” It is reduced to a naked corporeality that really ought to be concealed.

For late historicism, it was not the composition, and certainly not the construction, that invested a building with unmistakable individuality but rather the decoration covering it. What was concealing thus constituted the concealed. It was just the opposite with Wagner, in that the concealed was now naked or exposed, and the second skin, understood in a metaphorical sense, was identical with the first.

The “indecenty” of such an architectural conception is clearly reflected in the comparisons chosen by the critics of Wagner’s museum design. “It would be better suited to any other purpose; it would be best suited to a large amusement hall, in which gaiety could come and go, the violins could buzz incessantly, the flutes could tempt one to dance, and the angels could blow their trumpets from the rooftops... a dance floor next to the church, the hoppers as a counterpoint to the hallelujah.”<sup>38</sup> As the imagination of critics thus grew, it became unmistakably clear to everyone with what Wagner’s museum project could truly be compared. “Houses of worship have often been found in much worse neighborhoods, but merry people must simply be silent as soon as the beautiful bells of the Karlskirche ring out.”<sup>39</sup>

All told, the discussion of Wagner’s first designs for the Historisches Museum was essentially the same as that which would surround Loos’s building on the Michaelerplatz a few years later. The only difference being that in the case of Loos the affront to the dominant architectural morality would be seen and rejected in more decisive terms. With Wagner one could only voice the vague charge of nakedness, and the comparison of his architecture with the human body was limited to the face. The Looshaus, on the

contrary, was compared to the naked body of a woman and described as “indecent,” “provocative,” and “disgusting.” It also elicited comparison with the human face: the naked, smooth, unornamented facade became a “house without eyebrows.”<sup>40</sup>

The dispute surrounding Wagner’s design and how it anticipated the embittered criticism of the building on the Michaelerplatz certainly makes clear how strongly Wagner’s creative principles ran counter to the prevailing taste in art, how strongly his contemporaries felt threatened by his architecture, and how they strove to repulse this threat. Very different was their reaction to the historicist competition designs of Friedrich Schachner. Here no one’s visual expectation or taste was offended. Here everyone felt “on firm ground,” for “the work in its artistic spirit has been seriously considered for our city; it is a museum.”<sup>41</sup>

## NOTES

1. Otto Wagner, “Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum: Erläuterungsbericht zum Wettbewerbe,” competition report (Vienna, 1901), 12: “*Was würden beispielsweise die Meister Michelangelo und Fischer von Erlach für Augen gemacht haben, wäre ihnen zugemutet worden, die von ihnen zu schaffenden Werke gotisch zu bauen!*”

2. *Amtsblatt der k. k. Reichshaupt- und Residenzstadt Wien* (1901): 888.

3. Otto Wagner, “Zum Projecte für das Historische Museum der Stadt Wien,” competition proposal (Vienna, 1900), 7: “*Es ist hier am Platze, ganz besonders darauf aufmerksam zu machen, daß eine Durchführung der Fassade des Museums... im Stil der Karlskirche zu den albernsten Konsequenzen führen muß.*”

4. *Ibid.*: “*Eine wahre künstlerische Auffassung der Frage kann nur darin bestehen, die Höhe und Silhouette des Bauwerkes als integrierenden Bestandteil des Ganzen zu bezeichnen und ihre Lösung auf Basis dieser Prämissen zu erstreben.*”

5. E. V. Humphrey, trans., *Sketches, Projects and Executed Buildings by Otto Wagner* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 17–19. Otto Wagner, *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Author, 1889), unpaginated: “*Durch Fort- und Umbilden, sowie das Benützen aller Motive und Materialien.*”

6. Wagner (see note 1), 12: “*...[immer] haben die Künstler die Ausdrucksweise ihrer Zeitgenossen und ihr individuelles Empfinden in den von ihnen hergestellten Werken versinnbildlicht.*”

7. Wagner (see note 1), 12: “*Gerade bei richtiger Linienführung... wird das hauptsächlichste Schaustück, die St. Karlskirche, voll zur Geltung kommen.*”

8. Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1988), 86–87. Idem, *Moderne Architektur* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1896), 48: “Fast jedes Kunstdenkmal zeigt, welch’ grossen Werth ihre Schöpfer auf diesen Umstand legten, ja es gibt Beispiele, daß Baukünstler abgegrenzte Sehdistanzen schufen, um den Beschauer zu zwingen, so und nicht anders ihr Werk betrachten zu müssen.”

9. Wagner (see note 3), 8: “...[wie] Unveränderlichkeit gegen äußere Einflüsse, leichte Erhältlichkeit, die Ermöglichung rascher Baudurchführung und einen möglichst billigen Preis.”

10. Wagner (see note 3), 8: “...[da] der innere Ausbau mit der Plattenverkleidung der Fassade gleichen Schritt geht... ist die Fertigstellung des Baues innerhalb 3½ Jahren leicht möglich.”

11. Wagner (see note 3), 8.

12. Humphrey (see note 5), 18. Wagner (see note 5): “Legt man nun... diesem Nutzstil noch das Streben nach innerer Wahrheit als Ideal in den Schoß, so wird er auch in ästhetischer Beziehung seine Berechtigung haben.”

13. Wagner (see note 1), 13: “...[kann] kein Zweifel obwalten, welche Empfindung die richtigere ist... die Traversen aus der Bauherstellung zu eliminieren, weil die Barocke dieses Konstruktionsmaterial nicht kannte, oder dieses Baumaterial zu verwenden, und statt der Barocke eine andere Formgebung zu erfinden.”

14. Wagner (see note 1), 13–14: “...[würde] die Wahl eines historischen Stiles... die Structur des Baues, also seine Zweckmäßigkeit beeinflussen. Zu Gunsten eines Stiles aber Structives zum Opfer bringen, ist einfach ein Unding.”

15. Wagner (see note 1), 14.

16. Wagner (see note 1), 14: “...eine gute Hauptdisposition des Grundrisses... glückliche Silhouettierung der Baumassen... naturgemässe verständliche Details... constructiv richtige und rasche Baudurchführung.”

17. Wagner (see note 1), 14: “Es wäre aber ein großes Unrecht, zu behaupten, daß die zu errichtende Baugruppe als Kunstwerk nicht zum Mindesten auf gleicher Höhe stehen kann wie die Karlskirche selbst. Dies ist eben anzustreben, und dieses kann und soll vom Baukünstler erreicht werden.”

18. Wagner, 1988 (see note 8), 93. Idem, 1896 (see note 8), 59: “[Der wahre Baukünstler] wird jene Konstruktion wählen, bestimmen, vervollkommen oder erfinden, welche sich am natürlichsten in das von ihm zu schaffende Bild einzufügen im Stande ist und sich am besten zur werdenden Kunstform eignet.”

19. *Amtsblatt der k. k. Reichshaupt- und Residenzstadt Wien* (1902): 1116: “...bis zu den letzten Folgerungen seiner stilistischen Grundüberzeugung vorgedrungen... mit mehr Konsequenz als künstlerischer Wirkung gebraucht erscheint.”

20. *Ibid.*, 1114: “...als in ihrer eisenbahnstilmäßigen Nüchternheit den Eindruck verderbend.”

21. Otto Wagner, “Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum: Erläuterungsbericht zum Engeren

Wettbewerbe" (Vienna, 1902), 23: "Zweckmäßigkeit des Bauwerkes zu erhöhen... daß der gewiß erwünschte freie Blick auf die Stiegenentwicklung und auf die Zugänge der Säle tunlichst wenig [beschränkt werde]... mit der Zeit gelingen... Eisenformen zu bilden, welche der Allgemeinheit monumental erscheinen... das Ungewohnte solcher Materialverwendung schwinde... Immer... ist es dem Künstler vorbehalten, diesbezüglich führend voran zu schreiten; wurden ja doch alle Formen stets nur von Künstlern geboren."

22. Ibid., 24: "...wiederholt mit Farbe gestrichen und die Farbe selbst wieder geschliffen. Als Farbe wird weiß bestimmt. Der größte Teil der so präparierten Eisenflächen (die Komposition der Konstruktionsformen ist schon auf die Wirkung kleiner Flächen berechnet) wird, wenn alle anderen Bauarbeiter den Bau verlassen haben, mit einem Dekor von Aluminium und vergoldeter Bronze durch Anschrauben diverser kleiner Teile verziert. Da nun diese beiden Materialien in gedecktem Raum nicht farbverändernd sind, werden die Eisenkonstruktionen einen dauernden, reichen, blitzenden Eindruck hervorbringen, und mit der teilweise sichtbaren weißen Grundfarbe und dem übrigen auf weiß gestimmten Dekor des Raumes einen gewiß sehr vornehmen Eindruck machen, so daß mit Recht eine bisher nicht erreichte Wirkung gefolgert werden kann."

23. Wagner (see note 21), 24–25: "Ein solcher Dekor wird, ich hoffe es, das Eisen salonfähig machen und überdies den gewiß nicht zu unterschätzenden Vorteil der leichten Reinigung bieten."

24. Wagner (see note 21), 14–25: "...mitteilen zu können, daß ein solcher Dekor der gesamten Eisenkonstruktionen auf eine Summe zu stehen kommt, welche bei allem Effekte, durch den Wegfall eines großen Teiles der teuren Steinkonstruktion behoben erscheint."

25. *Amtsblatt* (see note 19), 2195: "...als eine so häßliche, daß jeder noch so begeisterte Sezessionist zugeben muß, daß für einen Palastbau keine derartige Treppe gebaut werden kann."

26. *Amtsblatt* (see note 19), 2195: "...[erinnert] an Modemagazine oder große Bibliotheken oder an Magazine wie 'Au printemps' in Paris... Es ist sehr leicht möglich, daß gerade diese Bauten als Vorbild gedient haben."

27. *Amstblatt* (see note 19), 2250: "...eine französische Erfindung... ein Zweig der naturalistischen Natur- und Kunstauffassung... nichts anderes, als ein Zweig jener Ideen und Gedanken, die Emile Zola in Frankreich aufgebracht hat, die schon in den Achtzigerjahren in Frankreich en vogue waren... [schon sind] die Ideen dieser modernen Bauwerke, dieser Ausführungen in Glas und Eisen, aufgekommen, und ist das berühmte Hotel Béranger in Paris gebaut worden, nach dessen Muster alle übrigen als Abklatschbauten gemacht worden sind."

28. *Amstblatt* (see note 19), 2250: "Es ist kein Zufall, daß Wagner in seinem ganzen Leben noch nie in Rom war, jedoch jedes Jahr nach Paris reist, um die pariser Bauten zu besichtigen."

29. Humphrey (see note 5), 18. Wagner (see note 5): "Die Franzosen, welche in den letzten zwei Jahrhunderten unsere Meister in der Kunst waren... [weisen] uns auch jetzt wieder die richtigen Ziele... In der Schwesterkunst Malerei... [ist] dieser Realismus bereits zum Durchbruche gelangt... [daß] diese modernen 'plein air' Genrebilder mehr... als alle historischen Gemälde mit

ihren ungeheuerlichen Formaten und ihren archäologischen Kunststücken [den modernen Zeitgenossen anheimeln].“

30. Wagner, 1988 (see note 8), 69. Idem. 1896 (see note 8), 23–24: “Um dort Aufnahmen gewöhnlich ganz unrichtig gewählter Bauwerke anzufertigen... deren Inhalt nach der Rückkehr bei jeder Gelegenheit und à tout prix verwendet werden soll... ist fast als Verbrechen, sicher als Fehler zu bezeichnen... die Großstädte und jene Orte, wo moderner Luxus zu Hause ist... und dort möge er sich im Schauen und Wahrnehmen der Bedürfnisse der modernen Menschheit gründlich einüben.”

31. Emile Zola, *Au bonheur des dames* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1883), 417: “A droite et à gauche de la galerie vitrée, d'autres galeries, d'autres halls luisaient au soleil... Des charpentes métalliques se dressaient, des échelles, des ponts, qui découpaient leur dentelle dans le bleu de l'air.”

32. Wagner (see note 3), 6–7: “Ein solches Bauwerk, und dies muß hier ausdrücklich betont werden, hat vor allem jede Konkurrenz mit Kunstmuseen streng zu vermeiden und soll das Spezielle dieses Bauwerkes besonders hervorgehoben werden. Diese Auffassung läßt daher eine reichere Durchbildung der Fassade nicht berechtigt erscheinen.”

33. Wagner, 1988 (see note 8), 83. Idem, 1896 (see note 8), 43: “Wie immer... muß das Streben nach Wahrheit der Leistungen des Baukünstlers sein; dann werden Charakteristik und Symbolik des Werkes wie von selbst entstehen: der Kirche die Heiligkeit, dem Gebäude der Staatsgewalt Ernst und Würde, dem Vergnügungsetablisement die Heiterheit u.s.f. gewahrt bleiben.”

34. Adolf Loos, “Das Prinzip der Bekleidung,” in *Ins Leere gesprochen* (1921; reprint, Vienna: Prachner, 1981), 140: “Der künstler aber, der architekt, fühlt zuerst die wirkung, die er hervorzubringen gedenkt, und sieht dann mit seinem geistigen auge die räume, die er schaffen will. Die wirkung, die er auf den beschauer ausüben will, sei es nun angst oder schrecken wie beim kerker; gottesfurcht wie bei der kirche; ehrfurcht vor der staatsgewalt wie beim regierungspalast; pietät wie beim grabmal; heimgefühl wie beim wohnhause; fröhlichkeit wie in der trinkstube.”

35. “Der Museumskrieg,” *Neue Freie Presse*, 17 May 1903, 2: “So sieht ein Museum nicht aus, ein Wiener Stadtmuseum ganz gewiß nicht. Keine Spur von Ernst und Würde. An dieser Arbeit ist alles hell und heiter, lustig und übermütig aufschreiend.”

36. Ibid.: “Goldene Brüstungen, goldene Balcone, goldene Fenster, ein geradezu orientalisches Übermaß des sonst so schätzbaren Metalls. Das flammt und flimmert und flunkert, als ob Wien über Nacht die Stadt der Milliardäre geworden wäre... Da kauern goldene Engel in Lebensgröße und prunken mit ihren großen goldenen Flügeln.”

37. “Der Museumskrieg” (see note 35), 2: “Wenn zu viel Gold an dem Gebäude klebt, so kann man ja einen Teil davon, das Ganze wegnehmen... Das versuche man beileibe nicht, weil dann ein ziemlich dürftiges Baugerippe übrigbliebe ohne jeden monumentalen Zug, die allzu bekannte nackte Mauer mit den vielen Fensterhöhlen, aller Welt Feind.”

38. “Der Museumskrieg” (see note 35), 2: “Für jeden anderen Zweck taugte es besser, am

*besten für ein großes Gesellschaftshaus, wo der Frohsinn aus- und einginge, die Geigen rastlos schwirrten, die Flöten zum Tanze lockten und die Engel vom Dach herunter Trompete blasen könnten... Ein Tanzboden neben der Kirche, Hoppsassa als Kontrapunkt zu Hallelujah."*

39. "Der Museumskrieg" (see note 35), 2: "*Gotteshäuser haben oft viel schlimmere Nachbarschaft gefunden, und das lustige Volk müßte eben verstummen, so bald das schöne Geläute der Karlskirche ertönte.*"

40. See Peter Haiko and Mara Reissberger, "Ornamentlosigkeit als neuer Zwang," in *Ornament und Askese im Zeitgeist des Wien der Jahrhundertwende* (Vienna: Brandstätter, 1985), 110–19.

41. "Der Museumskrieg" (see note 35), 2: "*...auf sicherem Boden... das Werk ist im künstlerischen Geiste unserer Stadt ernst gedacht, es ist ein Museum.*"



1. Otto Wagner,  
perspective of the Ringstraße, Stubenring.  
Originally published in the "General-  
Regulierungs-Plan," 1892-1893.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen,  
Projecte und ausgeführte Bauwerke*  
(Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1897), 2: pl. 9.  
Vienna, Akademie der bildenden  
Künste Wien.

August Sarnitz

REALISM VERSUS *VERNIEDLICHUNG*:  
THE DESIGN OF THE  
GREAT CITY

*The realism of our time must pervade the developing work of art. It will not harm it, nor will any decline of art ensue as a consequence of it; rather it will breathe a new and pulsating life into forms, and in time conquer new fields that today are still devoid of art.*

— Otto Wagner, “Antrittsrede,” 1894<sup>1</sup>

The premise of this investigation is that Otto Wagner (fig. 2) was a pioneer of modern architecture because he accepted, used, and specifically emphasized the notion of *reality* (*Realität*) in his architectural and urban program while rejecting any form of historicism, eclecticism, or cuteness (*Verniedlichung*).<sup>2</sup> The acceptance of *reality* (*Wirklichkeit*) in architecture, that is to say, the socioeconomic and technological forces that decisively influence the architectural work at the time of its creation (in contrast to an architectural approach that denies present conditions and takes its models from the past or from the interpretation of specific stylistic epochs), was fundamental to Wagner’s thinking. His acceptance of reality in 1894 included coming to terms with all new technologies and socioeconomic relations, among them the automobile, telephone, pneumatic post, vacuum cleaner, electricity, big-city traffic, and the municipal rail system, as well as a host of new products and materials, for example, aluminum. Such a view culminated in his essay of 1911 on the great city (*Großstadt*), his concept of which included the notion of “social anonymity.”

My investigation begins with a pair of concepts — reality and *Verniedlichung* — that appear suited to describe the fundamental characteristics of

modern architecture in general and of Wagner's notion of it in particular. In the German language "reality" (*Wirklichkeit*) derives its meaning from the notion of work (*Wirken*), that is, the activity that lets something become a reality. But how does something become real through work? Surely not because a concept, an attitude, or an object is simply imitated or repeated, therefore substantiating its origin in the repetition. Work in the conventional sense implies a newly established reality consisting of an innovation on the one hand and a factual transformation on the other hand. Conceptual innovation and factual transformation in architectural activity substantiate this definition by materially transposing the *agens architecturae* from the condition of manifold possibilities into the physical existence of a building.<sup>3</sup>

There are at least two criteria for any transformation: intention and selection. Both suggest, in addition, that architecture in its authentic sense interprets the reality of the present time.

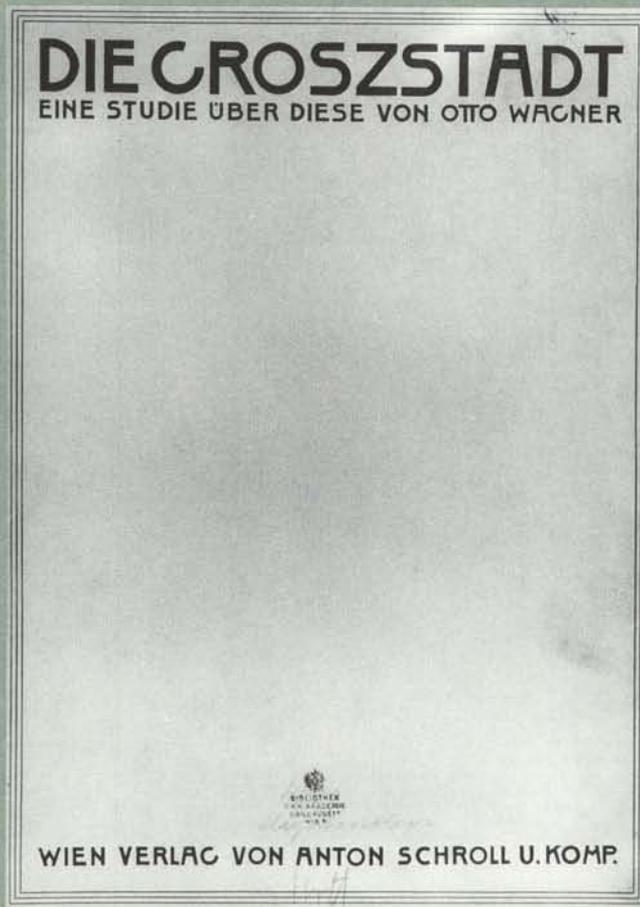
If *reality* suggests true work, then its conceptual antithesis – *Verniedlichung* – denies this true work by becoming an inductive reduction.<sup>4</sup> *Verniedlichung* implies reduction in that it changes the form of the true standard, that is to say, it is a distortion or a de-realization (*Ent-realisierung*) of a real object or an attitude toward life itself. Consequently, *Ver-niedlichung* is a form of limitation (*Be-schränkung*); limits block the way and the connection to true work. *Ver-niedlichung*, as a form of limitation, thus recalls the classical notion of the "idyll" (Greek *eidyllion*, "small image"), since a small likeness vicariously tries to replace a complex reality.

The idyll formed an important aspect of Jean Paul's stylistic investigation in his *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (Introduction to aesthetics), 1804. In connection with the epic, he wrote:

We have at least one small epic genre, namely, the idyll. This is, to wit, an epic presentation of pure happiness in its limitation. Higher rapture belongs to the lyric and to the romance, for otherwise Dante's heaven and Klopstock's occasional heaven could also be considered idylls. The limitation in the idyll can sometimes refer to the good, sometimes to insights, sometimes to social standing, and sometimes to all these things at the same time. Since one mistakenly relates it more to pastoral life, one also mistakenly places it in the Golden Age of mankind, as if this age could only move in a never-rocking cradle and not just as well in a flying chariot of Phaëthon. . . . At its best, one can understand that the idyll, as a pure happiness of limitation, restricts the



2. Photograph of Otto Wagner, ca. 1911.  
(Wagner sent this photograph to A. D. F. Hamlin in New York with the inscription "To Herr Professor A. D. F. Hamlin with fond memories. Otto Wagner.")  
New York, Division of Drawings and Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in the City of New York.



3. Otto Wagner, book cover.  
From Otto Wagner, *Die Großstadt*  
(Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1911).  
Vienna, Akademie der bildenden  
Künste Wien.

number of actors and the power of the great state machinery, that it suits a beautified, fenced-in, bucolic life that has torn a page from the book of bliss, and that it is also suited to the happy Lilliputians, for whom a flower bed is a forest and who need a ladder to harvest a dwarf tree.<sup>5</sup>

As remote at first glance as the connection may appear between Wagner's affirmative concept of reality in architecture and Jean Paul's rejection of the literary idyll as a too starry-eyed stylistic device, the comparison of these two notions is instructive when related to Wagner's ideas of urban planning and to those of his opponents and contemporaries. In essence, the debate places Wagner and Albert E. Brinckmann against the forces of Camillo Sitte, Karl Henrici, and Joseph Stübben.

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The primary focus of this study is the twenty-three page pamphlet entitled *Die Großstadt* (The great city), published by Wagner in 1911, shortly before his seventieth birthday (fig. 3). This was his principal text dealing with the theme of city planning, and together with its illustrations it provides a compendium of his thinking in this field. It was occasioned, as Wagner related in his preface, by "a flattering invitation that the author received on 18 March 1910 from Professor A. D. [F.] Hamlin of Columbia University requesting a paper for an international congress on urban art to be held in New York and to be sponsored by the city and the state."<sup>6</sup> Historically this period was rife with exhibitions and discussions on urban development, beginning with the debate surrounding the expansion of Stuttgart (1903), the plan for Greater Berlin (1907), Daniel Burnham's urban proposals for Chicago (1908), the general exhibition in Berlin (1910), and the expansion plan for Amsterdam (1917).<sup>7</sup> In his lecture on "urban art" Wagner made one significant restriction: he would concern himself exclusively with the notion of the *Großstadt*, or the major urban center in general, and would not dwell on any specific city. He would therefore ignore all questions dealing with the establishment of a new city (e.g., Tony Garnier's *Cité industrielle*, 1899–1901, 1904) or the Garden City Movement (e.g., Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin's Letchworth, 1903).

Wagner organized his study into three chapters: (1) "Das Stadtbild" (The cityscape); (2) "Die Regulierung" (The regulation, or the planning, of the city), with a site plan and perspective; (3) "Ökonomischer Teil" (Economic

section), which examined building square footage, costs, and possible economic returns.<sup>8</sup> Beyond this tripartite division of theoretical reflections, practical examples, and pragmatic analysis, he underscored the most important concepts typographically.<sup>9</sup>

*Die Großstadt* is quite specific in the particulars of its architectural proposals. The basic assumptions are that the most important factor in any urban solution is the scrupulous fulfillment of purpose and that art, in implementing this task, must sanction everything created. Since life-styles have changed and technical and scientific accomplishments are very different from what they were a thousand years ago, or even a short time ago, art must take into account these changes and adapt the cityscape to contemporary life. Wagner therefore rejected the nostalgia of such popular catchphrases as “regional style” (*Heimatstil*), “harmonizing with the cityscape” (*Einfügen in das Stadtbild*), and “heart in the cityscape” (*Gemüt im Stadtbild*). Also unjustified and artistically objectionable were *intentionally* irregular solutions for the layout of streets and squares in the effort to create a picturesque or pictorial effect, likewise any urban conditions arising by chance. Wagner concluded the first chapter by noting: “The majority of people undoubtedly prefer living in a large city to living in a small town or in the country. The majority of urban inhabitants are forced by their occupations to live in large cities. Reasons for moving to urban areas are livelihood, social position, comfort, luxury, a low mortality rate, the presence of every intellectual and physical amenity, diversions in both a good and a bad sense, and finally art.”<sup>10</sup>

After these basic observations, Wagner presented his urban conception, distinguishing between the regulation of existing parts of the city and planning for future expansion.<sup>11</sup> In the division of the city into districts, he suggested a social and economic mixture of people, so that no one district would become monolithic. Experience showed that each district should have a population of between 100,000 and 150,000 inhabitants (figs. 4, 5).<sup>12</sup>

In the third chapter, devoted to economic questions, Wagner presented model proposals for financing urban expansion. These were: (1) the municipal control of all public utilities; (2) a property tax, although Wagner immediately threw in the caveat that an additional tax would only increase the already enormous tax burden; (3) the relatively simple means of having the city operate as a real estate agent, buying and selling properties and using the profits realized to fund future expansion. In his economic

proposals Wagner basically viewed the city as a capitalist entrepreneur, whose profits were to be socially and culturally reinvested in the city to finance construction of public housing, sanatoriums, monuments, museums, theaters, and observation towers.

Near the end of his paper Wagner voiced the concern that Vienna over the past sixty years (that is, between 1851 and 1911) had not created many urban spaces of high artistic grandeur with the exception of Semper's upper Hofburg Forum and the chance creation of the Ringstraße and Schwarzenbergplatz. The Rathausplatz, the largest square in Vienna, measuring 80,000 square meters, and the Votivkirchenplatz were mentioned as failures.<sup>13</sup> Although Wagner described his study of the great city as only a "sketch," the actual presentation was surprisingly realistic in both its design-related details and economic assumptions. The extent to which his remarks can be seen to be *modern* or *trend setting* should be considered in a broader historical context.

*Die Großstadt* was not the first publication by Wagner to deal with urban issues. The problems of the great city were prominently discussed in *Moderne Architektur* (1896, 1898, 1902) and before this in his competition report and proposed master plan ("General-Regulierungs-Plan") for greater Vienna of 1893. The latter work is of particular importance to our study, because here for the first time Wagner presented a complex urban design proposal and theoretical statement.

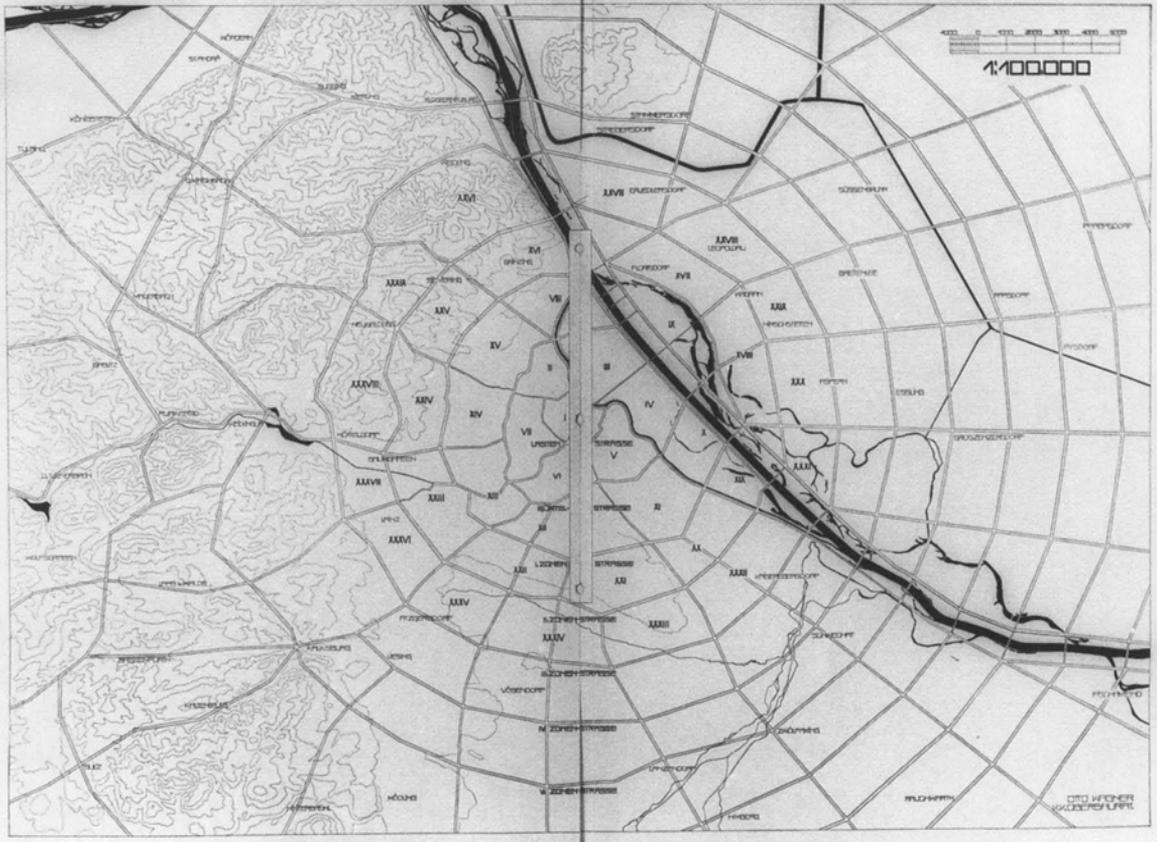
The program for the competition was adopted by the Vienna City Council on 6 May 1892. The journal of the Austrian Association of Engineers and Architects published it on May 27.<sup>14</sup> The formal advertisement followed in November, and the competition itself ran until November 1893. On 22 February 1894 the decision of the jury was announced. Wagner received one of the two first prizes of 10,000 *Gulden*. Immediately thereafter his project was published twice: first by the association journal (*Zeitschrift des Österreichischen Ingenieur- und Architektenvereines*) and then by himself (1 March 1894).<sup>15</sup>

Wagner's report (figs. 1, 6, 7) carried the motto *Artis sola domina necessitas* (Necessity is the only master of art). In its scope the project anticipated the broad range of proposals in *Die Großstadt*, especially with regard to traffic, edging and block planning, the height of buildings, the creation of squares, as well as the importance of monumental buildings. Wagner set the tone early in the report by venting his feelings toward the aesthetic sensibilities

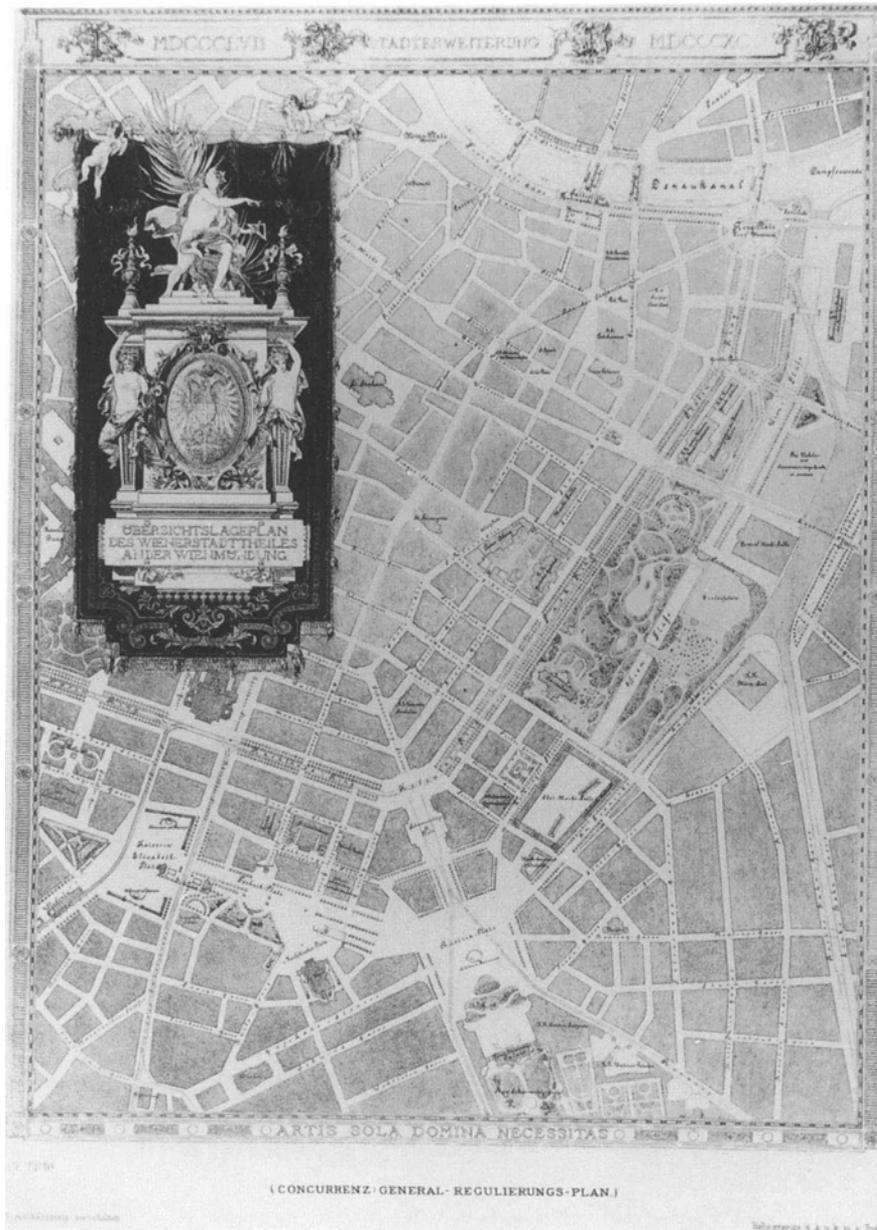


4. Otto Wagner,  
site plan of the projected twenty-second  
district of Vienna.  
From Otto Wagner, *Die Großstadt*  
(Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1911), 11.  
Vienna, Akademie der bildenden  
Künste Wien.
5. Otto Wagner,  
Vienna as an example of city planning,  
divided into districts by zones and  
radial streets.  
From Otto Wagner, *Die Großstadt*  
(Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1911), 12-13.  
Vienna, Akademie der bildenden  
Künste Wien.

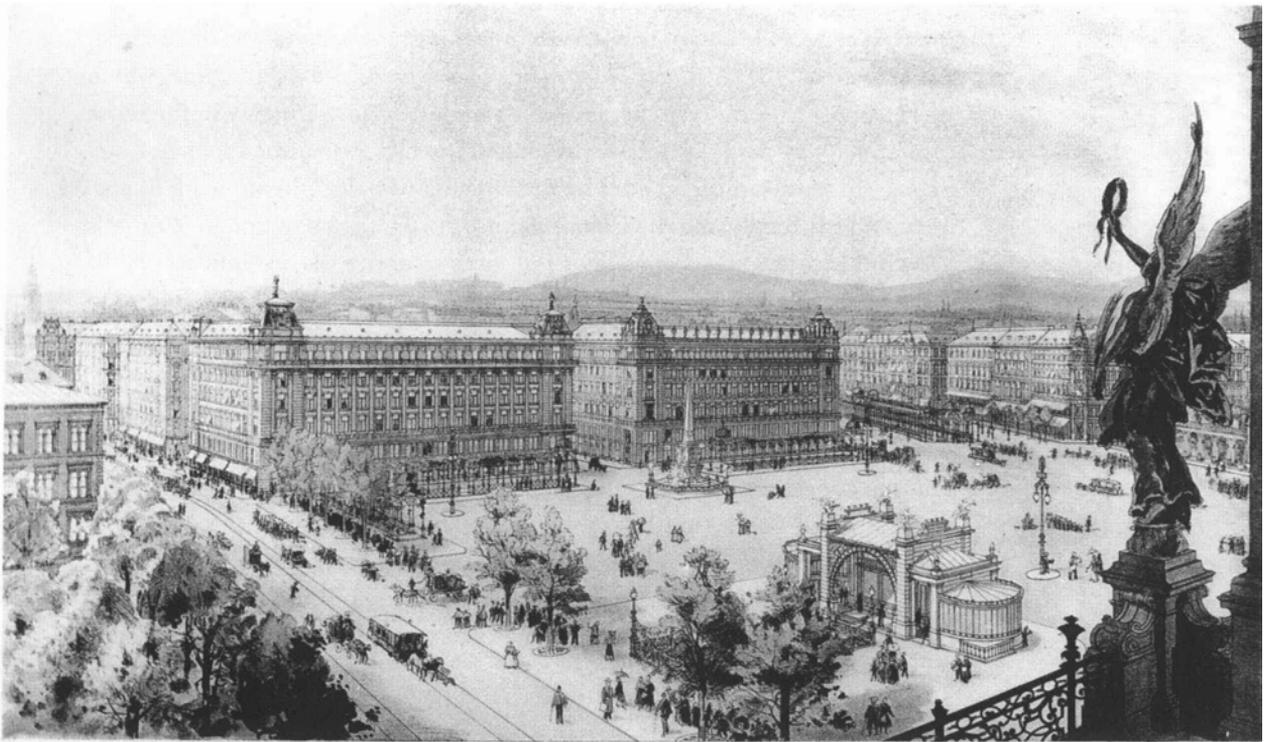
Wien als Beispiel einer Großstadt-Regulierung,



durch Zonen u. Radialstrassen in Bezirke geteilt



6. Otto Wagner, general plan for Vienna's inner city and the Vienna River bearing the motto of the master plan: "Artis sola domina necessitas." Originally published in the "General-Regulierungs-Plan," 1892-1893. From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen, Projecte und ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1897), 2: pl. 10. Vienna. Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien.



Bl. N° 12.

KAISERIN ELISABETH-PLATZ.  
PAVILLON DER HALTESTELLE

( CONCURRENZ I GENERAL-REGULIERUNGS-PLAN )

Verlag v. Wagner, Wien.

Reinhold 4 1/2 x 6 1/2 in. 1/2

7. Otto Wagner.  
perspective of the Kaiserin Elisabeth-Platz  
(today the Karlsplatz extension).  
Originally published in the "General-  
Regulierungs-Plan," 1892-1893.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen,  
Projecte und ausgeführte Bauwerke*  
(Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1897), 2: pl. 12.  
Vienna, Akademie der bildenden  
Künste Wien.

of the public. "There are few who have at their disposal a healthy judgment, and the most tasteless displays have been gazed at in wonder and even admired by the masses."<sup>16</sup>

Tastelessness, in the sense of an impulsive historicism, was for Wagner the first aspect of "barbarism" in city planning; the second was the general acceptance of "the painterly" (*das Malerische*) as a desirable attribute, which he vehemently opposed as an aesthetic standard. The painterly in the sense of planned accidents – a characteristic of the late-Romantic theory of surprise, which was implemented by the curving of paths, the skewing of corners, and the displacing of vistas – did not enrich the cityscape in Wagner's view but was an absurd argument put forth to defile the straight street. "If these advocates of the painterly would only open their eyes, they would soon be convinced that the straight, clean, practical street, leading to the destination in the shortest possible time, occasionally interrupted by monumental buildings, appropriately dimensioned squares, beautiful and imposing vistas, parks, etc., is by far the most beautiful."<sup>17</sup> Wagner further remarked that the concept of *realism* – invoked repeatedly in a causal relationship – stood for and supported the new premises of modern architecture. "Our realism, our traffic, and modern technology today imperiously demand the straight line. Only by its use can we build the transit lines that are essential to the great city; only the straight line is harmonious with houses, streets, and people."<sup>18</sup>

Wagner's attitude toward the great city opposed not only the theories of Camillo Sitte but also the attitude of most critics outside Vienna.<sup>19</sup> The competition report of 1893 dealt with the problem of traffic in the metropolis in a logical and functional way. Wagner insisted upon the necessity of public rail transportation (elevated or underground), as well as radial and ring streets. Vienna served as an example of the centralized European city, and his planning proposals sought to preserve a new, exemplary character for it. Thus, he vigorously assailed the romantic and painterly architectural conception of Karl Henrici and indeed by using the example of the Champs-Élysées. Their opposition is crystallized in the following interchange: Wagner noted that he could not imagine a more beautiful vista than this magnificent Parisian boulevard of seven kilometers in length; whereas Henrici responded that he much preferred a two-hour Alpine hike.<sup>20</sup> This particular example is indicative of Wagner's unequivocal, straight-line attitude and demonstrates that his theory of a modern archi-

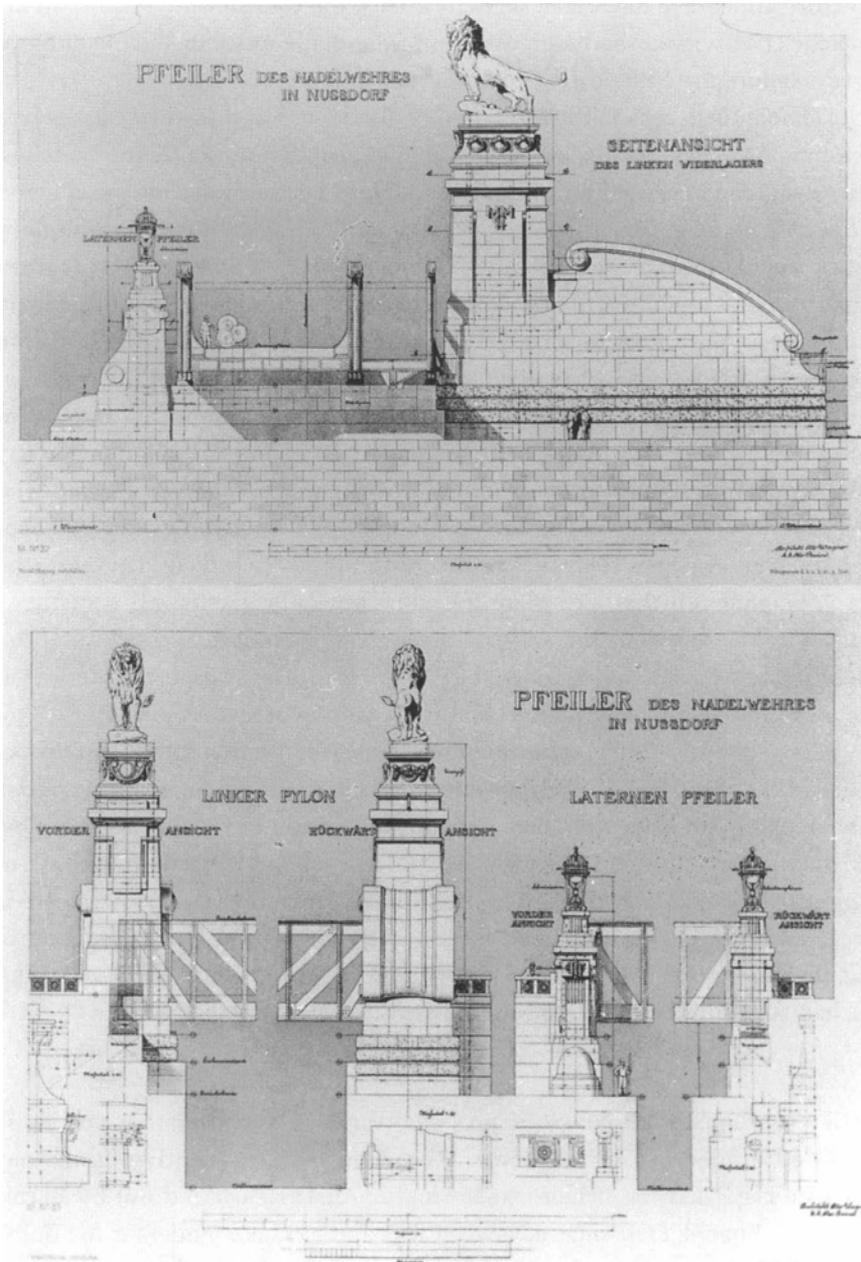
ecture appears to have been set before 1894, the year in which he began his teaching activity at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna and two years before the first edition of *Moderne Architektur*.

The seminal work in the formation of his theory was the preface to the first volume of *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Some sketches, projects, and executed buildings), 1889. Here for the first time he referred to *realism* as a healthy sign of progress, manifesting itself in the exemplary engineering designs of Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel. Wagner viewed realism as a fundamental attribute of modern life and therefore used it to ridicule the false pathos of historicism. Just as the task of the individual building was not to seek a new stylistic form but a new formulation of the question (which he indirectly answered with the term “utility style” [*Nutzstil*]), so the task of urban planning was not to invoke historical models but to address the issues of the modern metropolis. But what distinguished the modern city? What interests were to be represented? What technological and economic changes were relevant? In response to the altered conditions of the city, Wagner felt that city planning must not only dismiss all stylistic or historical associations but must also seek a new analytical interpretation. Reality was the phenomenon to be interpreted; the supreme ethic was to *make visible* its inner structure, materials, and processes (fig. 8).

Consequently the structural elements were emphasized in the architecture of the individual building, not the static wall or the panel but rather the dynamic steel structure demanded by the tensile and compressive forces; while in city planning the traffic arteries were to be stressed, not the typologically monotonous block of houses but the dynamic traffic system. A few years later Wagner’s dualism of static and dynamic forces was snatched up, further elaborated, and given a new design interpretation as a complex urban structure by the Italian Futurists.

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The essay on the *Großstadt* of 1911 was Wagner’s best, shortest, and most pointed summation of this theme. Historians have frequently pointed out that he regarded the urban transformation of Paris carried out by Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann between 1853 and 1869 as a model for the European city. Like Haussmann, Wagner presented both an architectural and economic solution in *Die Großstadt*. The original capital investment of altering or enlarging the city was to be compensated by the later profits,



8. Otto Wagner,  
pillars of the Nußdorf lock transportation  
building.  
Originally published in the "General-  
Regulierungs-Plan," 1892-1893.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen, Projekte  
und ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Anton  
Schroll, 1897), 2: pls. 32 and 33.  
Vienna, Akademie der bildenden  
Künste Wien.

that is, profits earned by the appreciation of land values. Like Haussmann, Wagner basically relied on the profitability of public investment; he differed from Haussmann in that his proposals dealt exclusively with urban expansion and not with the redevelopment of the historical district.

Almost all recent investigations of *Die Großstadt* have emphasized its opposition to Sitte's book *Der Städte-Bau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen* (City planning according to artistic principles), 1889.<sup>21</sup> Sitte's conception of city planning was based on historical experience with the square, "the true center of an important city, where a great people's philosophy of life becomes tangible."<sup>22</sup> In his view, the new monumental buildings were for the most part badly situated with respect to the square; thus, city planning needed a "practical aesthetic" to resolve future questions of design. His instructional manual for the practitioner was based on historical investigation and proposed "to embellish the layout of all squares" by projecting past examples into the future.

His treatise on the relationship of buildings, monuments, and squares, together with the size, form, and irregularity of old squares, further sought to mediate a design attitude in which emotional reminiscences of delightful old urban forms might serve as criteria for new planning. Sitte consulted Aristotle, "who summarizes all rules of city planning by observing that a city must be so designed as to make its people at once secure *and happy*" (Sitte's emphasis).<sup>23</sup> Like Wagner, Sitte saw *art* as the only possible basis from which to renew city planning. However, in Sitte's view art was to be tested for its motifs and its compositional features with the aim of explaining how qualities such as "the beautiful" and "the propitious" are produced. Sitte emphasized not the *nature* of art but the *effect*, that is, the subjective/objective pleasure of a thing itself. In this way art and – in the future – the architecture of the city would be seen as a means to the creation of a general delight. Not the content or true work in the sense of reality but the illusion of the urban scenery was the indirect result of Sitte's architecture of the city.

Wagner initially formulated his criticism of Sitte's theory in his competition report of 1893 and developed it in *Die Großstadt*, in which he harshly rebuked the representatives of the "regional style" (*Heimatstil*) and "heart in the cityscape" (*Gemüt im Stadtbild*). Such propositions, he argued, were simply "phrases" that contributed nothing to the solutions of the problems of the great city. "To refer to tradition, heart, or the painterly appearance

as the foundation of modern housing is simply tasteless in light of modern perception.”<sup>24</sup> This charge was clear, and it was aimed not only at Sitte, who can be described as a historicist by inclination, but also at Wagner’s German antagonists, such as Karl Henrici.

Sitte’s eclectic attempt to create urban spaces without allowing for the *necessity* and the *reality* of the modern metropolis was also severely criticized at the turn of the century by the German art historian Albert E. Brinckmann. In 1908 Brinckmann published his solution to the artistic problem of form, *Platz und Monument* (Square and monument), in which he characterized Sitte as the romantic among urban planners.<sup>25</sup> The judgment of Brinckmann in this regard is interesting in two respects: first, because of his acknowledged importance as a theorist in the field of architecture and city planning; second, because of his correspondence with Wagner from 1911 to 1912.<sup>26</sup>

Like Sigfried Giedion, Brinckmann was a student of Heinrich Wölfflin, to whom he dedicated *Platz und Monument*. Brinckmann classified styles and their characteristics typologically. His investigations extended back to medieval planning models and the German Renaissance and Baroque and concluded with modern efforts in city planning. As an art historian he was not altogether a partisan in his arguments. “As with the isolated work of architecture, so too in city planning a reaction had to set in against mindless schematization. The merit of having first spoken out against it belongs to the Viennese architect Camillo Sitte and his book *Der Städte-Bau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*.”<sup>27</sup> Yet Brinckmann did not hesitate to enter the contemporary polemical fray over city planning. He described Sitte’s emphasis on the square or the plaza as a “partial truth,” whose idea was overestimated. “Sitte as an architect is an eclectic; the appendix to his book titled ‘Examples of an Urban Arrangement According to Artistic Principles (for Vienna)’ is a theatrical composite of every architectural style.”<sup>28</sup> For Brinckmann Sitte spoke too often of a painterly or pictorial effect, which too easily recalled the theatrical. Brinckmann’s own urban sensibilities were closer to those of Wagner. “Just as the straight line and the right angle remain the most ennobling elements of architecture, so the wide straight street and the regular architectural square will retain their value in the cityscape.”<sup>29</sup>

Brinckmann repeatedly emphasized the need to combine history and lived *reality* in urban design. In a letter written to Wagner in January 1912,

he congratulated Wagner for *Die Großstadt* and in particular for opposing all “painterly senility” and “Sitteesque sentimentalities.” He then noted that “we must move beyond such small tricks and obsequious finery, and we will do so” (see p. 143).<sup>30</sup> It is evident that Brinckmann, like Wagner, accepted *reality* and *art* as the only basis for modern urban design and that he rejected Sitte’s *painterly attitude* toward the city – because of its “cuteness” (*Verniedlichung*) – as something akin to an *idyll*.

Realism as a stylistic device employed in the nineteenth-century novel was a means to achieve the actual, or *reality* – that is, unrestricted and total reality. It was important to exclude nothing from this reality, either for aesthetic reasons or on the basis of social or moral conventions. Thus in literature what was sought was a “realism without conventions.” In the case of Wagner, the metropolis, as the object under investigation, was regimented solely by the concept of art. All *necessities*, or needs, of the great city – from the transport of coffins to luxury shops to airport commuting – were accepted; presumably they would be artistically designed. Everything created must scrupulously fulfill its purpose and be consecrated by art, which for Wagner represented a visible *cultural ersatz*. In the monument he proposed for the front of the Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum in 1909, he represented culture allegorically as a tamed beast of prey.

Wagner’s publication on the unlimited great city, as I noted earlier, was composed of both a textual report and architectural drawings. The text was sufficiently abstract to be a valid description of a modern metropolis; the drawings, in contrast, were a testimonial to the historical spirit. The large aerial perspective of the future twenty-second district of Vienna, looking toward the central park, shows two surprising architectural details (fig. 9). One is the central position of the church surrounded by two lateral, U-shaped buildings, similar to the original campus plan for Columbia University by McKim, Meade, and White (fig. 10). The other is that the perspective as a whole is a collage of Wagner’s works from this period – the unlimited creativity of Wagner himself. The great city is *Wagner’s city*, in which every building and project carefully fulfills its assigned place.

It seems hardly accidental that Wagner established the general width of streets at 23 meters and prescribed the same height for apartment buildings (fig. 11). This 23 meters is almost the exact height of his own apartment house on Neustiftgasse (1909; street height 21.53 meters, courtyard height 23.05 meters [fig. 12]), his Hotel Wien project on Kolowrathring (1910;

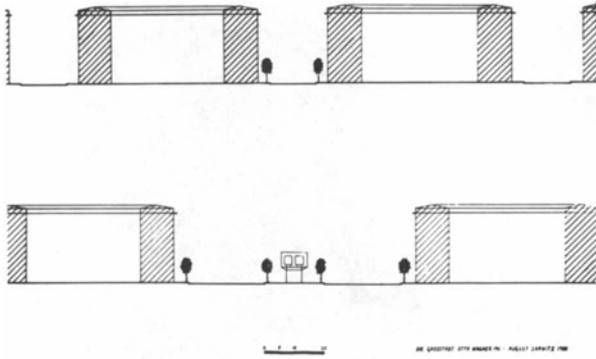


BLICK AUF DAS LUFTZENTRUM DES KÜNFTIGEN XXII. WIENER-GEMEINDEBEZIRKES

9. Otto Wagner,  
view of the central park of the future  
twenty-second district of Vienna.  
From Otto Wagner, *Die Großstadt*  
(Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1911), 14.  
Vienna, Akademie der bildenden  
Künste Wien.



10. Aerial view of Columbia University.  
Photo: Courtesy Culver Pictures.



11. Analytical drawing based upon the *Großstadt* study.  
Drawing by author.
12. Otto Wagner,  
perspective of apartment house at  
Neustiftgasse 40, 1909.  
(This typological apartment house accords  
with the dimensions of the buildings planned  
for the *Großstadt* study).  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen,  
Projekte und ausgeführte Bauwerke*  
(Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1922), 4: 209.  
Vienna, Akademie der bildenden  
Künste Wien.



street height 23.5 meters), his project for a university library (1910; street height 22.95 meters), as well as his Künstlerhof project, his last (1917–1918; street height 23.5 meters). The similarity between Wagner’s proposals for future urban expansion and his two executed apartment buildings of this period (Neustiftgasse and Döblergasse) shows him to be a realist: proven architectural elements are transposed directly into the future.

Thus the proposals presented in *Die Großstadt* are in fact prêt-à-porter. All technical, aesthetic, and economic aspects are clarified down to the last detail. The most important aspect – the social – is, however, the most crucial to Vienna in 1911: as a liberal patrician of the Lueger era, Wagner was a representative of the so-called second society. For the aristocracy, which retained the power of administrative decision making, his proposals were a call to change. The social atmosphere was at this time still determined by the preservation of appearance, by genteel behavior, by what has been called “good form.” Decorum had to prevail, even if this required the omission of a considerable part of real life. In the conventional art and literature of the period a systematic transfiguration or enhancement of the everyday life of the upper classes took place. Theodor Fontane, in a letter to Georg Friedländer, coined the term *Verniedlichung* to describe this phenomenon.<sup>31</sup> The apparent representation of pure happiness, as we saw in Jean Paul’s definition of the idyll, is similar to the apparent design of the city, which in Sitte’s theory becomes a built urban theater without irony. In such a view, the architectural spaces of the city should define urbanity – altogether in the sense of postmodern architectural thinking. With Wagner, on the contrary, the architectural design should make urbanity *possible*. The latter’s demand to acknowledge reality in urban design was directed against appearance and against the idyll of Viennese society. What may appear to us as logical and realistic was, in fact, the precursor of the anonymous metropolis for *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (The man without qualities) – so named by Robert Musil. By accepting the demand for anonymity in the great city as one of the basic attributes and premises for mass society, Wagner in *Die Großstadt* approached the true metropolis of the twentieth century. In my view, herein resides the true modernity of his urbanism.

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By way of concluding this study, I would like to consider briefly two additional aspects of Wagner’s urban theory: first, the acceptance of his plan-

ning ideals by his students (the *Wagnerschule*) and, second, the reaction of contemporary publications to Wagner's proposals.

In the last years of Wagner's academic studio, that is after 1910, urban planning projects were rarely executed, and in those cases where they were, they are incompletely documented. The main premises of Wagner's great city, however, were generally accepted, since the majority of student projects can be seen as partial solutions to the modern city.

Hotels, airports, swimming pools, theaters, department stores, apartment houses, and other such buildings have been documented in Otto Antonia Graf's *Die vergessene Wagnerschule* (The forgotten Wagner school) and in Marco Pozzetto's *Die Schule Otto Wagners, 1894–1912* (The Otto Wagner school, 1894–1912),<sup>32</sup> although it is important to note that Wagner's students generally preferred the idea of the housing development (*Siedlung*) to the urban apartment house. This social and cultural shift in sensibilities is especially evident in the works of Alfons Hetmanek, a student of Wagner's and later a municipal architect for the city of Vienna. The artistic interpretation of the modern city most closely related to Wagner's was, of course, that of Antonio Sant'Elia, who knew of Wagner's works from publications but had never studied with him.<sup>33</sup> None of Wagner's students achieved as forceful and sculptural an interpretation as Sant'Elia did in his material and constructional design for the Città Nuova.

Choosing the title "Realism versus *Verniedlichung*" for an essay on Wagner raises the question of how contemporary architects and art historians reacted to the dualism implied in his study of the great city. Was not Modernism an attempt to find a style for this new time? And was not Wagner – as a member of the Vienna Secession with its motto *Der Zeit ihre Kunst. Der Kunst ihre Freiheit* (To every age its art. To art its freedom) – predestined, as it were, to give form to modernity?

The leading Viennese architectural journal, *Der Architekt*, provides no answers to these questions. The other two art journals, *Hohe Warte* and *Ver Sacrum*, had long ceased publication by 1911. Only in 1916, some years after the first publication of *Die Großstadt*, did this urban planning project receive greater attention, first in an article by Max Eisler.<sup>34</sup> The aerial perspective of the new city center, in particular, was said to be representative of contemporary urban design. The premises of *Die Großstadt* were again discussed in an article written in the same year by Fritz Höber, titled "Stadt-bau und Verkehr" (City planning and traffic).<sup>35</sup> Höber believed that hous-

ing and traffic were the central questions of the modern city, and he went on to compare the significance of the single-family house to the medieval town and the housing block to the nineteenth-century city – citing Walter Curt Behrendt and Brinckmann to support his thesis. Wagner was included among the “housing-block group” and therefore with the progressive architects. The position of Camillo Sitte was seen, as it is perhaps today, as obsolete. “On the other hand, intentionally curved streets also seem arbitrary and show only a romantic who is very unhistorical in his thinking. For even *medieval city plans*, apart from the newly founded colonial towns of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries in northeastern Germany and southern France, are more rational than one generally assumes” (Höber’s emphasis).<sup>36</sup> In the same article, Wagner was hailed as the creator of modern Austro-Hungarian architecture for his work on the Vienna Stadtbahn and his fine artistic intuition.<sup>37</sup> He is named in the same breath with Theodor Fischer and Peter Behrens.

As my essay seeks to document, Wagner’s architectural attitude basically implies the notion of *modernity*. The position of contemporary Viennese architects – for example, Dagobert Frey, Leopold Bauer, and Robert Oerley – displays an emotional attachment to and enthusiasm for Wagner and does not rationally distinguish how far he actually and consistently realized his architectural attitude. The last unexecuted works, especially his Künstlerhof of 1918, show playful and ornamented facades, far removed from his purist apartment blocks.

In conclusion, we should also mention August Endell’s *Die Schönheit der großen Stadt* (The beauty of the great city), 1908.<sup>38</sup> This work, which somewhat poetically describes the new urban images of the great city, takes its departure from the aesthetics developed in his earlier essays on forms and decorative art (1898) and on the possibility and goal of a new architecture (1897–1898).<sup>39</sup> In all three of these writings, Endell documents a new understanding of form that is pervasive in German psychological literature. “The straight line is not only mathematically but also aesthetically valued above all others. . . . The straight line gives the feeling of speed: lesser speed the wider and shorter the line is, greater speed the thinner and longer it is.”<sup>40</sup> Speed is already a pleasing concept; it serves as a metaphor for the complexity of modern urban reality. The content of the new reality is the tempo – the unit of time for speed – with which man moves himself and goods through the great city. Otto Wagner’s emphasis on the traffic artery,

the straight street, and his rejection of any *Verniedlichung* in squares and streets make possible the frenzied speed of the metropolis and anticipate theoretically the conception of the *Großstadt* – which as “urban interchange” challenged city planners from Sant’Elia to Ludwig Hilberseimer to Peter Cook – as the locus of the new reality.

NOTES

1. Otto Wagner, “Inaugural Address to the Academy of Fine Arts,” in *Modern Architecture*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1988), 160. Quoted in “Ein baukünstlerisches Lehrprogramm,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 28, no. 86 (27 October 1894): 529–31: “*Der Realismus unserer Zeit muß das werdende Kunstwerk durchdringen. Er wird ihm keinen Schaden zufügen, kein Niedergang der Kunst wird daraus hervorgehen: er wird vielmehr neues pulsirendes Leben den Formen einhauchen und sich mit der Zeit neue Gebiete, welche heute noch der Kunst entbehren.*”

2. The notion of “modern” here refers to classical architectural Modernism, in the sense of Louis Sullivan, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and Otto Wagner. *Realität* (reality) and *Wirklichkeit* (reality) are not employed in their strict philosophical senses but for their literary affinity with an essay by Elias Canetti, “Realismus und die neue Wirklichkeit.” See Elias Canetti, *Das Gewissen der Worte* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1981). *Verniedlichung* is used here in the sense of Theodor Fontane, who understood it as the denial of the real world. *Verniedlichung* is a mode that replaces the complex relations of life with an apparent simplicity that is without problems.

3. The Latin term is the author’s. The intention is to emphasize more forcefully the timeliness of architectural designs.

4. Induction – to infer the universal from the particular – is the opposite of deduction – to infer the particular from the universal.

5. Jean Paul, *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804; reprint, Munich: Hanser, 1963). 258, 261–62: “*Wenigstens eine kleine epische Gattung haben wir, nämlich die Idylle. Diese ist nämlich epische Darstellung des Vollglücks in der Beschränkung. Die höhere Entzückung gehört der Lyra und der Romantik an; denn sonst wären Dantes Himmel und Klopstocks eingestreuter Himmel auch unter die Idyllen zu rechnen. Die Beschränkung in der Idylle kann sich bald auf die Güter, bald der Einsichten, bald des Standes, bald aller zugleich beziehen. Da man sie aber durch eine Verwechslung mehr auf Hirten-Leben bezog: so setzte man sie durch eine zweite gar in das goldene Alter der Menschheit, als ob dieses Alter nur in einer nie rückenden Wiege und nicht ebensogut in einem fliegenden Phaetons-Wagen sich bewegen konnte... Höchstens dies kann man verstehen, daß die Idylle als ein Vollglück der Beschränkung die Menge der Mitspieler und die Gewalt der*

großen Staatsräder ausschließe; und daß nur ein umzäuntes Gartenleben für die Idyllen-Seligen passe, die sich aus dem Buch der Seligen ein Blatt gerissen; für frohe Lilliputer, denen ein Blumenbeet ein Wald ist, und welche eine Leiter an ein abzuerntendes Zwergbäumchen legen.”

6. Otto Wagner, *Die Großstadt: Eine Studie über diese von Otto Wagner* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1911), 1: “...eine schmeichelhafte Einladung, welche dem Verfasser dieser Schrift am 18. März 1910, von Professor A. D. Hamlin in Namen der Columbia Universität zugeing, und das Ersuchen enthielt, einen Vortrag in New York beim internationalen, unter der Patronanz des Staates und der Stadt New York stehenden Kongresse für städtische Kunst abzuhalten.” The study was published in Vienna in March 1911 and shortly thereafter appeared in English as “The Development of the Great City.” *Architectural Record* 31 (May 1912): 485–500. The American journal published the aerial perspective view of the new twenty-second district but not the site plan.

7. Various planning models were proposed for urban expansion, the most frequent being the ring-street model. In 1905, for example, Eugène Hénard developed a theoretical diagram for the expansion of Paris, which proposed a three-belt system of streets around the urban center. See Eugène Hénard, *Etudes sur les transformations de Paris* (Paris: Faszikel, 1903–1906). Burnham’s plan of 1908 for Chicago should be briefly discussed. He praised the work of Georges-Eugène Haussmann in his report and documented his work in Chicago with forty-three plans, photos, and drawings of European cities. Among these, fourteen illustrations were devoted to Paris, five to Vienna, four each to London and Rome, and three to Berlin. See John Zukowsky, ed., *Chicago Architecture 1872–1922* (Munich: Prestel, 1987).

8. This chapter division is true only for the German edition. The translation in *Architectural Record* breaks the text into two chapters: “Regulation of the City Plan” and “Economic Considerations.”

9. Typographical emphasis was an important didactic feature in the publication of *Die Großstadt*. The essay receives an almost suggestive character from the use of this device. Wagner did the same in his various editions of *Moderne Architektur*. The attractiveness of his remarks and the importance of particular concepts are clarified for the reader in this way. The device was not carried over into the English translation.

10. Wagner, 1911 (see note 6), 10: “Es besteht wohl kein Zweifel darüber, daß die Mehrzahl der Menschen lieber in einer Großstadt wohnt, als in einer kleinen Stadt, oder auf dem Lande. Ein Großteil der Großstadtbewohner wird durch den Beruf hierzu gezwungen. Erwerb, gesellschaftliche Stellung, Komfort, Luxus, eine niedrige Sterblichkeitsziffer, das Vorhandensein aller geistigen und physischen Hilfsmittel, Zeitvertreib im guten und schlechten Sinne und schließlich die Kunst sind die Motive dieser Erscheinung.”

11. Wagner, 1911 (see note 6), 7. It is noteworthy that discussion of the regulation of the old part of the city was limited to a single sentence in the twenty-three page report: “...das vorhandene Schöne zu erhalten und günstig im Stadtbilde zu verwerten” (to preserve its existing

beauty and to exploit its advantages in the city plan). The future development of the city, on the contrary, must be systematized. "Safety features" for the expansion of the city must be planned and generously provided to future inhabitants.

12. Wagner, 1911 (see note 6), 10.

13. Wagner, 1911 (see note 6), 22. "*Es geht eben nicht an, den Ausbau einer Großstadt wie bisher dem blinden Zufall und der völligen künstlerischen Impotenz zu überlassen und künstlerische Bestrebungen als etwas Überflüssiges hinzustellen, oder endlich die Entwicklung der Großstadt dem erbärmlichsten Grundwucher auszuliefern*" (We cannot leave the expansion of a large city to blind chance and utter artistic impotence as in the past, or consider artistic efforts as superfluous. Nor can we hand over the development of the great city to the most miserable land speculators).

14. *Zeitschrift des Österreichischen Ingenieur- und Architektenvereines* 22 (1892): 340–44. Wagner probably began his work on the competition on this date.

15. *Zeitschrift des Österreichischen Ingenieur- und Architektenvereines* 9 (1894): 128–30.

16. Otto Wagner, "Erläuterungs-Bericht zum Entwurfe für den General-Regulierungs-Plan über das gesammte Gemeindegebiet von Wien" (1892–1893; 2nd ed., 1894), in Otto Antonia Graf, *Otto Wagner: Das Werk des Architekten* (Vienna: Hermann Böhlau Nachf., 1985), 1: 92: "*Wenige sind es, welche über ein gesundes Urteil verfügen, und die denkbar größten Geschmacklosigkeiten werden von der Menge angestaunt, wenn nicht sogar bewundert.*"

17. *Ibid.*, 1: 93: "*Würden diese Vertreter des Malerischen die Augen öffnen, so wären sie schon lange zur Überzeugung gekommen, daß die gerade, reine, praktische Straße, zeitweilig unterbrochen von Monumentalbauten, mässig großen Plätzen, schönen, bedeutenden Perspektiven, Parks etc., die uns in kürzester Zeit ans Ziel führt, auch weitaus die schönste ist.*"

18. Wagner (see note 16), 1: 94: "*Unser Realismus, unser Verkehr, die moderne Technik, sie begehren heute gebieterisch die gerade Linie, und nur durch deren Anwendung können jene Verkehrszüge entstehen, welche keine Großstadt entbehren kann, und auch nur so werden Häuser, Straßen und Menschen zusammenpassen.*"

19. One significant positive response to Wagner's competition project for Vienna appeared under the title "Der General-Regulierungsplan für Gross-Wien." *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 28, no. 20 (March 1894): 123–25. The author, Joseph Stübgen, wrote: "*Otto Wagner ist einer der hervorragendsten Baukünstler Oesterreichs. Seine Konkurrenzarbeit würde schon hohes Lob verdienen, wenn dieselbe nur aus den reizvollen Bildern bestände, welche die beabsichtigte Gestaltung des Kaiserin Elisabeth-Platzes, des Platzes an der Karlskirche und der Stadtbahnbauten in flottgezeichneten Perspektiven darstellen. Aber neben der göttlichen Phantasie besitzt dieser Künstler scharf ausgeprägte menschliche Verstandeskräfte und versteht es, sie in den Dienst des modernen Grossverkehrs zu stellen. Wir wollen modern sein, sagt er in seinem schneidigen Erläuterungsberichte; modern und geschmacklos ist keineswegs dasselbe*" (Otto Wagner is one of

the most outstanding Austrian architects. His competition work would earn high praise simply for the charming and stylish renderings that depict the proposed designs for Kaiserin Elisabeth-Platz, the square in front of the Karlskirche, and the Stadtbahn stations. But in addition to his divine imagination, this artist also possesses highly developed intellectual powers and understanding, which he puts at the disposal of modern traffic problems. We want to be modern, he says in his spirited competition report; to be modern and to be tasteless are by no means the same thing).

20. See Karl Henrici, "Langweilige und kurzweilige Strassen," *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 27, no. 44 (June 1893): 271.

21. Camillo Sitte, *Der Städte-Bau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*, 3rd ed. (Vienna: Graeser; Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1901). See also the English translation, "City Planning According to Artistic Principles," in George R. Collins and Christiane Crasemann Collins, trans., *Camillo Sitte: The Birth of Modern City Planning* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), 138–329. For the Sitte/Wagner controversy, see also Carl E. Schorske, *Wien – Geist und Gesellschaft in Fin de Siècle* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1982), and Hanno-Walter Kruft, *Geschichte der Architekturtheorie* (Munich: Beck, 1985).

22. Collins (see note 21), 150. Sitte (see note 21), 11: "...in Wahrheit der Mittelpunkt einer bedeutenden Stadt, die Versinnlichung der Weltanschauung eines großen Volkes sei."

23. Collins (see note 21), 141. Sitte (see note 21), 2: "...der alle Grundsätze des Städtebaues dahin zusammengefaßt, daß eine Stadt so gebaut sein solle, um die Menschen sicher und zugleich glücklich zu machen."

24. Wagner, 1911 (see note 6), 21: "Der Hinweis auf Tradition, Gemüt, malerische Erscheinung etc. als Grundlage von Wohnungen moderner Menschen ist unserem heutigen Empfinden nach einfach abgeschmackt."

25. Albert E. Brinckmann, *Platz und Monument – als künstlerisches Formproblem* (Berlin: Wasmuth, 1908), 165. The book was reviewed in *Hohe Warte* 22 (1908): 337–38, and all architects were strongly encouraged to abandon Sitte's viewpoints.

26. See especially the letter from Brinckmann to Wagner, 27 January 1912. Archives of the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Santa Monica. This letter is quoted in full in note 41 of Fritz Neumeyer's essay in this volume.

27. Brinckmann (see note 25), 164: "Wie für die Einzelarchitektur, so mußte auch für den Stadtbau eine Reaktion einsetzen, die sich gegen den gesinnungslosen Schematismus auflehnte. Das Verdienst, dieser zuerst das Wort geredet zu haben, gebührt dem Wiener Architekten C. Sitte mit seinem Buch: *Der Stadtbau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*."

28. Brinckmann (see note 25), 165: "Sitte als Architekt ist Eklektizist, das von ihm als Anhang seines Buches mitgeteilte 'Beispiel einer Stadtregulierung nach künstlerischen Grundsätzen (für Wien)' ein theatermäßiges Komposit aller Baustile."

29. Brinckmann (see note 25), 169: *“Die gerade Linie und der rechte Winkel bleiben die vornehmsten Elemente der Architektur und auch die gerade breite Straße wie der regelmäßige Architekturplatz werden ihren Wert im Städtebau behalten.”*

30. Letter from Brinckmann to Wagner (see note 26): *“...daß wir aus jenem Kleinspiel u. gefälligem Aufputz herauskommen müssen u. wir werden es auch.”*

31. Theodor Fontane, *Brief an Georg Friedländer* (Heidelberg: Kurt Schreinert, 1954), 2.

32. Otto Antonia Graf, *Die vergessene Wagnerschule* (Vienna: Jugend und Volk, 1969); Marco Pozzetto, *Die Schule Otto Wagners, 1894–1912* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1980).

33. Dore Ashton and Guido Ballo, *Antonio Sant’Elia* (Milan: Arnoldo, 1986).

34. Max Eisler, *Österreichische Werkkultur* (Vienna: Österreichisches Werkbund, 1916), 5.

35. Fritz Höber, “Stadtbau und Verkehr,” *Der Architekt* 21 (1916–1918): 73–83.

36. *Ibid.*, 77: *Andererseits erscheinen auch willkürlich gekrümmte Straßen unbegründet und beweisen nur eine ganz ungeschichtlich denkende Romantik: Denn auch die mittelalterlichen Städtepläne, abgesehen von den einheitlichen Neugründungen des kolonisierenden 12., 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts im Nordosten Deutschlands, im Süden Frankreichs, sind rationaler als man gewöhnlich annimmt.”*

37. Höber (see note 35), 80.

38. August Endell, *Die Schönheit der großen Stadt* (Stuttgart: Strecher & Schröder, 1908; reprint, Berlin: Archibook-Verlag, 1984).

39. August Endell, “Formenschönheit und dekorative Kunst,” *Dekorative Kunst* 2 (1898): 119–25; *idem*, “Möglichkeit und Ziele einer neuen Architektur,” *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* 1 (1897–1898): 144.

40. Endell, 1898 (see note 39), 119: *“Die gerade Linie ist nicht nur mathematisch, sondern auch ästhetisch vor allen anderen Linien ausgezeichnet...die Gerade gibt das Gefühl der Schnelligkeit: am geringsten, je breiter und kürzer, am stärksten, je schmaler und länger sie ist.”*

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1. Otto Wagner,  
Hochbahn-Viaduct Meidling,  
Schönbrunnerstraße, 1892–1893.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen,  
Projecte und ausgeführte Bauwerke*  
(Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1897), 2: pl. 14.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

Fritz Neumeyer

IRON AND STONE:  
THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE *GROßSTADT*

When Otto Wagner finally decided to replace *Architektur* in the title of the fourth edition of *Moderne Architektur*, 1914, with the term *Baukunst*, it was already too late for an appropriate revision of the book's title. Another book — *Moderne Baukunst*, 1907 — had made use of the title that should have gone to Wagner's new edition. The word *Baukunst* had become a key term for architects in the first decade of the twentieth century. Literally meaning "building-art," it signified a beauty that must be built-in and not applied, an art governed by necessity, construction, and utility.

The word *Baukunst*, as Wagner himself explained, was "the achievement of the last two decades, more or less, of the last century."<sup>1</sup> It was seemingly allied with a Darwinistic conception of architectural evolution and charged with ending the hodgepodge of styles by affixing artistic economies to the skeleton of construction that stood for the unshakable truth of all architectural development and progress. "Every architectural form has arisen in construction and has successively become an art-form. This principle withstands all analyses and explains every art-form."<sup>2</sup> Thus issued forth Wagner's categorical imperative governing architectural development and progress, which was to reverberate in many architectural manifestos of the early twentieth century.

In 1902 Hermann Muthesius first pointed toward the distinction between an architecture of applied styles and a modern building-art in his study *Stilarchitektur und Baukunst* (Style-architecture and the building-art), which Wagner respectfully acknowledged in the preface to the fourth edition of *Moderne Architektur*. In 1907 Karl Scheffler, the German art critic, had chosen *Moderne Baukunst* as the title for his influential analysis of contempo-

rary developments.<sup>3</sup> Although Wagner certainly knew Scheffler's book, he did not pay tribute to it. The first three chapters – “Stein und Eisen” (Stone and iron), “Das Mietshaus” (The apartment house), and “Das Bürohaus” (The office building) – virtually summed up the range of building tasks upon which Wagner's career as an architect centered. Together, they represented the fundamental problems with which the modern architect had to struggle.

There was, however, a fundamental difference in the conceptualization of *Baukunst* that may explain why Wagner did not give Scheffler any credit. “According to modern views,” as Wagner noted in *Moderne Architektur*, “a harmony of art and purpose is the first condition of a good solution.”<sup>4</sup> Scheffler, on the contrary, had decried any harmonization or wished-for integration of art and purpose as a “nostalgic romanticism.” Instead, he envisioned another kind of architectural beauty, one taking its departure point not in the classical concepts of form but in modern technology itself. In Scheffler's vision of the modern “building-art,” it was the bare structure of the engineer that in its primitive splendor and striking monumentality held out the promise of art.<sup>5</sup> Such a vision would be realized less than two decades later when Mies van der Rohe introduced his “Glass Skyscraper” design in 1922 and noted that “only skyscrapers under construction reveal the keen structural idea and overpowering impression of the steel skeleton.”<sup>6</sup>

The range of building tasks Scheffler presented in his study of 1907 reflected the new urban reality of industrialized civilization – the “great city,” or *Großstadt*. Wagner also embraced the phenomenon of large cities as “the most modern of the ‘modern’ in architecture today,” because “their unprecedented size has given rise to a number of new problems that await an architectural solution.”<sup>7</sup> The modern condition became acutely visible as the new rail systems and their facilities intruded on the traditional cityscape, affecting urban monumental spaces governed by tradition and the architectural language of stone. The alien ironwork of the engineer, such as bridges and elevated rail lines, violated the image of the city and its monuments. Whereas Scheffler had praised the vivid impression the new railway structures made while under construction, as yet undecorated with architectural motifs and sandstone facings, Wagner in 1892 had referred to the results in Berlin – taking exception to the latest efforts – as “the worst examples one could possibly imagine.”<sup>8</sup>

The shocking presence of these innovations with which, as Wagner phrased it, “every city would have to trouble itself” demanded artistic solutions.<sup>9</sup> Wagner’s remarks in *Moderne Architektur* regarding such solutions are highly illuminating. Whereas he proclaimed it the architect’s duty to come to grips with the “necessities” of modern life, he judged the effect of rail lines at street level as “all too often disastrous” for the city. “Apart from all the disturbances to pedestrian traffic . . . they almost always disfigure its image, regardless of whether they are horse, steam, or electrically powered.”<sup>10</sup> The elevated train was even more more obtrusive, even if its advantages were obvious. “It is less expensive than the subterranean train and affords the passenger much enjoyment with its open and frequently changing view.”<sup>11</sup> Yet its principal disadvantage was aesthetic; when introduced in bridges, the “first brutish appearance of the new material – iron” had only “prompted rather energetic protests by the city’s inhabitants.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, whenever possible, “construction below” was ordered, so as not to impair the traditional image of the city. Wagner concluded, “Therefore, the elevated train will never be well received by inhabitants for whom the preservation of a cityscape of the greatest possible beauty is the primary consideration”; he then added the remarkable afterthought, “and understandably this will always be the viewpoint of the architect.”<sup>13</sup>

Let us return to the range of building tasks enumerated in Scheffler’s *Moderne Baukunst*. The first chapter, “Stein und Eisen,” addressed the problem of introducing modern construction into the traditional urban fabric, that is, the juxtaposition of iron structures with the dignified classical forms of stone architecture. This new type of urban architecture obviously demanded new aesthetic strategies to reestablish the harmony of art and purpose, simply because crude iron girders and columns could hardly be screened from view with stone facings or traditional facades.

The second chapter concerned the new residential architecture of the great city and the formidable problems that it posed for the builder. To cope with the new economic and social reality of speculation and urban growth, the modern architect had to resort to mass housing and uniform units. Yet the problems of scale and repetition demanded new artistic concepts, both for the facade and for the configuration of the street wall.

Finally, the office building and its functional requirements brought a third and challenging issue to the architect’s drawing board. Commercial architecture not only had to be efficient in a bureaucratic and rational sense

but also had to reinforce and celebrate the commercial life-style of the expanding metropolis.

Each of these issues and their implications were once more addressed by Wagner in the fourth edition of *Moderne Architektur*, which now had to be fitted with the rather bland and modest title *Die Baukunst unserer Zeit* (The building-art of our time). The new edition, which integrated a portion of Wagner's text from *Die Großstadt*, 1911, as a new chapter, emphasized in a more deliberate way the notion of urban architecture.<sup>14</sup> Here Wagner went a step further by projecting "a setting in which his buildings would realize their functional and aesthetic potential"<sup>15</sup> and by extending the compass of the architect's action to the outskirts of the metropolis. He thereby introduced the concept of a continuous, endlessly expanding city.

Another indication of the increasing importance that the architecture of the metropolis had assumed in Wagner's theory can be seen in the first biography of Wagner, also published in 1914. Its author, Joseph August Lux, was himself an Austrian and a friend of the architect. Lux recorded Wagner proclaiming that the metropolis, the *Weltstadt*, was the only problem of architecture, a statement more extreme than anything found in Wagner's own writings. In his apotheosizing prose, Lux credited Wagner with being the very first and only architect who truly faced "the problem of the metropolis, a problem that still awaits a solution today."<sup>16</sup>

Regardless of who was the first to give prominence to this issue, it seems that Wagner once again missed an opportunity. One year before publication of the fourth edition of Wagner's *Moderne Architektur*, Scheffler published his second book — *Die Architektur der Großstadt*, 1913 — once again updating the term *architecture*. Scheffler's title, in fact, could also have characterized the entire oeuvre of Otto Wagner, although Wagner's name was not mentioned. Instead, Scheffler celebrated Alfred Messel, the builder of the famous Wertheim Department Store (1896), and Peter Behrens, the architect of the equally famous AEG factories (1908–1914), as the Berlin champions of urban architecture. They were given the same credit that Lux awarded Wagner only a few months later.

When Wagner came to prefer the word *Baukunst* over *Architektur*, he thought of himself as a builder rather than an architect. This self-evaluation not only expressed a shift in his thinking but also signified his accomplishments. The term *Baukunst* suggested the program of an architect who chose the somewhat shocking motto *Artis sola domina necessitas* (Necessity is the

only master of art) to conceal his artistic goals. With this credo on his lips, Wagner had proceeded through a number of architectural stages: from an open-minded eclecticism of a “certain free Renaissance”<sup>17</sup> (stretching but never rejecting the rigors of essentially classical principles), to attacking academic tradition with a boyish exuberance (joyfully joining the artistic rebellion of youth – the Secession), to finally freeing himself and achieving a degree of independence from the “ancients” and the “moderns” that allowed him to be a *Baukünstler* (building-artist). The latter could dream of future monumental buildings, but in reality he was restricted to utilitarian building tasks, although he was able to practice an art of building appropriate to his own strongly individualistic standards. This constellation of ideals and practice indeed demanded an architect not unlike the one Wagner described in the first sentences of *Moderne Architektur* – the architect who, with his happy combination of idealism and realism “has been praised as the crowning glory of modern man,” although “unfortunately he alone feels... the truth of these words.”<sup>18</sup>

In the preface to the first volume of *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Some sketches, projects, and executed buildings), 1889, Wagner presented the architect in a historically ambivalent light, struggling with or attempting to mediate realism and idealism. Wagner the artist favored realism not for its own sake but for the sake of art; he was confident of the salutary effect of the “realism” of our time. Realism was not something to be denied, but something to be welcomed as the future “utility style” (*Nutzstil*). In his double role as artist and building technician, the architect should be asked to emphasize his second identity and do justice to the new building tasks. His better half, the artist, would still have plenty to do. The architect’s ambivalence or the splitting apart of his work into two distinct professional domains, however, was easier to achieve in theory than in practice.

The historical mission and responsibility of the architect was to bring about this reconciliation of the utilitarian and realistic orientation of the engineer with the idealistic forms of artistic expression. The architect’s superiority allowed him to enter the realm of the engineer. The latter was “seldom born an artist,” and therefore, as Wagner repeated on several occasions, he lacked the capacity to address problems artistically. Since Wagner’s image of the architect was someone akin to a superman, by training himself he most certainly could become an engineer. Thus the architect would “in time succeed in extending his influence into the realm today occupied by the

engineer," although "seldom" could both capabilities be "combined in one individual in an outstanding way."<sup>19</sup> Perhaps looking back to his experience as the architect of the Vienna Stadtbahn, Wagner questioned the optimistic and self-assured tone of this sentence in the third edition of *Moderne Architektur*, 1902, by changing the "seldom" to a "never" and adding the qualification "and in fact cannot be combined."<sup>20</sup>

Yet the inaugurated conquest of the engineer's terrain was the necessary precondition for the proposed extension of the building-art into the realm of reality and necessity, which in turn needed to be shaped and dignified by aesthetic principles. The artist's new mission was to recapture that realm, which, with his ability and knowledge, "absolutely" belonged to him. "Death and everlasting damnation to the engineer's style" was the battle cry of 1892.<sup>21</sup> Notwithstanding his practical disillusionment, Wagner never seemed to tire, at least verbally, of fighting "the beauty-destroying influence of the engineer"; even in 1911 that influence still waited to be "forever destroyed."<sup>22</sup>

Wagner the artist, like so many architects of the late nineteenth century, was caught up in a struggle on two fronts. On the one hand there was the romantic viewpoint of the traditional craftsman, who believed that architecture should harmonize with the historical environment by adapting and applying the principles of the arts and crafts. On the other hand there was the viewpoint of the engineer, who responded only to structural and economic calculations and therefore spoke "a language unsympathetic to man."<sup>23</sup> The latter's first "brutish appearance" or intervention in the great city was proof enough that his influence should be forever destroyed.

Yet this unsympathetic modern man had attained a position of prominence and was in charge of many building tasks of the city. It was for this reason that Wagner demanded in 1892 that the design of buildings for the rail lines no longer be entrusted to the engineer but be turned over to the artist.<sup>24</sup> Wagner's subsequent appointment as chief architect for the Vienna Stadtbahn almost seems to be a direct result of this imperative.

The romantics and the rationalists — or as Wagner liked to call them, the "hermaphrodites of art and vampires of practice"<sup>25</sup> — were both enemies of art. The first group's conception of beauty tended toward the artificiality of the "painterly" (*das Malerische*); the second group, dominated by the nonartist (*Nichtkünstler*), who was not expected to know any better, destroyed the classical notion of architectural composition by juxtaposing

the monuments of the city with the harsh reality of bare structures. The aesthetics of beautification were unacceptable to modern sensibility but so was the unsightly constructional and functional ethic that was disrespectful to the perceptive eye. A single “Kraus’sche Dampftramway Baracke,”<sup>26</sup> whatever it may have looked like, was evidently sufficient to pollute the visual image of a whole quarter of the city, an image that the Viennese held with great pride.

Even more distinguished examples of structural engineering, such as the Eiffel Tower (1888–1889), appeared strange to Wagner and his generation, at least to those who were able to appreciate realism but were wary of how far it should venture into the world of art. “For the works of art must always be the mirror image of their times. That such realism in architecture can also bear quite peculiar fruit may be seen by several quite poignant examples, such as the Eiffel Tower, the *Kursaal* in Ostende, etc., etc.”<sup>27</sup> The notion that the “quite peculiar fruit” exemplified by the Eiffel Tower might turn into an icon to be worshiped by the avant-garde artists of the next generation would have been a rather horrifying prospect for Wagner. The architectural dilemma of using iron was that while it increased the purposefulness of a building, it lacked monumentality – a criticism that had been repeated by countless architects since Semper, Wagner not excepted. Yet Wagner still believed in the inventiveness and ingenuity of the building artist and had confidence that one day he would succeed in solving the problem, thereby creating “iron forms that would appear monumental to everyone.”<sup>28</sup>

The notion of monumentality, or, to be more precise, the notion of monumental appearance and its historical association with heavy stone architecture, is the key to Wagner’s theory, and his design work for the Vienna Stadtbahn demonstrates an ingenious array of possibilities for making iron forms appear monumental. Thus it becomes almost self-evident why iron was used to represent functional forms in the station at Unter-Döbling (1895). Here the iron supporting screen is used as a decorative motif, and its ornamental geometrical patterns alluding to the classical canon seem to be more closely related to the evocative image of the triumphal arch than to the light and elegant elevated structures of postindustrial times.

In this instance Wagner’s architectural expression approached the poetic assimilation of new building materials into the traditional syntax in a way related to the classical and romantic architecture of the early nineteenth century, when the first iron bridges were treated in a similar way. Wagner’s

approach, incidentally, did not lack a certain sense of honesty in construction, that is, it was not related to the way in which academic architects attempted to hide utility behind a screen of historicist motifs. Almost the opposite was true, in fact. The transparent ironwork of the girder provided a layer of decoration or a screening of the traditional building, at least the central portion of it – not unlike a transparent window curtain. No other building material allowed the eye to penetrate the surface and glimpse what was behind; no other material could create a minimalist plane composed of gridlines, more perforation and void than material. But the time had not yet arrived for the discovery of the inherent beauty and immanent aesthetics of the iron frame or the exploration and simultaneous reading of planes and layered surfaces.<sup>29</sup>

Other possibilities for the modern artistic treatment of this material that did not appropriate a historical style are seen in Wagner's subtle decoration of a structure with compatible ornament or in the invention of "supplemental ornament," that is to say, an ornament that seeks its plastic expression in the concentration of artistic energy at certain elements or points, such as junctions, piers, gateways, and railings (fig. 1). The predominance of monumental form derived from stone architecture is easily recognizable: piers composed of steel webs are shaped like stone forms, and supporting stone elements are modeled like a mass slowly buckling under the pressure of the load they resist. The line of support, or the functional line, is the medium that explains by visual analogy the drama of load and support, utilizing forms borrowed from a different material and representing the upsurging will that resists the eternal laws of gravity. This notion of architectural expression is, of course, the genuine principle of classical monumental architecture, a principle that Schopenhauer called the "bass notes" of all architecture.

But it was precisely this classical notion of a "body at work" that iron structural members could no longer express without being treated illogically or by masking it. Thus the decorative application provided the necessary vocabulary to circumscribe the functional prose of reality; the latter had to be poetically wrapped as diligently as possible. Beauty remained to a large extent the matter of skin; structure remained separate from style. In a detail such as a railing, this separation is redeemed by being functional and artistic at the same time. Here the cleft between art and construction is bridged artistically and in a noble way by using classical form based on the

simple geometry of direct support. The railing defines a continual running line encircling the whole city with a reappearing form, visually linking the individual stations. Thus the trajectory of the railroad track is transformed into an elevated and updated version of the famous Ringstraße, a kind of continuous monument punctuated with artistic stations representing the gates of the modern city.

Just as decorative appliquéés are wrapped around girders of the structure to invest the iron with a monumental appearance, so the stations themselves (which represent a completely new type of urban architecture) appear like necessary appliquéés wrapped around the trajectory of the encircling rails, thereby creating a monumental appearance. This ring of monuments strung like pearls on a rosary, these “monuments in harmony with the image of the city,”<sup>30</sup> now become the crown adorning the modern city of the democratic age. In this fashionable and functional necklace of urban ornament, dedicated to the glory of modernity and the formation of its cityscape, the motive of the wreath that Wagner so obsessively employed as a high symbolic device may have found its appropriation on a larger scale.

Wagner’s vision of the monument embraced the notion of a “body at work” infused with the power of suggestiveness that only artistic forms could generate. Thus the architectural object sought to achieve its cultural and urban function of assimilating, integrating, mediating, and finally transforming the given context of modern reality. This impressionistic concept of a “monumental appearance” was based on a theory that was applied even to the graphic presentations of architectural drawings, which should, as Wagner explained, “inspire and captivate the viewer without deviating from the truth.”<sup>31</sup>

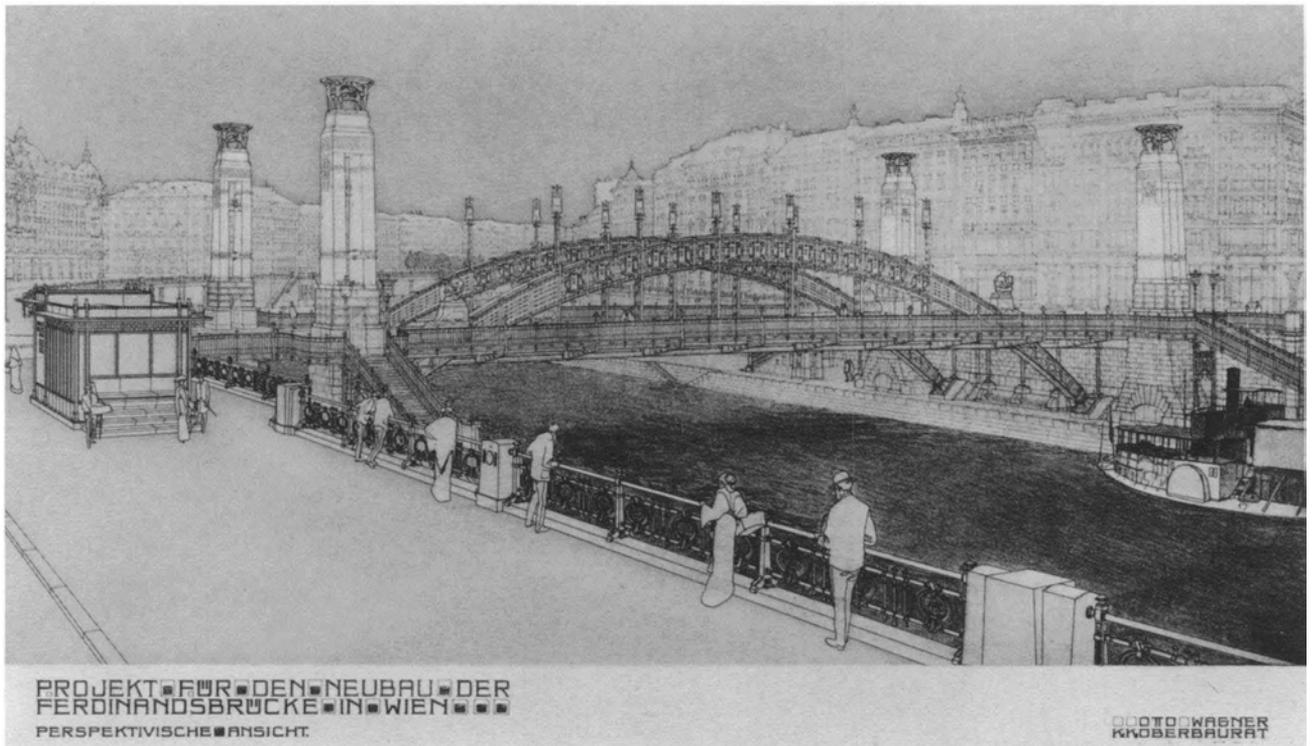
We may certainly be dubious about how successfully Wagner’s heroic approach recaptured the paramount position of the architect as master builder, artist, and engineer in one (fig. 2). Judging from the Nußdorf lock (1894–1898), with its hierarchical distribution and the dominant role assigned to “art,” we may find it hard to believe that Wagner followed his credo “necessity is the only master of art.” The powerful image of massive pillars topped with statues stakes the claim for the superiority of the artist in a manifesto-like manner. In terms of visual rhetoric, the logical distribution of the active and passive members within the composition is reversed. Visually, the real conditions are turned upside down: the motif of the king of animals, the lion, topping a pier is the dominant element endowed with the power to control

2. (Next page)  
Otto Wagner,  
Nußdorf lock at the Danube Canal, 1894–1898.  
From *Der Architekt* 6 (1900): pl. 1.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.

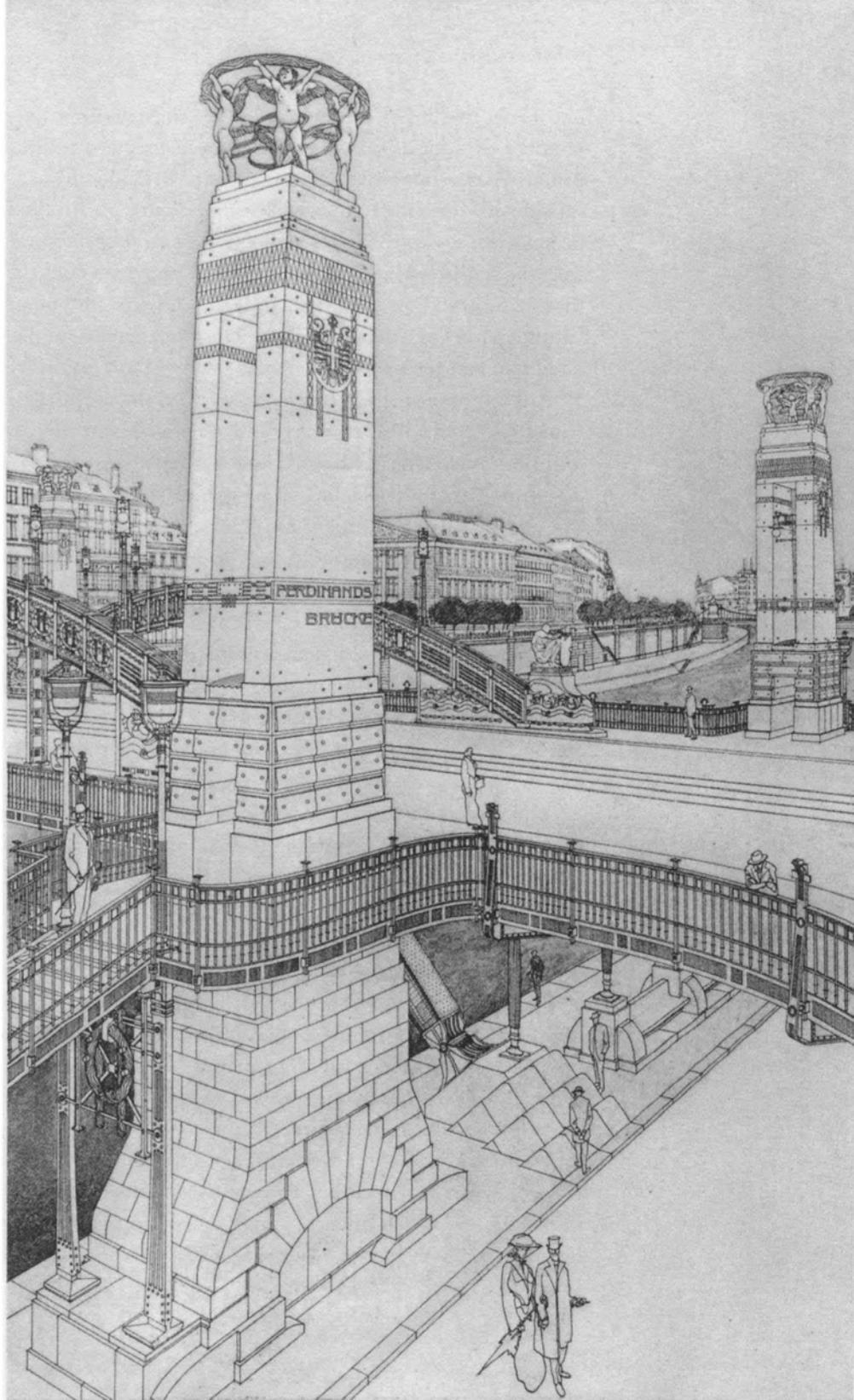




VIRIBUS  
VANUS



3. Otto Wagner,  
Ferdinandsbrücke, first competition  
design, 1905.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen,  
Projekte und ausgeführte Bauwerke*  
(Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1906), 3: pl. 62.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.
4. Otto Wagner,  
Ferdinandsbrücke, first competition  
design, 1905.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen,  
Projekte und ausgeführte Bauwerke*  
(Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1906), 3: pl. 63.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



PROJEKT FÜR DEN NEUBAU DER  
FERDINANDSBRÜCKE IN WIEN

PERSPEKTIVISCHE ANSICHT

OTO WAGNER  
KÖBERBAURAT

and resist the forces, whereas the steel construction, like an architectural member of a lower order, is not allowed to share in the responsibility of proudly performing its tectonic function. Excluded from a classical scenario satisfactory unto itself, the steel beams silently fulfill their necessary utilitarian duties. Even Wagner's selection of an architectural form associated with the sculptural sarcophagi of Michelangelo echoes the paramount role that he reserved for the artist. Indeed, as the prototype of the modern artist, the genius of Michelangelo during this period might well have stimulated and reinforced Wagner's own vision of a "certain free Renaissance."

After another decade of struggling with the new urban reality of industrial civilization, Wagner was ready to revise his strategy with regard to the building concept of *Baukunst*. The extremely conservative and hostile artistic climate of fin-de-siècle Vienna certainly had its effect on Wagner, who was rather badly treated by his imperial patron.

Wagner's first competition for the Ferdinandsbrücke, dating from 1905 and designed in collaboration with an engineer, illustrates this point (figs. 3, 4). It is certainly among the most beautiful designs of this period for this type of utility-oriented urban architecture. Judging from the accompanying explanatory text, the distinction between architect and engineer now seems to be taken for granted. Each delivers his own statement. Wagner, of course, is first, describing the *baukünstlerische* part; the engineer's task is to elucidate the *bautechnische*, or technical, aspects of the design.

The result of this collaboration is quite remarkable; the qualities of the design are manifold. Contrary to customary Viennese practice, governed by the motto "construction below," a large part of the construction is visible above the street. Wagner pointed out that although those bridges in which construction is kept below street level generally come closest to our aesthetic sensibility, that should not preclude us from exploring other possibilities. The proposed bridge, visibly displaying half of its construction, seems to be a compromise between the architect and engineer; its attractiveness is enhanced by the argument that a quarter of a million *Kronen* can be saved with such a method of construction.<sup>32</sup>

Wagner's treatment of iron with its appealing line is highly sensitive to the structural beauty of the construction. The supporting iron beams were meant to be painted white, repeatedly sanded and repainted to achieve an immaculate surface, then ornamented with gilded or bronze decorative details fixed with screws. Mies van der Rohe would later make such a care-

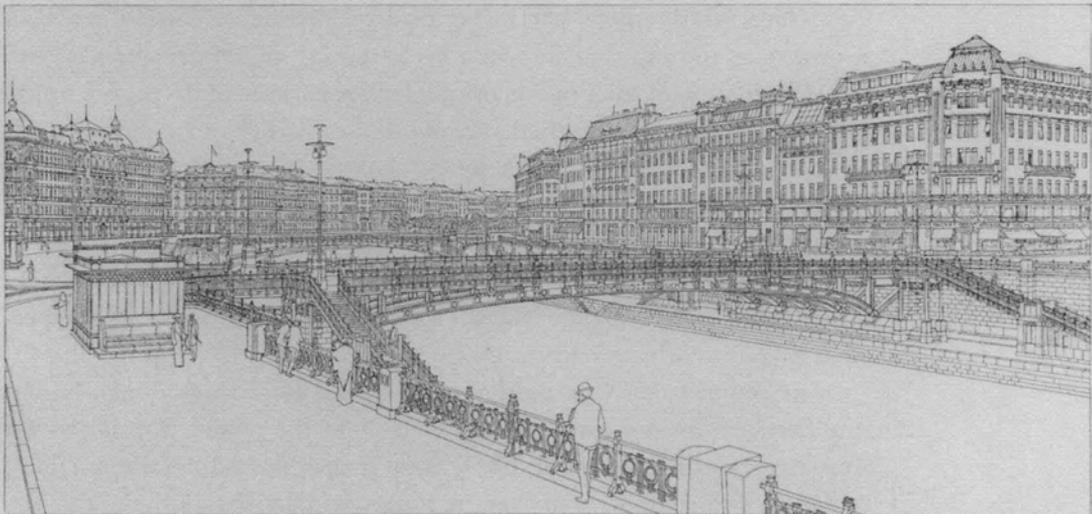
ful refinement of the surface famous in his treatment of the I-beams of the Farnsworth house (1950) – achieving the laconic splendor of the metal frame, of course, without applied ornamentation.

Granite was selected to be the material for the abutments and bases of the pylons, whose upper parts were clad with white glass tiles, again an appropriate and immaculate white backdrop for gilded ornaments. With this combination of color and material, the appearance of the bridge would have conveyed both a dignified aura of monumentality and a sense of modernity. It went, however, much too far for the Viennese. The honorable (*löblich*) city council immediately rejected Wagner's project and seized the opportunity to pass a resolution prohibiting any part of the construction from protruding above street level. The indefatigable Wagner immediately proposed a second design for the bridge conforming to the council's imperative for polite urban architecture (figs. 5, 6).

If we return to the first design and examine more closely the relationship between art and construction, the role of the pylons in this context appears to be crucial, and not simply because they serve different functions. In their relationship with the height, language, and materiality of the surrounding buildings, they maintain the essential spatial proportion with the street but define a distinct, autonomous space for the bridge as well. The placement of the massive pylons transforms the bridge into a rhythmical and modern plaza that as an urban platform becomes an active part of the city's fabric. Yet the supporting role of the pylons lies neither in their static necessity (to which Wagner referred in justifying their heaviness), nor in their monumentality (in providing a counterbalance to the thrust of the arched iron beams), but in the creation of an image that is meant to explain by visual analogy the inherent forces and tensions. The forceful presence of these heavyweight pylons gives the impression that the beam gains its curved line by being compressed between two pylons acting like buttresses, much like a bow arching under tension. The weight of the street seems necessary to hold the beams down and suppress their tension, thereby preventing them from jumping out of their joints like a spring.

By evoking this impression – again a reversal of the real condition – the physical nature of the construction becomes apparent. The pylons endow the construction with power; they pretend to be the “actors and performers,” whereas the steel beams appear to have a passive role of reacting to forces. In truth, the hierarchy of forces is just the opposite. The beams perform

PROJEKT FÜR DEN NEUBAU DER FERDINANDSBRÜCKE IN WIEN::

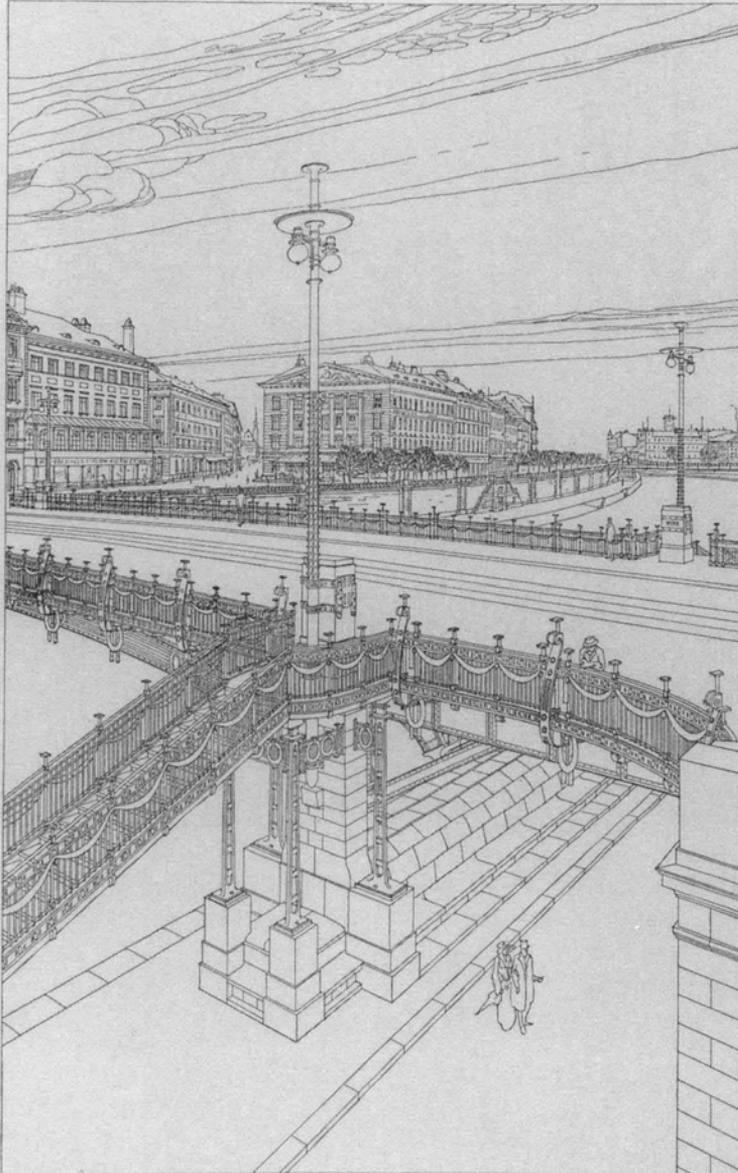


BERGAVAT  
OTTO WAGNER

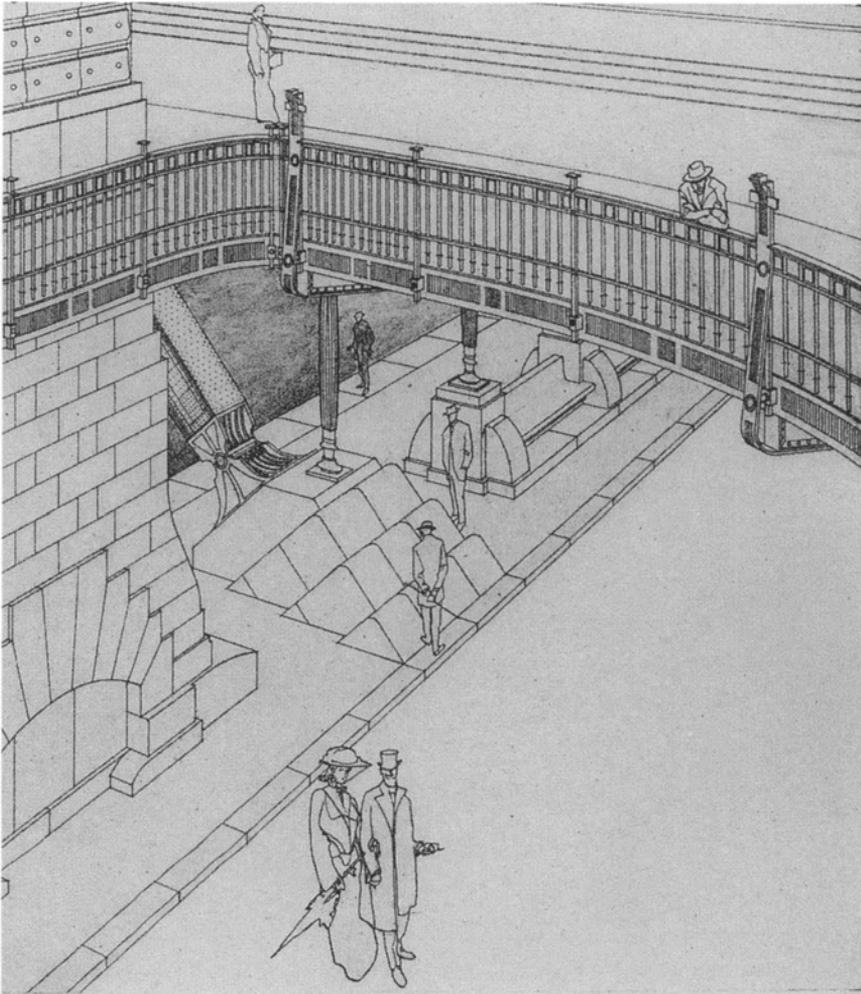
5. Otto Wagner,  
Ferdinandsbrücke, second competition  
design, 1905.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen,  
Projekte und ausgeführte Bauwerke*  
(Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1906), 3: pl. 64.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.
6. Otto Wagner,  
Ferdinandsbrücke, second competition  
design, 1905.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen,  
Projekte und ausgeführte Bauwerke*  
(Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1906), 3: pl. 65.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



PROJEKT FÜR DEN NEUBAU DER  
FERDINANDSBRÜCKE IN WIEN



BERGAMAT  
OTTO WAGNER



7. Detail of fig. 4.

the structural work, although Wagner wants us to believe that this energy is derived from the stone.

The slim linear forms of the steel arches are of insufficient size within the topos of classical imagery to carry the entire load of the street and its traffic. It is the inherent strength of this modern material that it can absorb enormous weight in a seemingly effortless line of support. The pylons can only be legitimized functionally as two passive masses, ballasts that help prevent the arches from pushing outward. But if this were their function, they would best be positioned *behind* the steel arches, not beside them, where they are actually located.

This shift to the side is very significant for other reasons. The spatial relationships of the composition would be disturbed if the pylons were placed behind the arches; the proportional balance of the bridge in relation to the urban context would be completely different. The second design for the Ferdinandsbrücke, as we can see from Wagner's magnificent drawings, employs the same type of construction, except that the steel beam is pressed below street level and the pylons are abandoned. Thus it is possible to get by without them.

The Ferdinandsbrücke demonstrates that Wagner did not significantly deviate from his principles of representation. Once again art triumphs with the ring-bearing putti posing atop the iron cage that modern man – the engineer – has prepared for them. This image reiterates the claim of superiority that Wagner made on behalf of the architect in relation to the engineer. The builder of monuments should rule over the manufacturer who works in iron. In Wagner's architectural world the *stone*, not the *iron*, occupies the position of authority and controls the world of art. The "building-artist" of the nineteenth century – like the putti – would never enter the iron cage, nor did Wagner's architectural imagination.

In Wagner's imagery there is thus far no interest in the "mechanical" or "metallic" aspects of the construction. The architect as artist could not turn his eyes away from the stone. In one part of the drawing Wagner seems to have placed himself standing next to the abutments with a certain gesture of helplessness, hands clasped behind his back, eyes riveted on the granite, as if the solution of the enigma could be read from it (fig. 7). In the futility of his endeavors, one is reminded of the character in Robert Musil's novel *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (The man without qualities), 1930–1943, who was doomed to failure but had a presentiment of it.

The Ferdinandsbrücke is more than a bridge. It is a viewing platform from which to gaze at the city, one that also allows a glimpse of the almost subterranean world of construction that now becomes visible but only in a suggestive way. The sculptural quality of its structural details is not yet assimilated into the architectural language, as would happen only two years later when Peter Behrens in his famous turbine factory for the AEG Company put constructional components on display and thereby turned them into sculpture.

It might be worthwhile to look into the question of whether an attitude similar to the polite bureaucratic imperative “construction below” might also be found in Wagner’s architectural practice. In his buildings after 1905 an urban presence of steel construction is no longer present. It seems that Wagner ceased wanting to explore the architectural beauty and modern lightweight monumentality of the metallic body and its capacity to express and communicate cultural values. Only inside the building can something comparable to the notion of *Industrie-Kultur* be found.

The famous banking hall of the Postsparkasse (1903–1912) has altogether “interiorized” the station building and its large glass-covered space with a type of construction that seems to be inspired by the suspension bridge (figs. 8, 9). The section cut through the main hall, with the ocular positioning of the circular lamps, even suggests the illusion of a locomotive on rails. The station building and the bridge, both prominent issues in Wagner’s urban architecture, reoccur, but this time they are hidden behind walls.

Contrary to the preliminary design for the Postsparkasse, where the iron appeared prominently in the superstructure of the facade and thereby alluded to the vast space behind, it disappears almost completely on the exterior of the executed building (fig. 10). In contrast to Wagner’s earlier attempts to dignify construction with expression, the effort here seems to be just the opposite – to prevent the iron from disappearing completely. What Wagner once endowed with a monumental appearance, he now suppresses and reduces to a minimalist, but efficient, symbolic detail; it is an artistic, almost erotic, play of masking and disguising that triggers the senses.

Like the thin floating garment that clothes the female body in ancient Greek sculpture, revealing as much beauty as it conceals, Wagner’s treatment of the structure and construction exploits a similar kind of delicate, sensuous play that was probably only evident to a connoisseur of a certain age and experience. Exactly this principle gives the interior of the Postsparkasse

its quality of silklke transparency. The glass veil is lifted up on iron stilts that carefully cut into its skin and gently disappear. Semper's theory of "dressing" (*Bekleidung*) could find no more ingenious interpretation, because here an artist, not a theoretician, generously appealed to it to mask his own interests and obsessions.

Even the aluminum caps attached to the bolt heads in the cladding of the facade — a detail that has provoked art historians to many a subtle and divergent interpretation — can find a better psychological explanation in this way. This *erotic* architectural ornament is actually intensified at the top of the building, which corresponds to that delicate part of the female body that Nietzsche once praised as being both "pleasurable and useful at the same time." From this highest point the motif of sensuousness multiplies its presence in the abstract, *sachliche* pattern of the aluminum caps that are spread over the facade like confetti. The cap signifies the suppressed presence of iron, screened by the garment of the building. But like the diaphanous garment, it reveals more than enough to prevent the iron from disappearing. Wagner appropriates it not at the level of construction but as representation. He, in effect, applies the economical, efficient modern *mask*. What he formerly treated monumentally, he now reduces to a minimalist, symbolic statement that no longer depends on mass. This was a victory over mass that was truly modern, like the filigree, wide-span structure of the engineer.

In our time Tadao Ando has taken Wagner's subtle sublimation a step further with the creation of a functional ornament: no longer "nails" affixing parts and reducing the time of construction but "holes" that modern construction practices leave behind (fig. 11). All the cladding is taken down, and light itself has become a substitute for the revealing veil of a material layer.

It can be argued that Wagner's concept of modernity was governed by a rather peculiar kind of necessity — the necessity to thrive in the absence of the monumental building commissions that had populated his architectural dreams from the early *Artibus* project to his later conception of the *Großstadt* as a continuously expanding city. In his essay entitled "Die Qualität des Baukünstlers" (The quality of the building-artist), 1912, Wagner argued that the ultimate goal of the architecture of his day was to add "a building from our own time to the symphony of monumental buildings of all times."<sup>33</sup> This opportunity was his dream, no matter what other words may have indicated. Listen to him again in another context: "The profession cries out for suste-

8. (Next page)  
Otto Wagner,  
interior hall, Postsparkasse,  
Vienna, 1904–1906.  
Photo: Courtesy Yukio Futagawa, ©Retoria.





21  
OKTOBER  
1977

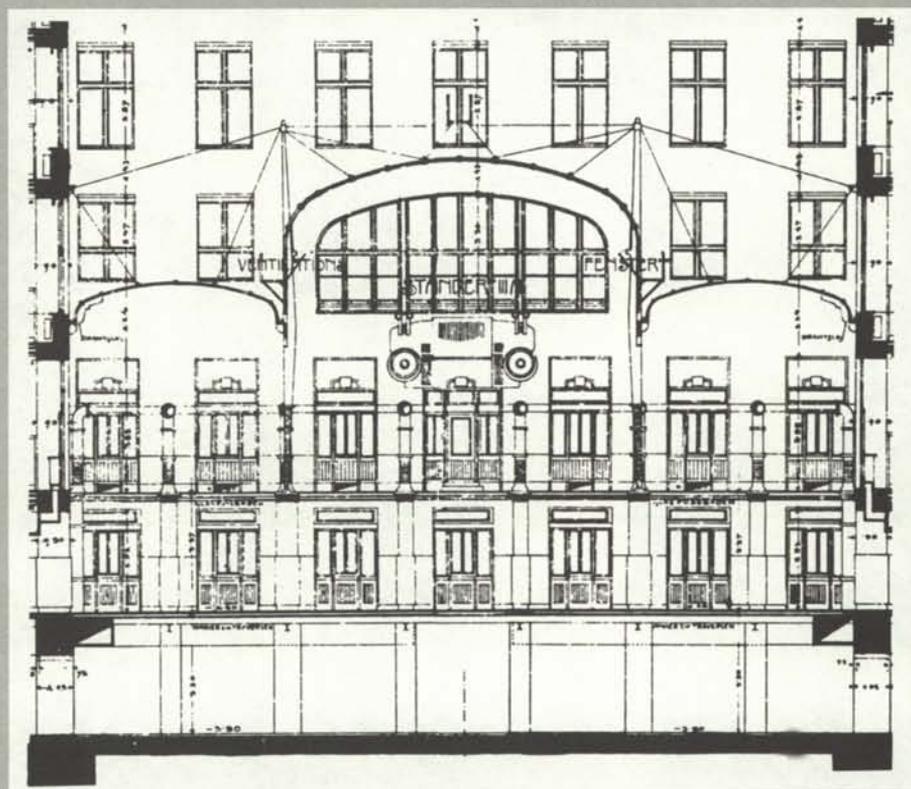
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Die P.S.C. auf einem Blick



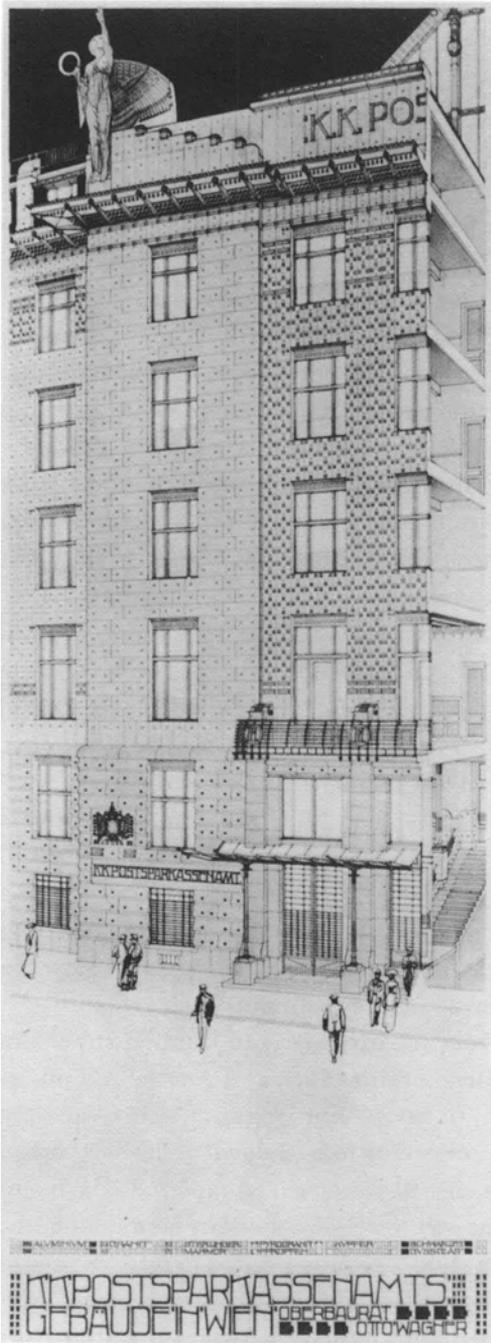
9. Otto Wagner,  
section drawing of interior hall,  
Postsparkasse, Vienna, 1904.  
From Heinz Geretsegger and Max Peintner,  
*Otto Wagner, 1841-1918* (Salzburg: Residenz  
Verlag, 1964), 168, fig. 188.  
© 1964 and 1983 Residenz Verlag, Salzburg  
and Vienna.

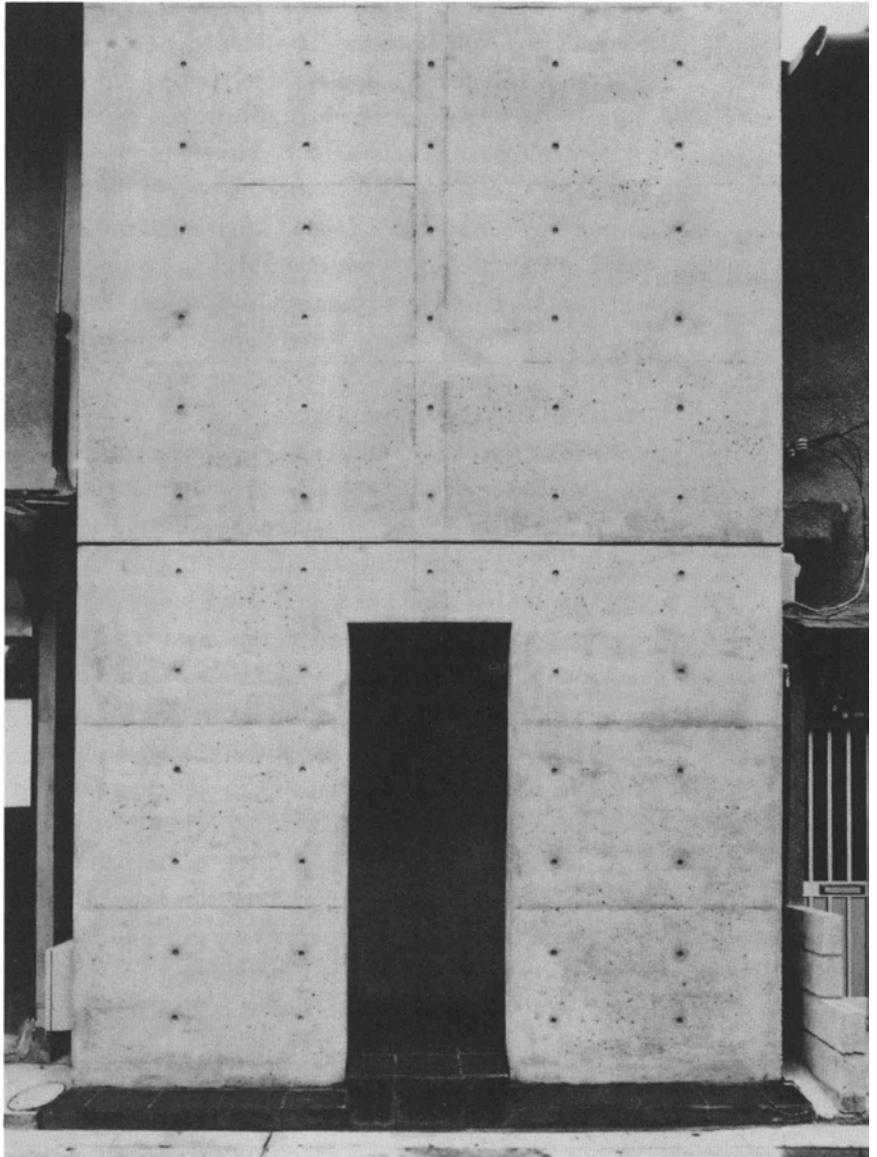
nance, for nutritious and life-sustaining food and wants not to upset its stomach with the virtually indigestible heavy stones of tradition, archaeology, and [building] science. I am certainly not opposed to these disciplines, but they belong in the second row as long as there are artists; we have now placed those disciplines in the second row, and hopefully, for the sake of art, they will remain there forever.”<sup>34</sup> Here Wagner rejected the monumentality of stone, as if it were based on tradition and archaeology. Yet only two years later, the following words accompanied another project, the Stadtmuseum competition: “It must be emphasized that in the last twenty years the Viennese people have not been administered a single warm spoonful of monumental soup, and therefore they still hunger for a monumental building; yet at least we find consolation in the fact that a strict simplicity constitutes the character of our time and therefore awaits expression in our art.”<sup>35</sup>

The *Großstadt* itself gave Wagner the opportunity to express the strict simplicity and functional ornament that he tried to approach with his concept of modern monumental form. It was the historical mission of the modern artist to make the urban plan conform to the needs of contemporary man and to elevate uniformity itself to the level of monumentality without achieving a schematic result.<sup>36</sup> The uniformity inevitably resulting from the necessity of economy and living styles had to be accepted and expressed in the future city plan. In the illustrations for his essay *Die Großstadt*, 1911, Wagner presented impressive bird’s-eye views of the modern “great city,” demonstrating how “our modern art” could “turn the long and uniform block facades . . . to monumental account” in order to “give them their full artistic effect.”<sup>37</sup>

In this same report he criticized efforts to avoid uniformity of dwelling types by the “altogether objectionable and artistically worthless overloading of the exteriors of these utilitarian structures with purposeless features,”<sup>38</sup> as well as the fashionable preference for irregular and winding streets. In this, he echoed arguments that Berlin critics such as Scheffler and others had been repeating for years. In his essay “Ein Weg zum Stil” (A path to style), 1903, Scheffler proclaimed uniformity to be the goal of the new “urban architecture.” The impressive image of rows of uncompleted apartment houses suggested to him the right way to achieve modern monumentality. To arrive at the gates of a modern style, one only needed to train the eye to discern the abstract visual language in the buildings under construction.<sup>39</sup>

In the same year that Wagner’s *Die Großstadt* appeared, Walter Curt





10. Otto Wagner,  
perspectival section drawing of  
Postsparkasse, Vienna, 1904.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen, Projekte  
und ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Anton  
Schroll, 1906), 3: unpaginated.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

11. Tadao Ando,  
row house in Sumiyoshi, Osaka, 1975–1976.  
Photo: Courtesy Tadao Ando.

Behrendt published an urban study entitled *Die einheitliche Blockfront als Raumelement im Stadtbau* (The homogeneous blockfront as a spatial element in urban design), dedicated to Karl Scheffler.<sup>40</sup> Behrendt took the next logical step by proposing rhythmically grouped units of apartment houses as the principal urban form of the future city, invoking Wagner's urban study in support of his ideas. A letter to Wagner from Albert E. Brinckmann, author of *Platz und Monument* (Square and monument), 1908, and a sharp critic of Camillo Sitte's sentimental city planning, supports this trend (figs. 12a, b).<sup>41</sup> In these years Wagner's ideas were certainly discussed within Berlin circles. The postcard Peter Behrens sent to "Herrn Hofrat Prof. Otto Wagner," apparently written during a private dinner party held at his house in Berlin-Neubabelsberg on 17 December 1914 (figs. 13a, b), sheds additional light on Wagner's influence. Addressing Wagner as "highly esteemed friend" (*hochverehrter Freund*), Behrens writes just to let Wagner know that he had been the talk of the party. "Today you were once again in our midst." Among those who signed the postcard was Karl Scheffler, sending Wagner his "first but nevertheless kindest regards!"<sup>42</sup>

While not allowing modern iron construction to become a conditioning factor in the architectonic impression, Wagner welcomed other aspects of modern reality with a rigor similar to that of his fellow countryman Karl Kraus. Prominent was an artistically satisfactory appearance of the great city, the necessity of its "faultless street cleaning and living accommodations provided with every comfort and suited to every social class." For the city's general "physiognomy" these instruments of urban life were most important, since "neatness and scrupulous cleanliness go hand in hand with art; city governments please take notice!"<sup>43</sup> In this regard, the street sweeper Wagner depicted in the foreground of his perspective drawing for the apartment house on Neustiftgasse becomes an important symbolic figure (see p. 104). The paradigm of scrupulous cleanliness going hand in hand with art approaches Scheffler's bare functional prose and the claim to raise uniformity to monumentality. With the "scrupulously clean" schematic designs of Ludwig Hilberseimer's *Großstadtarchitektur* of the mid-1920s, this paradigm found its ultimate realization in a vision strongly anti-Sitteesque.<sup>44</sup> The desire for both technologically efficient municipal services and homogeneous blocks of monumental structures had finally turned the great city into something that resembled, in Hilberseimer's own words, "more a necropolis than a metropolis."<sup>45</sup>

PRIVATDOZENT DR. PHIL. A. E. BRINCKMANN, AACHEN

Victoria Allee 58  
27.1.12.

hochgeachteter Herr Ober Baumeister!

Sobald habe ich Ihre „Grossstadt-  
Studie“ zu Ende gelesen. Die Anlagen  
so häufig auf alle „malerische Alt-  
väterweise“ u. „Sittlich-Sentimentali-  
täten“ darauf los, das ich alle, mei-  
ner freudigen Bewunderung Aus-  
druck zu geben. Beside ich doch selbst  
seit meiner ersten Schrift „Platz und  
Raumwert“ (wo ich C. Sittlich den Ro-  
mantiker der modernen Stadtbau-  
architekten nannte) ständig in glei-  
cher Richtung u. habe das Prinzip  
noch härter in meiner jetzt er-  
schienenen „Deutscher Stadtbaukunst“  
vertreten. Sublimierende Kritik meines  
ausgezeichneten Kollegen zeigt  
aber, wie gradezu der Bräutling das  
Wort Sittlich will, ich glaube wie  
Sie daran, dass wir als genau

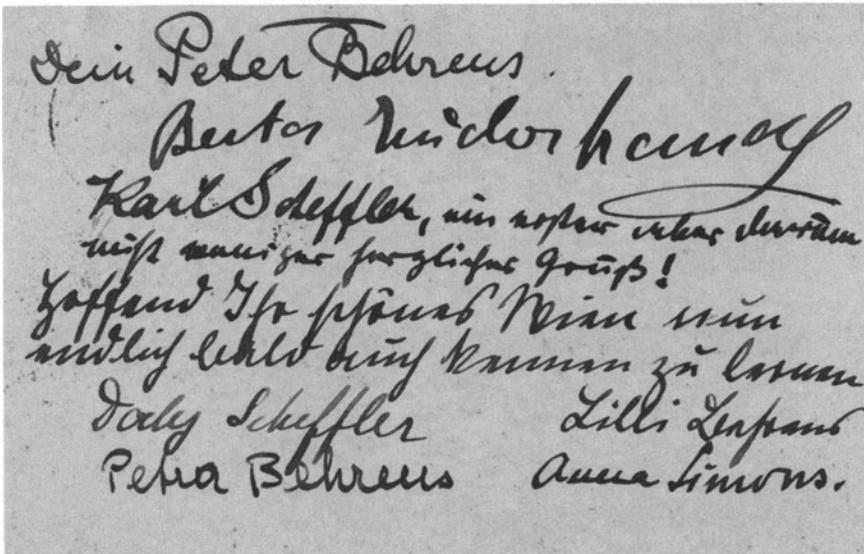
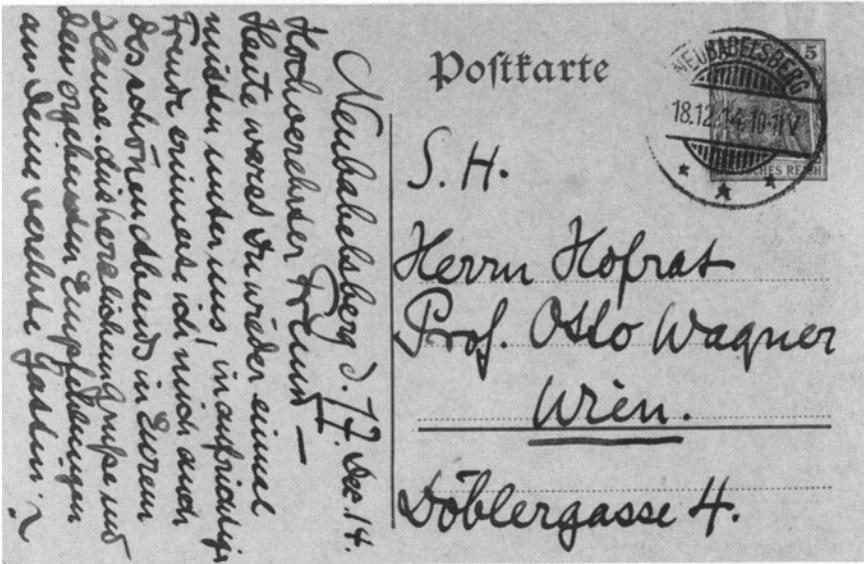
Kleinispiel u. gefälliger Auffatz  
herauskommen müssen u. wir ver-  
den es auch.

Vor bald zwei Jahren dankten Sie  
mir für mein kostbares „prähisto-  
rischer Stadtpläne in Süd-  
bayern“ u. stellten mir eine  
Künstlerische Festschrift in Aussicht.  
Vielleicht könnte ich in diesem Jahr  
einmal nach Wien, — erlauben  
Sie dann, das ich mir diese alle  
persönlich abhole?

Mit ergebensten Empfehlungen  
A. E. Brinckmann.

2 Anlagen.

- 12a. Letter from Albert E. Brinckmann to  
Otto Wagner, 27 January 1912.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.
- 12b. Back of fig. 12a.

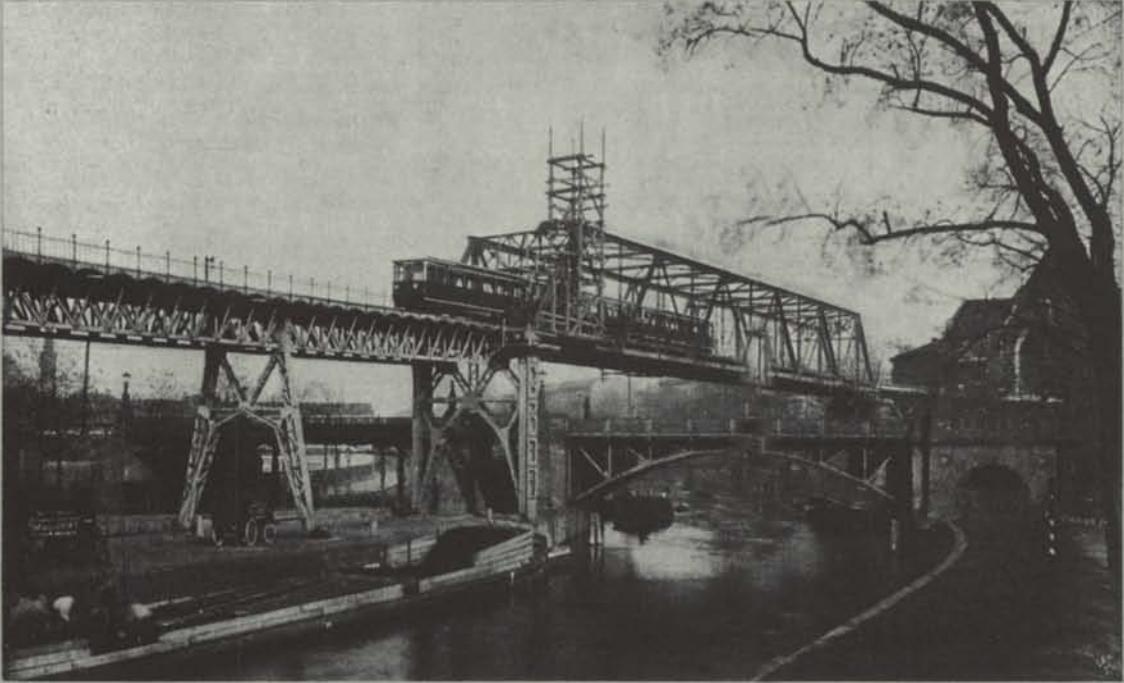


- 13a. Postcard from Peter Behrens to Otto Wagner, 17 December 1914. Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.
- 13b. Back of fig. 13a.

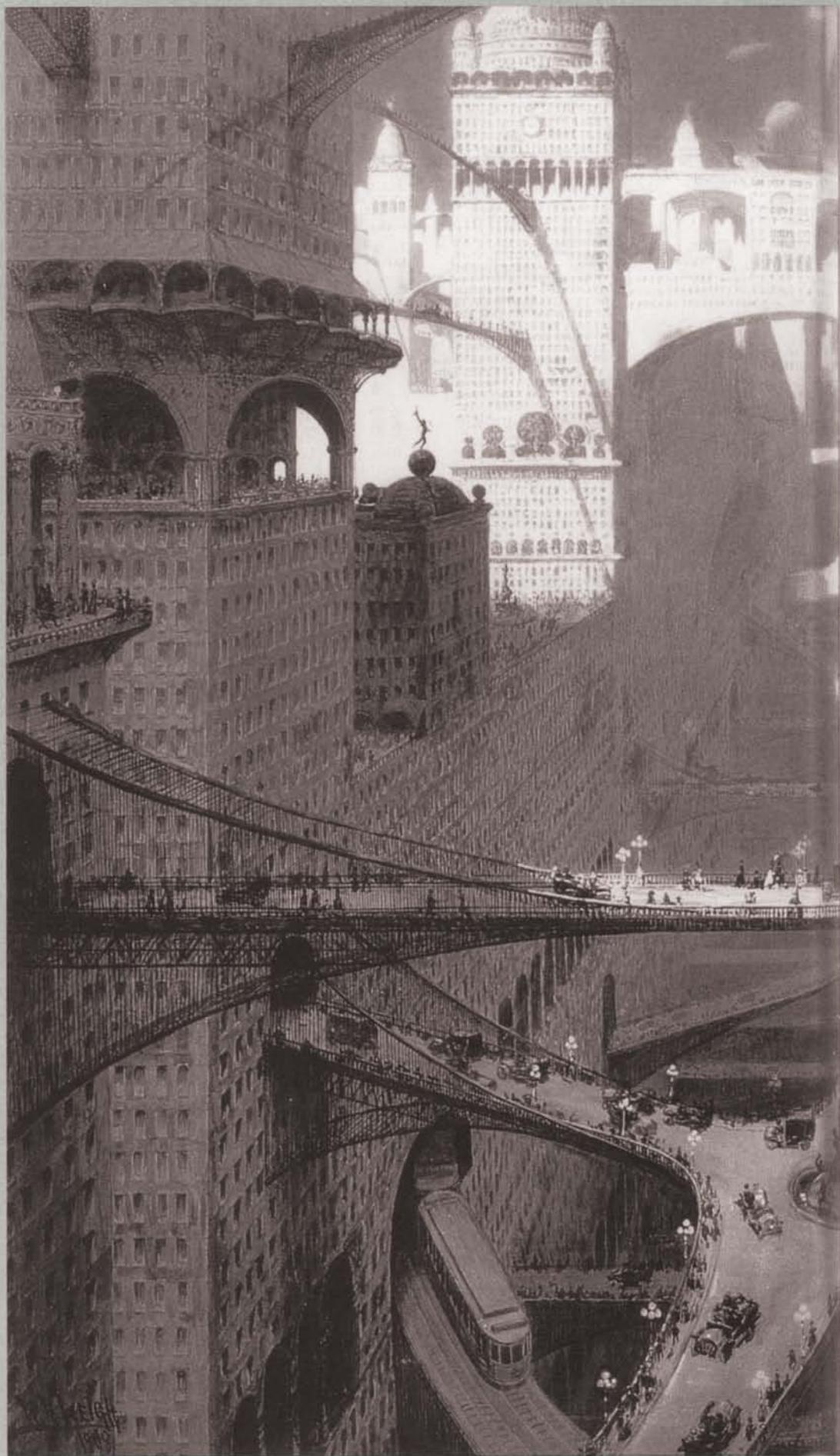
Fortunately the modern city did not develop under the yoke of a superimposed monumentality. The chaotic structure of the metropolis resisted all attempts at homogenization, regardless of their rigidity. The clash of modern reality with the monuments of the historical city supported different visions of the urban image (figs. 14, 15). At the turn of the century bridges began to climb over one another like copulating animals, intermingling to form a cluster of steel webs. In the joints of this mechanical system, where the subway and streetcar, shipping lanes and railway lines meet for an instant at their different levels before heading their different ways, the model of the “city of the future” was engendered. Here, the urban scenario of the metropolis – the city of multi-leveled movements, isolated objects, and omnipresent bridges – lay bare, waiting to be awakened by the kiss of a Futurist imagination.

Surprisingly it was Wagner, the protagonist of modern urban architecture, who inspired the rhetoric of Futurists like Antonio Sant’Elia, whose education was exclusively technical. The students of the *Wagnerschule* turned out to be the most influential purveyors of the homogeneous expression, both monumental and modern at the same time. We know that the young Sant’Elia jealously kept and frequently consulted the monograph of the *Wagnerschule*.<sup>46</sup> When Sant’Elia’s vocabulary was taking shape, many of his designs show similarities to Wagner’s own in their monumental representations, the use of pillars, the selection of the viewing point for a soaring perspective, and inflated proportions.<sup>47</sup>

In emphasizing the monumental representation, even the Futurist’s rhetorical use of iron invokes a dialogue with Wagner’s desire to make the material responsive to the modern condition. Of course the repertoire of expressive components no longer includes lions on top of pylons. The new heroic and functional ornament of the metallic culture of the metropolis exhibits filigree antennae atop overwhelming edifices.



14. Bridges atop bridges, the Berlin Elevated, ca. 1900.  
From *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 35, no. 95  
(27 November 1901), 589.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.
15. William Robinson Leigh,  
*Visionary City*, 1908.  
From Joseph J. Corn and Brian Horrigan,  
*Yesterday's Tomorrows: Past Visions of the  
American Future* (New York: Summit Books,  
1984), 34.  
Photo: Courtesy Joseph J. Corn.



## NOTES

1. Otto Wagner, "Erläuterungsbericht Stadtmuseum" (1910), in Otto Antonia Graf, *Otto Wagner: Das Werk des Architekten* (Vienna: Hermann Böhlaus Nachf., 1985), 2: 484.
2. Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1988), 92. Idem, *Moderne Architektur* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1896), 56: "Jede Bauform ist aus der Construction entstanden und successive zur Kunstform geworden....Dieser Grundsatz hält allen Analysen Stand und erklärt uns jede Kunstform."
3. Karl Scheffler, *Moderne Baukunst* (Berlin: Julius Bard; Leipzig: Julius Zeitler, 1907).
4. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 103. Idem, 1896 (see note 2), 72: "Ein Zusammenfassen von Kunst und Zweck ist nach modernen Anschauungen immer die erste Bedingung einer guten Lösung."
5. Karl Scheffler, "Hochbahn und Aesthetik," *Deutsche Bauhütte* 6, no. 14 (1902): 109.
6. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, "Hochhäuser," *Frühlicht* 1, no. 4 (1922): 122.
7. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 103. Idem, 1896 (see note 2), 72: "Das Modernste des Modernen in der Baukunst sind wohl unsere heutigen Großstädte. Ihre bisher nicht erreichte Dimension hat eine Unzahl neuer Fragen entstehen lassen, die ihrer Lösung durch die Baukunst entgegensehen."
8. Otto Wagner, "Erläuterungs-Bericht zum Entwurfe für den General-Regulierungs-Plan über das gesammte Gemeindegebiet von Wien" (1892-1893; 2nd ed., 1894), in Graf (see note 1), 1: 120. Max Schliepmann in "Die Berliner Hochbahn als Kunstwerk," *Berliner Architekturwelt* 4 (1902): 307, reports the vehement protests of the Berlin public against the first railroad constructions erected by engineers without the consultation of architects. The protests against the "naked crudity" of these iron constructions led to the city commissioning such Jugendstil designers as Alfred Grenander and Bruno Möhring. Certainly alluding to them, Wagner adds "except the very recent ones."
9. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 111.
10. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 111. Idem, 1896 (see note 2), 86-87: "Bahnen im Strassenniveau, ob es nun Pferdebahnen, Dampfbahnen oder solche mit elektrischem Betriebe sind, verunzieren fast immer, abgesehen von allen durch sie verursachten Verkehrsstörungen, das Strassenbild."
11. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 111. Idem, 1896 (see note 2), 87: "Sie ist etwas billiger als die Tiefbahn und bietet dem Fahrenden durch einen freien und wechselreichen Ausblick manchen Genuss."
12. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 112. Idem, 1896 (see note 2), 90: "Das erste brutale Auftreten des neuen Materiales, des Eisens, hat die Städtebewohner zu recht energischen Protesten veranlasst."
13. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 111. Idem, 1896 (see note 2), 87: "Dem Städtbewohner wird aber in erster Linie immer um die Erhaltung eines möglichst schönen Stadtbildes zu thun sein, es

wird daher die Hochbahn bei ihm nie Anklang finden, und dies ist auch selbstverständlich immer der Standpunkt des Baukünstlers.“

14. Otto Wagner, *Die Großstadt: Eine Studie über diese von Otto Wagner* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1911). The text was translated as “The Development of a Great City,” together with an appreciation of the author, by A. D. F. Hamlin, *Architectural Record* 31 (May 1912): 485–500. Wagner’s text was prompted by the lecture he gave at Columbia University in 1910.

15. See Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 95.

16. Joseph August Lux, *Otto Wagner: Eine Monographie* (Munich: Delphin, 1914), 124.

17. Otto Wagner, *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Author, 1889). See E. V. Humphrey, trans., *Otto Wagner: Sketches, Projects and Executed Buildings* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 17.

18. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 61. Idem, 1896 (see note 2), 11: “*Als die Krone des modernen Menschen in seiner glücklichen Vereinigung von Idealismus und Realismus wurde der Architekt gepriesen. Leider empfindet nur er selbst... das Wahre dieses Ausspruches.*“

19. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 94 n. 92. Idem, 1896 (see note 2), 59–60: “*Nachdem der Ingenieur selten als Künstler geboren, der Baukünstler in der Regel aber auch zum Ingenieur zu machen ist, kann es als sicher angenommen werden, dass es der Kunst, beziehungsweise dem Baukünstler mit der Zeit gelingen muss, seinen Einfluss auf das heute vom Ingenieur occupirte Gebiet zu erweitern... dass von einem Herabdrücken des Niveaus des Ingenieurs durch den Künstler schon deshalb keine Rede sein kann, weil die Fähigkeiten Beider in hervorragender Weise wohl noch selten in einem Individuum vereint waren.*“

20. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 94 n. 92.

21. Otto Wagner, “Erläuterungs-Bericht zum Entwurfe für den General-Regulierungs-Plan über das gesammte Gemeindegebiet von Wien” (1892–1893; 2nd ed., 1894), in Graf (see note 1), 1: 92.

22. Wagner, 1912 (see note 14): 494.

23. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 94.

24. Otto Wagner, “Erläuterungs-Bericht zum Entwurfe für den General-Regulierungs-Plan über das gesammte Gemeindegebiet von Wien” (1892–1893; 2nd ed., 1894), in Graf (see note 1), 1: 95.

25. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 63.

26. Otto Wagner, “Erläuterungs-Bericht zum Entwurfe für den General-Regulierungs-Plan über das gesammte Gemeindegebiet von Wien.” (1892–1893; 2nd ed., 1894), in Graf (see note 1), 1: 119.

27. Humphrey (see note 17), 18. Otto Wagner, *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (1889), in Graf (see note 1), 1: 73: “*Kunstwerke sollen eben immer das Spiegelbild ihrer*

*Zeit sein. Dasz dieser Realismus in der Architektur auch recht sonderbare Blüten treiben kann, davon haben wir einige recht treffende Beispiele aufzuweisen, wie den Eiffelturm, den Kursaal in Ostende etc., etc."*

28. Wagner, "Erläuterungsbericht Stadtmuseum," in Graf (see note 1), 1: 393.

29. In this context it is worthwhile to come back to Lux's biography of Wagner, written in 1914. In 1910 Lux published a book entitled *Ingenieur-Ästhetik* (Vienna: Gustav Lammers), which argued, contrary to Wagner, that the artist and engineer should be one and that they should reject any compromise with the formal ideas borrowed from the arts. Lux not only opposed discrimination against the engineer as a destroyer of beauty but also called him the true architect of modern times (p. 14). Notwithstanding the prejudices of art history, Lux found modern construction to be beautiful, and insisted it would only be a matter of time before the public would also see it as beautiful (p. 38).

30. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 89.

31. Wagner, 1988 (see note 2), 102.

32. Otto Wagner, "Erläuterungsbericht Ferdinandsbrücke" (1905), in Graf (see note 1), 2: 502.

33. Otto Wagner, "Die Qualität des Baukünstlers" (1912), in Graf (see note 1), 2: 653: "...der *Symphonie von Monumentalwerken aller Epochen ein Werk unserer Zeit beizufügen.*"

34. Otto Wagner, "Die Kunst im Gewerbe" (1899), in Graf (see note 1), 1: 363: "*Das Gewerbe schreit nach Brot, nach nahrhafter, lebenserhaltender Speise und will sich nicht mit schwer verdaulichen Steinen, wie sie Tradition, Archäologie und Wissenschaft bieten, den Magen verderben. Ich bin gewiss kein Verächter dieser Disciplinen, aber sie gehören, so lange es Künstler gibt, in die zweite Reihe; dort haben wir sie jetzt hingestellt, und dort werden sie hoffentlich, der Kunst zum Heile, immer bleiben.*"

35. Otto Wagner, "Erläuterungsbericht Franz-Josef Museum" (1901), in Graf (see note 1), 1: 395: "...dasz die Wiener Bevölkerung seit 20 Jahren keinen warmen Löffel Monumentalsuppe genossen hat, also jetzt sicher nach einem Monumentalbau hungert, so ist doch zu bedenken, dasz die stramme Einfachheit ein Charakteristikon unserer Zeit bildet, daher in der Kunst sicher zum Ausdruck kommen musz."

36. Wagner, 1912 (see note 14), 490.

37. Wagner, 1912 (see note 14), 490. Idem, *Die Großstadt: Eine Studie über diese von Otto Wagner* (1911), in Graf (see note 1), 2: 641: "*Die Kunst unserer Zeit hat durch breite Straßen dies Uniformität zur Monumentalität erhoben und weiß dieses Motiv durch glückliche Unterbrechungen künstlerisch voll zu verwerten.... Die zwecklich und ökonomisch bedingte Uniformität der Wohnhäuser hat leider zu einem ganz verwerflichen, gegenseitigen Übertrumpfen im Außendekor dieser Nutzbauten durch zweckwidrige Dinge... geführt*" (Our modern art has with broad streets raised this uniformity to monumentality, and it knows how to make full artistic use of this motif with felicitous interruptions.... The practically and economically conditioned uni-

formity of the block facades has unfortunately led to a very objectionable mutual one-upmanship [*Übertrumpfen*] in the unsuitable exterior decoration of these practical buildings).

38. Wagner, 1912 (see note 14), 490.

39. Karl Scheffler, "Ein Weg zum Stil." *Berliner Architekturwelt* 5 (1903): 291–95. See also Scheffler (see note 3), 29–39. Similar arguments are found in Hans Schliepmann, "Vom Straßens-bilde." *Berliner Architekturwelt* 6 (1904): 37–40, 73–75. After the exhibition of the results of the competition for greater Berlin, mentioned in Wagner's *Die Großstadt*, these arguments became quite common among architects. For example, see Bruno Möhring, "Die neue Großstadt." *Die Bauwelt* 1, no. 4 (1910): 17–20. For the results of the competition, see *Groß-Berlin Wettbewerb Neunzehnhundertzehn* (Berlin, 1911).

40. Walter Curt Behrendt, *Die einheitliche Blockfront als Raumelement im Stadtbau: Ein Beitrag zur Stadtbaukunst der Gegenwart* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1911).

41. Letter from Privatdozent Dr. Phil. A. E. Brinckmann, Victoria Allee 38, Aachen, to Otto Wagner, dated 27 January 1912. Special Collections, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Santa Monica:

*Hochgeecherter Herr Oberbaurat!*

*Soeben habe ich ihre "Großstadt-Studie" zu Ende gelesen. Sie schlagen so tüchtig auf alle "Malerische Altväterweise" u. "Sitte-Sentimentalitäten" darauf los, daß ich eile, meiner freudigen Bewunderung Ausdruck zu geben. Arbeite ich doch selbst seit meiner ersten Schrift Platz und Monument (wo ich C. Sitte der Romantiker der modernen Stadtbauarchitekten nannte) ständig in gleicher Richtung u. habe das Prinzip noch schärfer in meiner jetzt erschienenen Deutschen Stadtbaukunst vertreten... ich glaube wie Sie daran, daß wir aus jenem Kleinspiel u. gefälligem Aufputz herauskommen müssen u. wir werden es auch.*

(Highly Honored Senior Architectural Counselor!)

I have just finished reading your "*Großstadt-Studie*." Your attack on all "painterly senility" and "Sitteesque sentimentalities" is so well done that I hurry to express my enthusiastic admiration. I myself have since my first publication, *Platz und Monument* (in which I called C. Sitte the romantic among modern city architects), steadily worked in the same direction and have supported the principle even more strongly in my just published *Deutsche Stadtbaukunst*... Like you, I believe that we must move beyond such small tricks [*Kleinspiel*] and obsequious finery, and we will do so).

42. Letter from Peter Behrens et al., Berlin-Neubabelsberg, to Otto Wagner, dated 17 December 1914. Special Collections, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Santa Monica:

*Neubabelsberg d. 17. Dez. 14. Hochverehrter Freund – Heute warst Du wieder einmal mit-  
ten unter uns, in aufrichtiger Freude erinnerte ich mich auch des schönen Abends in Eurem  
Hause. Mit herzlichem GruÙe und den ergebensten Empfehlungen an Deine verehrte Gattin.*

*Dein Peter Behrens*

*Berta Zuckerkandel*

*Karl Scheffler, ein erster aber darum nicht weniger herzlicher GruÙ!*

*Hoffend Ihr schönes Wien nun endlich bald auch kennen zu lernen,*

*Lili Behrens*

*Daly Scheffler*

*Petra Behrens Anna Simons.*

(Neubabelsberg, 17 December [19]14. Highly Esteemed Friend – Today you were once  
again in our midst. With true joy did I also recall the wonderful evening at your house.  
With warm greetings and the most devoted regards to your esteemed wife.

Your Peter Behrens

Berta Zuckerkandel

Karl Scheffler, first but nevertheless kindest regards! Hoping finally soon to get to know  
your beautiful Vienna,

Lili Behrens

Daly Scheffler

Petra Behrens Anna Simons).

43. Wagner, 1912 (see note 14): 491. Idem, *Die Großstadt: Eine Studie über diese von Otto  
Wagner* (1911), in Graf (see note 1), 2: 642: “*Je besser eine Großstadt ihren Zweck erfüllt, je größeres  
Behagen ihrer Bewohner sie hervorruft und je mehr die Kunst dabei zu Worte kommt desto  
schöner ist sie. Ihr adrettes Aussehen, ihre peinliche Reinlichkeit gehen mit der Städtekunst stets  
Hand in Hand. Darin liegt der Fingerzeig für jede Stadtverwaltung*” (The better a great city  
fulfills its purpose, the more pleasure it gives its inhabitants, and the more art is expressed, the  
more beautiful is the city. Neatness and scrupulous cleanliness go hand in hand with art; city  
governments please take notice).

44. In an unpublished manuscript entitled “Die Architektur der Großstadt,” dating from  
1914, Hilberseimer strongly attacked the fashion of Sitte’s urbanism because of its formalistic  
prejudices. For Hilberseimer the modern metropolis, as it should be conceived, existed only  
on paper. Among the projects of significance for the development of the future city, Hilberseimer  
listed the “Entwürfe für eine australische u. eine finnische Großstadt. Wettbewerb Großberlin.  
Wagners Entwurf für Wien.” Ludwig Hilberseimer Papers. The Art Institute of Chicago.

45. Ludwig Hilberseimer, *Entfaltung einer Planungsidee* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1963), 22. For

a more detailed account, see Richard Pommer, "More a Necropolis than a Metropolis," in Richard Pommer et al., *In the Shadow of Mies. Ludwig Hilberseimer: Architect, Educator, and Urban Planner* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1988), 16–53.

46. Otto Wagner, *Die Wagner-Schule* (Vienna, 1902).

47. Luciano Caramel and Alberto Longatti, *Antonio Sant'Elia: L'opera completa* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), 24.

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PART II

CONTRARY OR COMPLEMENTARY FACES?



1. Photograph of Hendrik Petrus Berlage,  
ca. 1930.  
Rotterdam/Amsterdam, Nederlands  
Architectuurinstituut.
2. Egon Schiele,  
drawing of Otto Wagner, 1914/1915,  
Wiener Werkstätte postcard no. 251.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

Iain Boyd Whyte

MODERNIST DIOSCURI?  
OTTO WAGNER AND  
HENDRIK PETRUS BERLAGE

In surveys of the Modern Movement, Otto Wagner and Hendrik Petrus Berlage are invariably linked as members of the small circle of visionary spirits who prepared the way for the early twentieth-century design revolution (figs. 1, 2). Writing in 1919, J. J. P. Oud pointed to the years 1890–1910 as the crucial period for the definition of the new building tasks, adding that “in the solution of these problems the way was led by men like Otto Wagner in Austria, Peter Behrens in Germany, [Louis] Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright in America, and Dr. H. P. Berlage in my own country. All of them argued for a modern, honest conception of architecture and worked on this principle.”<sup>1</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner followed this example in the first edition of his *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, published in 1936, adding Henry van de Velde and Adolf Loos; the pattern has been followed ever since.

The pairing of names reaches an apotheosis of sorts in an article by Jan Tabor, which assures us that “Berlage and Wagner were more than kindred spirits. They were like twin brothers growing up under different spirits (Baroque exuberance versus Protestant austerity).”<sup>2</sup> The literature on the two masters, however, does not exactly reverberate with the excitement of this twinship. The monograph on Wagner published in 1914 by Joseph August Lux mentions Berlage only once and then in the most unflattering terms. Referring to the 1884 competition for the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, which both Berlage and Wagner entered, and to Berlage’s much later design, which was ultimately completed in 1903, Lux noted that “Berlage will allow me to say that Wagner’s stock exchange would have given more lasting architectural pleasure to Amsterdam than the brutal brick barn that ultimately depresses one with its doctrinaire puritanism.”<sup>3</sup> Lux’s faith in Berlage’s

goodwill may well have been stretched here.

Following the first point of contact at the competition of 1884 in Amsterdam, a second occurred in 1886, when Berlage reviewed the Jubilee Exhibition in Berlin. Following a long account of the Pergamon Altar and a short paean to Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Berlage turned his attention to a more contemporary talent.

Judged by his project for a parliament building in Pest, Otto Wagner would seem to be an artist of the first rank. This is an impressive domed construction. Anyone who knows Pest, with its magnificent situation on the Danube, will regret that the broad river will never be able to reflect this building. Otto Wagner is clearly a master draughtsman and in this respect his design is among the most beautiful of those presented in the exhibition. A charming project for a villa in Hütt[el]dorf near Vienna confirms this for a second time.<sup>4</sup>

Two years later, in 1888, Berlage exhibited two drawings from his unsuccessful entry to the 1886–1887 competition for a new facade for the Milan cathedral at the Jubilee Exhibition at the Künstlerhaus in Vienna.<sup>5</sup> He made little impact on the competition with this design, and it seems unlikely that this Gothicist project would have excited Wagner unduly.

Whether the two men met on either of these occasions must remain a matter of speculation. Over the following decades, however, Berlage clearly became well acquainted with Wagner's work, as can be gleaned from a tantalizing comment by Max Eisler in an article of 1916 on Berlage's plan for South Amsterdam. Referring to a conversation with Berlage, Eisler added: "I cannot forget the hour during which we talked about Otto Wagner. In many respects he has made the Hague and Amsterdam seem like the northern pole of a Modern Movement in building, which has its southern pole in Vienna."<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately Eisler gives no details, and his short survey of the work of Berlage, dated 1920 and published in Vienna, draws no further parallel with Wagner.<sup>7</sup> Any design similarities that might have been implied by Eisler were denied, however, by Oud in the article mentioned above. Although Oud recognized shared theoretical convictions, he also noted a wide stylistic diversity. "You can see this," he wrote, "if you compare the works of Otto Wagner with those of Berlage. The difference is characteristic and the result not of personal design ability but of local conditions such as climate, living patterns, and so on."<sup>8</sup>

The relationship and the differences between the two men have not been pursued in the monographic literature. While Lux was clearly no admirer of Berlage, the comparable book on Berlage by Jan Gratama makes no reference to Wagner.<sup>9</sup> This separation of Tabor's twins continues in more recent accounts. In the standard Wagner monograph by Heinz Geretsegger and Max Peintner, Berlage appears very briefly, again in the context of the 1884 stock exchange competition,<sup>10</sup> while the excellent account of Wagner's furniture and interiors, published by Paul Asenbaum and others in 1984, draws no comparisons at all with Berlage.<sup>11</sup> On the other side of the relationship, Wagner entirely fails to appear in Pieter Singelenberg's standard monograph on Berlage,<sup>12</sup> and he is cited only once in Manfred Bock's detailed account of Berlage's early career – and then in a very general quotation from J. H. van den Broek listing Wagner and Berlage together among the Pevsnerian pioneers.<sup>13</sup>

There are, of course, exceptions. One is to be found in the question posed by Ákos Moravánszky regarding the degree to which “agreement and difference” can be found in the works of Wagner and Berlage.<sup>14</sup> The most striking level of consensus, he finds, is on the “outer skin,” or *Oberfläche*, since for both Wagner and Berlage “it is the outer skin that decides if an artistic form emerges from the characteristic form.”<sup>15</sup> This concern with the outer surface as the vehicle through which both the structure and the function of the building might be given artistic expression points back to the mutual source, the egg from which the twins – if twins they were – developed.

The source was Gottfried Semper, both in the example of his buildings and in his theoretical writings on the nature and origins of architecture. The debt to Semper owed by Wagner and Berlage has been acknowledged so fully, both by the debtors themselves and by subsequent historians, that it merits only brief rehearsal here. In Vienna, as Renate Wagner-Rieger has indicated,<sup>16</sup> Semper's influence was particularly marked on the generation of architects trained by August Sicardsburg and Eduard van der Nüll at the Akademie der bildenden Künste. While van der Nüll himself had railed against thoughtless eclecticism in the mid-1840s,<sup>17</sup> the next generation found exactly this quality in his own work. In the 1860s, according to Wagner-Rieger:

Architecture in Vienna must, in general, be regarded as of a new type, modern, and of an increased monumentality. It had freed itself from the romantic

historicism that Sicardsburg and van der Nüll had pursued to the utmost limits in the Opera House – and not without being ruined in the process. It is not surprising, therefore, that this Semperian component was expressed almost at its most radical by one of the youngest Nüll students, namely Otto Wagner, when in 1863 he produced – without being invited – competition designs for a stock exchange building on Franz Josefs Kai.<sup>18</sup>

The similarity is particularly striking between the facade designed to face the quay in Wagner's first scheme for the stock exchange (fig. 3) and Semper's building for the Eidgenössisches Polytechnikum in Zurich, built 1858–1864 (fig. 4). Berlage, of course, studied at the Eidgenössisches Polytechnikum, arriving in 1875 – four years after Semper had left for Vienna – and completing his diploma in 1878. Not only did Semper's successors in the design studio, Julius Stadler and Georg Lاسius, maintain the Semperian tradition, but the physical surroundings of the Polytechnikum also had an impact on Berlage, whose diploma scheme for a school of applied art and museum also bears close comparison to Semper's model (fig. 5).<sup>19</sup>

In their respective facades for the stock exchange and the school of applied art, both Wagner and Berlage followed Semper's lead in differentiating between a decorated central bay, based on the triumphal arch motif, and simple, undecorated flanking wings. While this format reflected standard Palladian precedent, the exact detailing of the scheme in the hands of Semper can be seen to reflect the principles of masking and “dressing,” or *Bekleidung*, developed in his writings. The incised stucco surfaces of the side wings have been seen by Peter Wegmann to represent the Greek isodomon, described by Semper as the “most ideal” outer skin for a wall.<sup>20</sup> This outer skin both expresses and masks the structural frame, marked by the quoins and cornice, which rises out of the earthbound rustication like Semper's primitive hut rising from the hearth. In contrast to this simple plane, the central bay, projecting beyond the facade, creates the realm of artifice that Semper deemed essential for the creation of art. “The denial of reality, of materiality is necessary where the form is to stand out as a meaningful symbol, as an autonomous creation of man. We should forget the means necessary to achieve the sought-for artistic impression.”<sup>21</sup> On all three facades by Semper, Wagner, and Berlage, the projecting central bay is the primary bearer of architectural decoration. In this idealistic realm, pure, artistic form dominates, independent of material concerns and of the structural

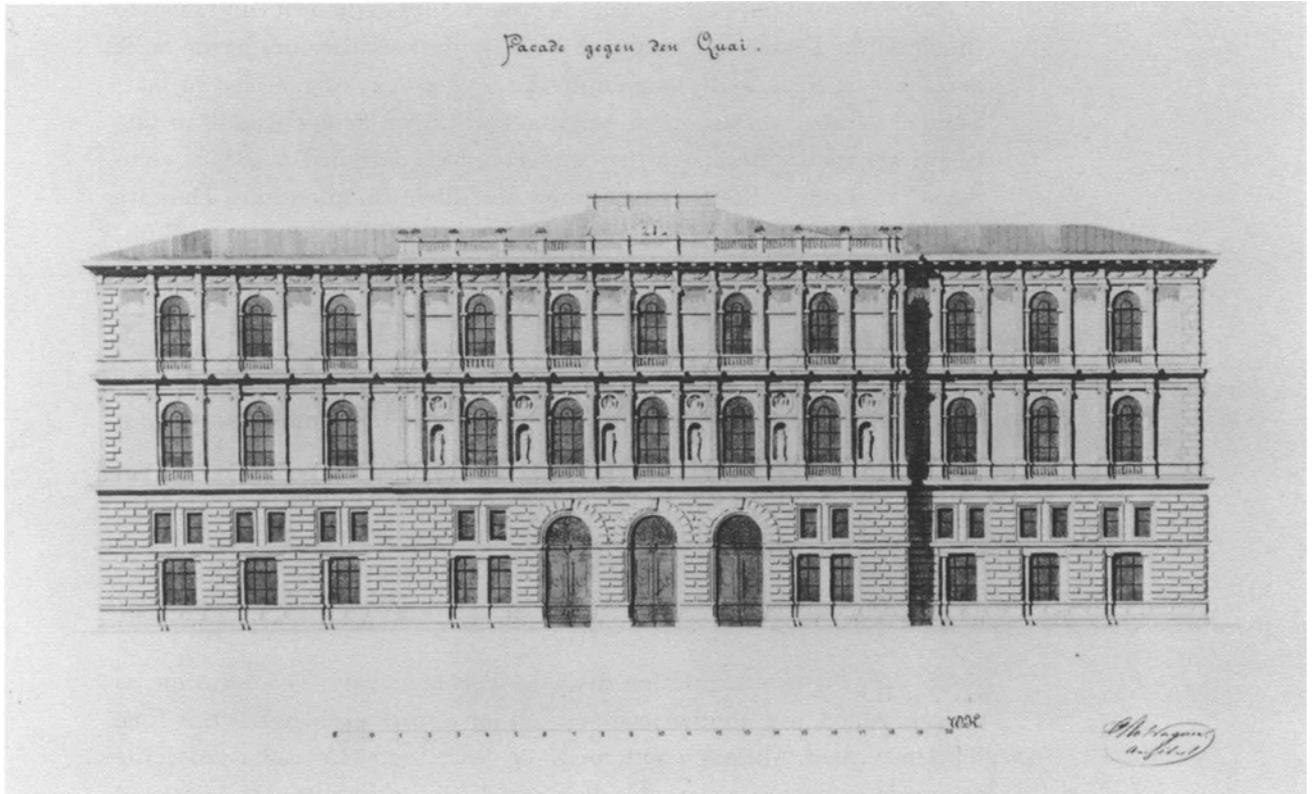
frame of the building behind. This symbolic plane, hung in front of the main body of the building, corresponds, of course, to the decorative mat that Semper regarded as the precursor of all architectural art.

Both Wagner and Berlage had the opportunity in the 1870s and 1880s to illustrate the Semperian theory of the origins of architecture in the mask and the feast. Sketches by Wagner for the *Festpavillon* designed for the marriage of Princess Stephanie of Belgium and Crown Prince Rudolf in 1881 (see p. 20) and by Berlage for street decorations designed in 1887 to commemorate King Willem III (fig. 6) show near identical intentions. They are based on a pair of simple, rectangular frames with the Semperian “vellum” stretched between them. These schemes give tangible form to Semper’s conviction that

the festival apparatus, the improvised scaffolding with all the special splendour and frills that indicate more precisely the occasion for the festivity and enhance the glorification of the day – covered with decorations, draped with carpets, dressed with boughs and flowers, adorned with festoons and garlands, fluttering banners and trophies – this is the motive of the permanent monument. . . . Thus, the Egyptian temple arose from the motive of the improvised pilgrims’ market.<sup>22</sup>

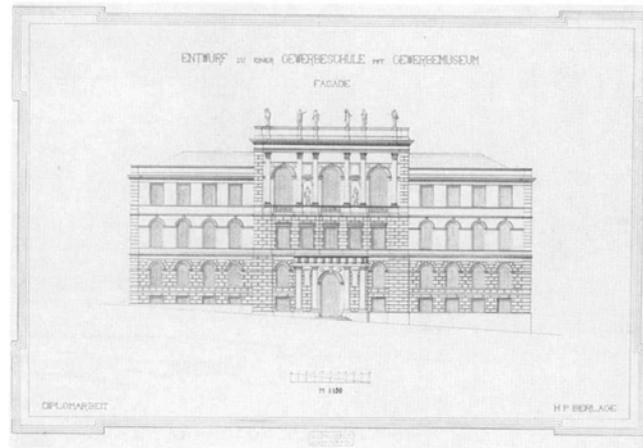
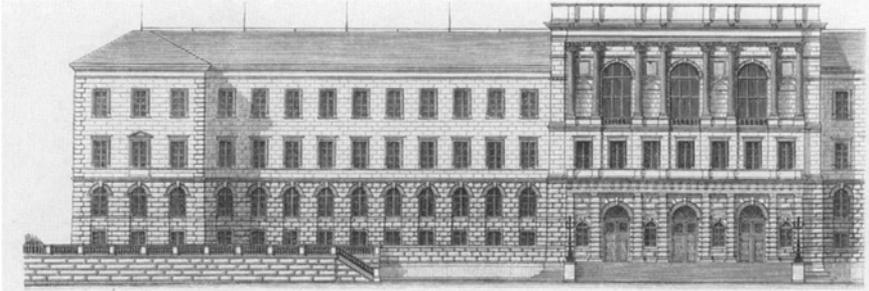
In 1884 the two Semperian disciples became rivals. The occasion, as already noted, was another competition for a stock exchange – this time for Amsterdam. Although both might be described as Neorenaissance, the two projects reveal a remarkable degree of dissimilarity within this notional framework. Wagner’s project (fig. 7) offers a single axial hall set behind a four-columned portico that speaks much the same language, for example, as Semper’s city hall at Winterthur, built in 1865–1866. Berlage entered a joint scheme with his partner Theodor Sanders (fig. 8). As Singelenberg has noted, the dominant Dutch Renaissance flavor of the exterior is leavened with both Italian and German elements, including an entrance parti that alludes to Semper’s Burgtheater in Vienna. The interior (fig. 9), in contrast, is “an exuberant variation in Italian art” with references to the Pantheon, the Pazzi Chapel, and Francesco Borromini’s Convento dei Filippini in Rome.<sup>23</sup>

While the projects by Wagner and Berlage/Sanders can both be described as Neorenaissance, they reveal quite different intentions in their relations both to historical models and to the surrounding cityscape. Adher-



3. Otto Wagner,  
competition design for the facade of the  
Vienna Stock Exchange facing the Franz  
Josefs-Kai, first project, 1863.  
Vienna, The Vienna Stock Exchange.

MODERNIST DIOSCURI?



4. Gottfried Semper,  
elevation drawing of the Eidgenössisches  
Polytechnikum, Zurich, 1858–1864.  
From Constantin Lipsius, "Gottfried  
Semper," *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 14, no. 21  
(13 March 1880): 109.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.
5. Hendrik Petrus Berlage,  
drawing of a school of applied art and  
museum, diploma project, 1878.  
Rotterdam/Amsterdam, Nederlands  
Architectuurinstituut.



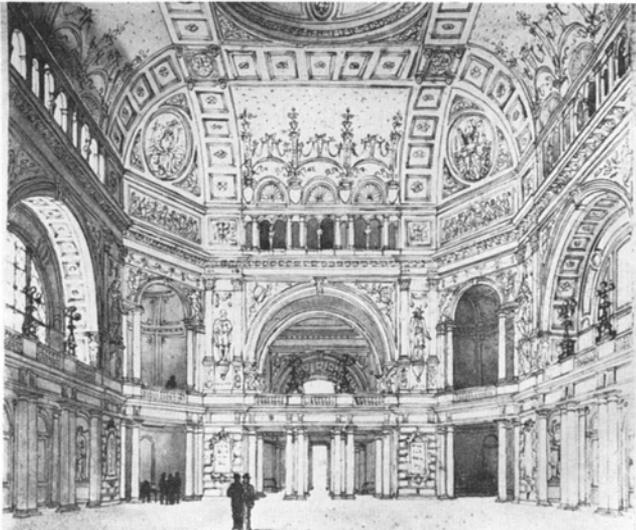
6. Hendrik Petrus Berlage,  
decoration for the festivities commemorating  
Willem III, 1887.  
From *Bouwkundig weekblad*, no. 17  
(23 April 1887): pl. following p. 102.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.

ing to Semperian principles, particularly in the layering and treatment of the stonework, Wagner's design expresses a universal Neorenaissance that would be equally at home in Berlin or Budapest and makes no concessions to the particular ambiance. In contrast, the Berlage/Sanders scheme moves markedly away from Semper's example and offers no distinction between constructional necessity and "meaningful symbol." It is rooted in the local historical tradition and is tightly related to the surrounding cityscape.

The significance of the choice of a modified Dutch Renaissance shell with an Italianate interior can only be understood in the context of the wider architectural debate and in particular the burgeoning influence of P. J. H. Cuypers. Under the patronage of Victor de Stuers, a powerful figure in the Interior Ministry, Cuypers received commissions for the Rijksmuseum (1875–1885) and for the Amsterdam Main Station (1876–1889), the latter on a site directly facing the projected site of the stock exchange. With his essentially French Gothic forms mixed with elements from the Dutch early Renaissance, Cuypers and his followers felt that they were establishing a national style of monumental design. It was against this proposition and the Catholic revivalism that accompanied Cuypers's Neogothic that the *Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst* (Society for the promotion of the building arts) proclaimed the Neorenaissance the official style of the society at its annual meeting in September 1884. And as Manfred Bock has noted: "Berlage's designs and completed buildings from the 1880s are entirely determined by the position of the society, which he himself had, to a certain degree, co-formulated."<sup>24</sup> Although no evidence is offered of the degree to which Berlage was involved in formulating this program, Bock's contention is supported by the evidence of Berlage's work in the 1880s. An eclectic climax was reached with the design for a *Monument historique, projet d'un mausolée, monument crématoire* (Historical monument, design for a mausoleum, crematorium) exhibited at the Universal Exposition in Paris of 1889. The central chapel was composed of a giant, domed assemblage of historical motifs. As identified by Sergio Polano, some of Berlage's sources are nonclassical: the Temple of Amen at Karnak; the towers of the cathedrals at Strasbourg, Rheims, and Antwerp. The majority, however, point to classicist preferences and include elements from the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, the Parthenon, the Baptistery of Constantine, the Temple of Minerva Medici, the Pazzi Chapel, and the Redentore in Venice.<sup>25</sup> When set beside the centerpiece of the exposition – the Eiffel Tower – the unre-



7. Otto Wagner,  
competition design for the Amsterdam Stock  
Exchange, 1884.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.
8. Hendrik Petrus Berlage  
and Theodor Sanders,  
competition design showing an exterior  
perspective of the Amsterdam Stock  
Exchange, first submission, 1884.  
Amsterdam, Gemeentearchief Amsterdam.
9. Hendrik Petrus Berlage  
and Theodor Sanders,  
competition design showing the interior of  
the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, 1884.  
Amsterdam, Gemeentearchief Amsterdam.



ality of Berlage's assemblage must have struck even its author. Indeed, this contrast may well have been highly significant. As Oud later commented:

I regard this project as the turning point in Berlage's development, which is to say I believe that with this work, either consciously or unconsciously, Berlage made a final attempt to expand the possibilities of design within the framework of historicist architecture [*Stilarchitektur*]. It seems to me to mark the beginning of the insight that in general, only reproductions or assemblages can be achieved with motifs from the historical styles, no truly original work.<sup>26</sup>

A similar path was followed by Wagner from Neorenaissance via the Eiffel Tower to his own version of realism. In the introductory text to the first volume of the series *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Some sketches, projects, and executed buildings), published 1889, he wrote:

The experiments with various stylistic directions that have been pursued by the majority of the architectural world in recent years, consuming the building styles of millennia as more or less of a caricature in the haste of our existence, have passed me by leaving relatively little trace. Thus have I finally reached the conclusion that a certain sort of free Renaissance, which has absorbed our genius loci, taking the greatest possible consideration of our conditions as well as the modern achievements in the use of materials and construction, is the only correct style for the architecture of the present and the future.<sup>27</sup>

The conditions attached to the use of the free Renaissance style and the subsequent text indicate, however, that Wagner was already turning away from the built works of Semper and Karl von Hasenauer and looking for alternative models on which to base his designs.

He was joined in this search by Berlage, and both men ultimately rejected the Neorenaissance as a design model, while adhering to Semper's theoretical postulates. Wagner, for example, wrote in *Moderne Architektur*, 1896:

Need, purpose, construction, and idealism are therefore the primitive germs of artistic life. United in a single idea, they produce a kind of "necessity" in the origin and existence of every work of art, and this is the meaning of the words "Artis sola domina necessitas."

No less a person than Gottfried Semper first directed our attention to this truth (even if he unfortunately later deviated from it).<sup>28</sup>

In a series of lectures published in 1908 but originally delivered at his alma mater (by then the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule), Berlage, too, distanced himself from Semper's built work, finding it "incomprehensible that Semper, the author of the book *Der Stil in den technischen Künsten* [Style in the technical arts],...[who] lashes nineteenth-century art humbug with extraordinary intelligence, that the same man could arrive at architectural inconsequentiality."<sup>29</sup> Both Wagner and Berlage, therefore, traveled a similar path, from a Neorenaissance position to one more directly expressive of Semper's theoretical insistence on the need for architecture to express artistically "the social structure of society and the conditions of the times."<sup>30</sup>

This shift against the Neorenaissance first appears in the published statements of the two architects in the early 1890s, and it is to these decisive years that one might most profitably turn in the search for those characteristics that either joined or separated the supposed twins, Wagner and Berlage. There are three significant Wagner texts: the introduction to *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke*, 1889, mentioned above; the "Erläuterungs-Bericht zum Entwurfe für den General-Regulierungs-Plan über das gesammte Gemeindegebiet von Wien" (Explanatory commentary on the designs for the general regulation plan for the Vienna municipal area), 1892–1893; and the inaugural lecture delivered in 1894 following Wagner's appointment as professor at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna. As testaments to a vital period of transition, these three texts can be compared with Berlage's most significant theoretical statement of the same period, the lecture "Bouwkunst en impressionisme" (The building arts and impressionism), first delivered in November 1893 and published the following year in the journal *Architectura*.

For both Wagner and Berlage a vigorous condemnation of any imitation of historical styles provides the basis for the ensuing proposals. Wagner opened his inaugural lecture with the lament that "almost all modern buildings reach their zenith by displaying in their external appearance a more or less happy arrangement of as near exact copies as possible of different stylistic directions.... If it was not so sad, one could see in this a certain quality of architectural comedy."<sup>31</sup> In "Bouwkunst en impressionisme,"

Berlage reveled in the comedy of styles, pointing to “those modern old-Dutch details which, when badly understood and applied, make a facade look like a piece of well-larded meat.”<sup>32</sup> Semper’s “conditions of the times” offered the clear, dialectic alternative to stylistic eclecticism. In his inaugural lecture Wagner insisted that “art and artists should and must represent their age”<sup>33</sup> – a theme later developed in *Moderne Architektur*. Berlage was even less compromising in describing an ideal course of action, since for him “the spirit of the time is unfortunately more powerful than the architect.”<sup>34</sup> This spirit, both men agreed, was characterized by two qualities: haste and economy. While Wagner saw “the short period of construction” as “one of the most important factors affecting the way we build,”<sup>35</sup> Berlage bemoaned “the demand for speed, which . . . does not allow for calm reflection, for trying anything out. . . . Any architect in practice is familiar with this greatest of all modern architectural evils.”<sup>36</sup>

The stylistic consequence of accepting the essential modernity of the demands made by time and money was a utility style, a *Nutzstil*. For Wagner in 1889, it seemed certain that “this style of the future will be the ‘*Nutzstil*,’ toward which we are steering with full sails.”<sup>37</sup> The surprisingly poetic metaphor used here – full sails rather than full steam – points already to the architect’s desire to maintain artistic control over the purely utilitarian solution. Berlage concurred, pointing out that it was exactly the perception of the artistic qualities latent in these utilitarian solutions that marked the talented architect.

The distinction between what the Germans call a utilitarian building [*Nutzbau*] and a work of architecture should not, I think, exist. It is actually an absurdity but understandable in modern times, which, because of all kinds of bad examples, has gone astray and considers the purely constructive to be incompatible with any kind of art. In fact, the opposite should be the case: the pure construction as such already contains all the elements of art, however simple they may be. It is a matter of finding them, and in order to do that one needs great skills. For the architect who has these skills the distinction does not exist.<sup>38</sup>

The ability to bridge the apparently irreconcilable divide between art and utility, between the essentially beautiful and the merely practical, was one that both architects claimed to be particular to their profession. For Wagner,

the architect “in his happy union of idealism and realism” was “the crowning glory of modern humanity.”<sup>39</sup> Berlage, too, insisted on “the special place that architecture occupies among the arts. This special place results from the particular ambiguity created by the conjunction of ideal and reality, whereby the latter, as practical theme, is certainly not the less important of the two.”<sup>40</sup> In their attempts to justify their claims, however, both Wagner and Berlage looked beyond the confines of their own discipline and sought to locate their architectural predictions within the wider context of contemporary literary and artistic theory. For Wagner the key word was *realism*; for Berlage, *impressionism*.

While the French example provided the acknowledged inspiration for Wagner’s realism,<sup>41</sup> Berlage’s impressionism, notwithstanding its apparently French origins, was more personal and idiosyncratic. In his introduction of 1889 to *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke*, Wagner said that the French had already pointed the way to realism, to “inner reality.” By redefining the role of the architect as a combination of artist and building technologist, the French were able to build on the achievements of their structural engineers. As it did for Berlage, the Eiffel Tower offered an important symbol of this progress to Wagner, who wrote, “We possess some very striking examples of how this realism can also produce in architecture such truly remarkable results as the Eiffel Tower and the *Kursaal* in Ostende.”<sup>42</sup> These successes had been matched by those of the contemporary French painters, who had pointed the way out of what Wagner regarded as the impasse of academic eclecticism. “Realism has already achieved a breakthrough in the sister art of painting, and as a result we feel much more at home with these modern ‘plein air’ paintings than with all history paintings.”<sup>43</sup> Berlage, too, felt it imperative that architecture should follow the lead of the painters. “Architecture must become impressionistic because it is a practical art. The circumstances are not only favorable at this moment; they also force us to do so.”<sup>44</sup> Inspired by the examples of the engineers and painters, realist or impressionist architecture would, according to both Wagner and Berlage, ultimately transcend these models and regain the position it had lost after the Renaissance, as leader and inspiration of the plastic arts.

While it would be possible to determine the nature, the similarities and the differences between the notions of realism and impressionism in the texts of Wagner and Berlage, it is more instructive to base the compari-

son on the buildings of the period. From 1893 to 1895 Wagner built a shop and office building for Kärntnerstraße in central Vienna – the Kaufhaus Neumann (fig. 10). In December of 1894, Berlage was commissioned to design a new main office in Amsterdam for the insurance company De Nederlanden van 1845 (see figs. 12, 13); the building was completed in 1896. Even from the plans, the differences in approach are instantly striking. Wagner’s site was relatively deep and irregular. Taking the flat street facade as the basis of the plan’s order, Wagner carved a rectangle out of the site, established by six rows of pillars set parallel to the street and aligned in sets of three each in front of and behind a central, rectangular courtyard. In plan, therefore, a rectilinear order was imposed upon the capricious irregularity of the site, proposing, in microcosm, a “realistic” reordering of the city according to the demands of the modern age. This was exactly the pattern proposed in Wagner’s “General-Regulierungs-Plan,” which insisted, “Our realism, our traffic, and modern technology imperiously demand the straight line.”<sup>45</sup> This was in contrast to the picturesque, or *malerisch*, configurations proposed by Camillo Sitte and his followers. Wagner went on to dismiss the objection – made in *Deutsche Bauzeitung* by Karl Henrici in 1893 – that there is nothing more boring than a straight street by pointing to the seven-kilometer axis running through Paris from the place de la Concorde along the Champs Elysées and stating that he knew no more beautiful modern urban image.<sup>46</sup>

The rectilinearity of the Kaufhaus Neumann plan was reflected in the elevations. On the first two levels the street facade was divided into five bays, each with a square format, and this tight control of the plane was extended on the three levels above, articulated vertically by the windows and horizontally by the cornice and two bands of large letters: “Metropolitan Clothing Palace” and “Maison de Confection Viennoise.” The areas of wall between the windows and under the cornice were clad with ceramic panels, the frames of which reinforced the larger pattern.<sup>47</sup> The disposition of the facade as a series of rectangles was extended through the whole building via ferroconcrete floors hung on the six rows of pillars. With the weight of the building carried on this iron-and-concrete frame, there was no need for load-bearing walls in the interior, which was left as a series of interconnecting open spaces.

How can this facade be related to the Semperian model? In the Neorenaissance facades by Semper, Wagner, and Berlage analyzed above, a dis-

10. Otto Wagner, plan and photograph of the street front of the Kaufhaus Neumann, Kärntnerstraße 19, Vienna, 1893–1895 (demolished). From *Der Architekt* 2 (1896): pl. 92. Santa Monica. The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.



WARENHAVS

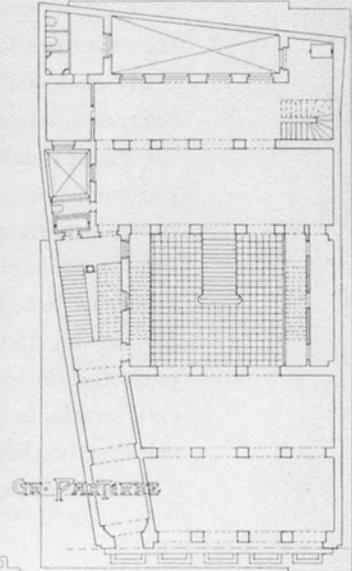
I. KÄRNTNER-

STRASSE 19

CREANT V.

K. KOECHERAVRAT

OT. WAGNER.



Gr. Pflanzl.

inction was drawn between the simple, isodomous cladding of the side wings and the layered cladding of the central bay, hung between the quoins. This model of the central bay was further developed by Wagner in his apartment house of 1887 on Universitätsstraße, Vienna, which has a frame made up of a heavily rusticated base and overdimensioned quoins, infilled with rectangular, membrous hangings of glass and layered stucco. With the Kaufhaus Neumann, Wagner retained the same format and the same theoretical premises while breaking radically with the material models provided by Semper. Where there was once rustication and a dialogue between the primeval mound and the cut stone, there was now a break with the lithic age and a dialogue between the city street and the iron framework of the engineer. Where before there were stone quoins, there were now flat, notional pilasters to mark the verticals of the frame with the corresponding horizontals marked by the cornice and the two bands of lettering. And following Semper's assurance in *Die vier Elemente der Baukunst* (The four elements of architecture) that "a large and open field of polychrome effects remains open to us in the use of different coloured materials, whose artistic development does not encroach upon our traditions, and that, as shown above, corresponds perfectly with the present state of technology,"<sup>48</sup> Wagner used colored ceramic panels to form the upper areas of his mask. While the strict rectilinearity of these panels gives artistic expression to the building frame, the exactly calculated recessions and protrusions on the surface of each panel echo the complicated layering of the Semperian facade.<sup>49</sup> As the most striking expression of contemporary technology, Wagner's glass panels on the lower two levels offer the ultimate Semperian mask, one that simultaneously encloses the frame and reveals, by artistic means, its essence. For as Semper insisted: "Masking does not help, however, when *behind* the mask the thing is false or the mask is no good. In order that the material, the indispensable (in the usual sense of the expression) be completely denied in the artistic creation, its complete mastery is the imperative precondition."<sup>50</sup> Emancipated from the frame yet able to reveal it, the glass plane offers an insight – both physical and metaphorical – into two essential Semperian dictates: the symbolic dressing and masking of the structural parts and the possibility of transforming this process according to the materials available – the principle of *Stoffwechsel*. In the open display of the relationship between mask and frame lies the essence of Wagner's realism.

In his text of 1889 Wagner had written: "Amid the enormous practical

endeavors of our age and ubiquitous struggle for existence, which stretches the individual to the utmost limit, this utility style will be the correct one. If we further add to it as an ideal the aspiration for inner truth, then it will also be justified in the aesthetic respect.”<sup>51</sup> This credo found tangible form in the Kaufhaus Neumann. Through the completely glazed panels on the two lower levels both the supporting frame and the interior spaces were made entirely visible from the street. This revelatory process reached a climax at the center of the plan, in the glazed courtyard, which, with its glass-brick floor and suspended glass roof, prefigured the dreams of the Expressionist generation – a glass core acting as a metaphor for honesty and “inner truth.”

The notion of truth was at the very core of the realism debate that flourished in the German-speaking lands at this time. Yet neither term, by definition, could offer reassuring norms or absolutes – merely varying interpretations depending on the hermeneutic standpoint. This diversity of view and definition can be seen in the series of articles on architectural realism that was published in *Deutsche Bauzeitung* in the 1880s and early 1890s. Writing in March 1884 on “Die Wahrheit in der modernen Architektur” (Truth in modern architecture), Adolf Göller listed three principles as essential to architectural “truth”:

1. The imitation of one material by another is reprehensible: the transference of the common forms of our ashlar architecture into wood, cast iron, zinc, or stucco is an untruth.
2. We should openly expose the construction rather than mask it, whereby the decorative forms should idealize the construction, that is to say, give expression to the performance of the structural elements.
3. The decorative forms of the architecture should proceed from the construction, which is to say, they should be derived from the way in which the materials are worked or the way in which the parts are joined together.<sup>52</sup>

All three of these points directly contradict the Semperian position as developed by Wagner at the Kaufhaus Neumann, and it is clear that Wagner’s “inner truth” has nothing whatever to do with Göller’s “truth.” Indeed, Wagner’s “inner truth” comes closer to Semper’s well-known definition of “style,” as “the accord of an art object with its genesis, and with all the preconditions and circumstances of its becoming.”<sup>53</sup>

Semper’s definition, which posited no superiority – either practical or



11. Bernhard Sehring,  
courtyard of the Künstlerhaus zum St. Lucas,  
Fasanenstraße, Berlin-Charlottenburg,  
1889–1890.  
Photo by author.

ethical — of one style over another and allowed for the possibility of nonhistoricist design, was supported by one of the most influential figures in the contemporary critical debate, K. E. O. Fritsch, editor of *Deutsche Bauzeitung*. In a long article on style published in 1890, Fritsch noted the new mood of realism, one manifestation of which was a growing awareness that “the style in which one builds in no way has the significance of a religious dogma and is not more than an expressive vehicle for artistic thoughts. As such it is entirely analogous to human language, in which very different, yet equally valid, tongues prevail.”<sup>54</sup> Among the many possible architectural languages that offered themselves, one in particular found Fritsch’s favor: the Romanesque style, which, he noted, “already holds sway over the architecture of a great country, namely the United States of America.”<sup>55</sup>

Romanesque elements were also to be found in a building nearer home, the Künstlerhaus zum St. Lucas in Berlin, praised by Fritsch in an article published in 1891, which made an important contribution to the realism debate. Designed by Bernhard Sehring, this five-story block offered accommodation and studio space for artists (fig. 11). Prefiguring Berlage’s theory of an impressionistic reception of architecture, Fritsch characterized the aims behind the Künstlerhaus in a paragraph that merits quotation in full.

Herr Sehring, who with this work has made, as it were, his public declaration of faith, is following a direction that is brusquely opposed to all the academic rules and opinions. In the realm of architecture it corresponds to some extent to what is described as “naturalism” in the realm of painting. This is a direction that has become particularly developed among the architects of North America, where it has already achieved some very noteworthy results.<sup>56</sup> This direction, however, appears in very different forms according to the artist’s point of departure. The academic architect adheres to a historically determined style and strives to maintain the unity of this style not only in every detail but in many cases subordinates his entire creation to the demands of this style. In contrast, the “most modern” among the architects, through the naive application of various stylistic forms and motifs appropriate to the specific function, aim simply to achieve a characteristic total image, which attracts in its picturesque impact and reflects the intended purpose of the building.<sup>57</sup>

Cornice-free walls of exposed brick, a pattern of fenestration that reflected specific need rather than any normative system, and willfully picturesque

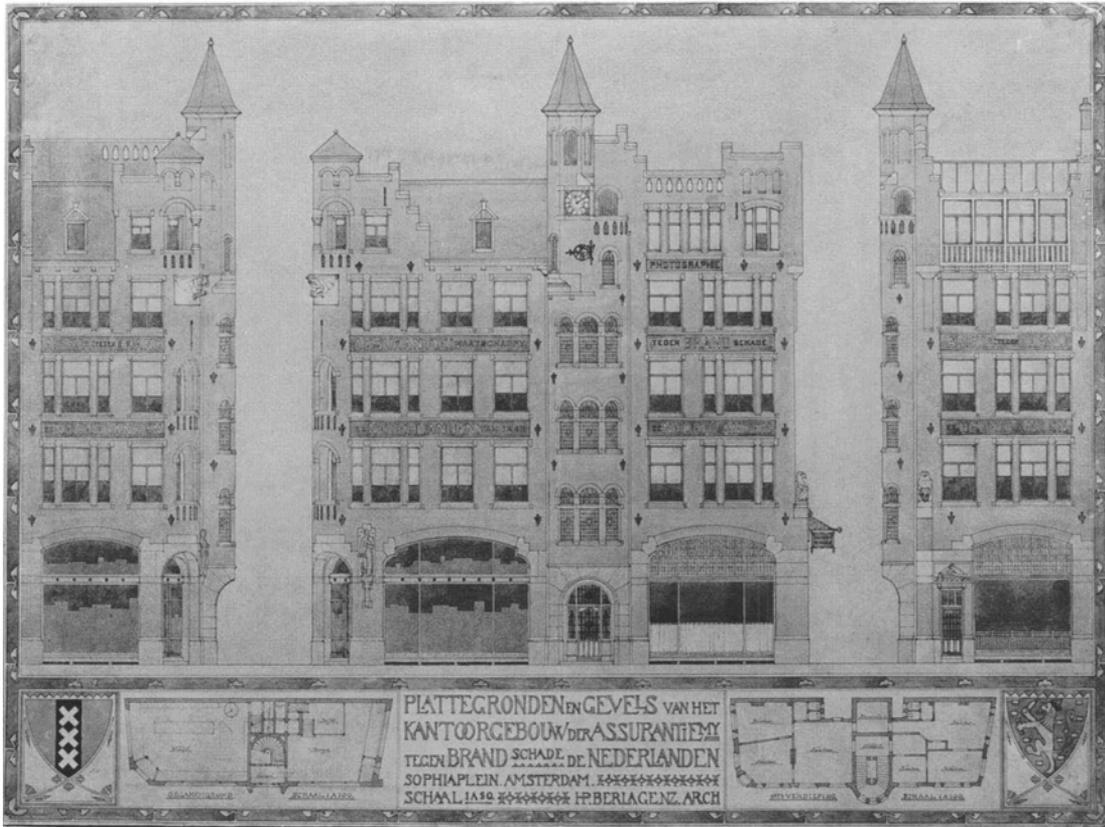
elements such as a lookout tower, timbering on the upper story, and a circular stairwell in the courtyard were all employed to produce a powerful total image rather than a building that might be appreciated in its details. Indeed, Sehring's disinterest in the specific details enabled him to use factory-made sills and lintels made of artificial sandstone. The main street portal also came from the factory and had actually been designed for a different building.

Much of this design philosophy, as filtered by Fritsch, can be found in Berlage's impressionism.<sup>58</sup> As used by Berlage, the term had little to do with Impressionist painting theory in France. It was not concerned with the analysis of the particular form under unique conditions of light and atmosphere but rather with the instant, subjective perception of the larger entity. "With impressionism we refer in general to the representation of an image as it presents itself not objectively but subjectively."<sup>59</sup> The architectural form, felt Berlage, should be composed in order to make an instant impression, not through its detail but through its massing and silhouette. The key word, as in the essay by Fritsch, is *characteristic*, meaning such things as appropriate to the conditions of the age, to the purpose of the building, and to the nature of the construction: in other words, realism and truth. The impressionist building, in Berlage's own words, meant "a characteristic silhouette in harmony with a simple substructure."<sup>60</sup> Applied to the specific example of a block of apartment houses, Berlage suggested "it would be impressionistically angular, outlined with simple, irregular details, such as the various entrance doors," while later in the text he exhorted, "Let us look for some characteristic large planes and edges!"<sup>61</sup>

These qualities can readily be found in Berlage's office block for De Nederlanden van 1845 (fig. 12). As already suggested, the differences between this building and Wagner's Kaufhaus Neumann (see fig. 10) are considerable and begin with the plan. Whereas Wagner sought to impose a geometric order on the site and, by implication, the city, Berlage was happy to accept the random development of the city and to exploit it. In its original state, before Berlage extended and renovated the building in 1910–1911, the block was contained on a shallow, trapezoidal corner site (fig. 13). Berlage's response was a willfully picturesque plan in which rectangular rooms were the rare exception. The plan was articulated around the main stair tower, set off center and projecting out onto the street, while the angle formed by the intersection of Muntplein (formerly Sophiaplein) and Kalverstraat was

12. Hendrik Petrus Berlage, De Nederlanden van 1845 office building, Muntplein, Amsterdam, 1894–1896. Rotterdam/Amsterdam, Nederlands Architectuurinstituut.





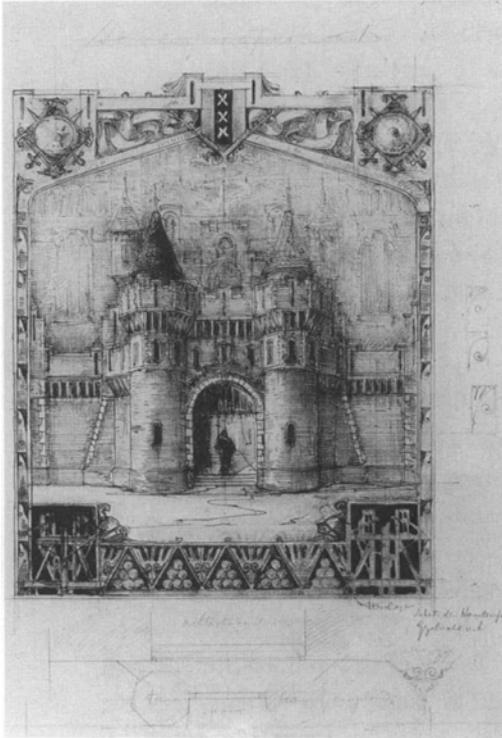
13. Hendrik Petrus Berlage,  
drawing of elevations and plans for  
De Nederlanden van 1845 office building,  
Muntplein, Amsterdam, 1894–1896.  
Rotterdam/Amsterdam, Nederlands  
Architectuurinstituut.

cut away at ground level to accommodate a door. Above this door the corner expanded into a window bay topped by a tower, echoing the circular tower housing the main stairs. This disinterest in rectilinearity in the plan was quite in accord with the precepts of “*Bouwkunst en impressionisme*,” in which, in total contrast to Wagner, Berlage espoused the *Sittesque* virtues of urban enclosure, of the square and the short vista. Characterizing Greek, Roman, medieval, and Renaissance city plans, he concluded: “One did not only try to create a concentration of works of art but rather a visual concentration by making a closed space, like a room. This enclosure was achieved in all kinds of ways but, especially, by making the streets that run into the square short or otherwise curved and not too wide.”<sup>62</sup>

Although he admitted that there could be no future in merely copying the romantic cityscape of the Middle Ages, Berlage despaired totally at the prosaic alternatives offered by the late nineteenth-century city planners. “The authorities,” he wrote, “not only do not think of but do not even consider it possible that irregular lots might produce the best solutions for a floor plan. . . . The whole system of modern city planning consists of regularly intersecting streets, and that which is left in the checkerboard pattern of street blocks becomes a square.” The obsession with standard dimensions, with hygiene, and with traffic had led, said Berlage, to visual banality. “No stoops, no front yards, no entrances to basements, no portals, no arcades, no oblique angles, no projections, no awnings, nothing whatsoever, enacted to absurdity. For the architects’ most sacred commandment runs as follows: ‘Honor your building line so that you will build well and your practice on earth will be a long one.’”<sup>63</sup> Many of the elements frowned on by what Berlage called “the tyrannically bureaucratic list of building regulations” survived on the elevations of his offices for *De Nederlanden van 1845*.

The shallow curves that occur on the plan in the stair tower and corner bay reappear in the elevations as the shallow segmental arches of the four main display windows. While the windows in the towers and bays take a Neoromanesque form, the main office windows are rectangular to ensure maximum illumination in the offices. This lack of system, which Berlage shared with Sehring, is particularly striking at the roof level, where, prior to the later additions, there was a wide assortment of windows, fragments of stepped gables, and pierced copings, all topped by two towers.

Many of these features can also be found in the illustrations that Berlage drew between 1891 and 1893 for a luxury edition of Joost van den Vondel’s



14. Hendrik Petrus Berlage,  
Haarlemmerpoort, drawing for stage set  
to *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*, second state,  
1891–1893.  
Rotterdam/Amsterdam, Nederlands  
Architectuurinstituut.
15. Hendrik Petrus Berlage,  
perspective drawing for De Nederlanden  
van 1845 office building, Muntplein,  
Amsterdam, 1894–1896.  
Rotterdam/Amsterdam, Nederlands  
Architectuurinstituut.

drama *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*, 1637 (fig. 14), which provided a hero modeled on Virgil's Aeneas for the new Dutch Republic. In the graphic presentation of the *Gijsbrecht* illustrations, traditional architectural forms are framed with the decorative motifs of Nieuwe Kunst – the Dutch variant of Art Nouveau that emerged in the early 1890s – and this fusion is even more pronounced in a presentation drawing for the *Nederlanden van 1845* insurance office in which heraldic motifs are mixed with Art Nouveau lettering (fig. 15). In his masterly survey of the roots of Nieuwe Kunst in Dutch typography, Ernst Braches notes that “the *Gijsbrecht* decorative borders are the first signs of Berlage’s transition to modern design,”<sup>64</sup> and it is entirely appropriate that the vehicle for this breakthrough should be *Gijsbrecht*, a text with such strong local and historical reference. For Berlage’s impressionism was in no way iconoclastic. Rather than damn history and hail the tabula rasa, Berlage insisted in “Bouwkunst en impressionisme” that the hope for a new architecture “does not mean, however, that the art of the future has nothing to learn from the past.”<sup>65</sup> This past was not, however, that of the Semperian Neorenaissance, and artistic success for Berlage could not be formulated merely in terms of “symmetry, proportionality, and direction.” Berlage replaced Semper’s distinction between frame and mask in the *Nederlanden van 1845* office building with a notion of the wall surface as the simultaneous, undifferentiated bearer of structural, ornamental, and symbolic functions. The art of the facade did not reside in a symbolic layer, physically freed from the structural plane, but in the total impression generated by the unified wall, both in plane and silhouette.

This conception of the wall was expressed most obviously in the choice of materials – brick and stone – which in turn asserted the positive relationship with the past and with the locale. Yet the materials and the historical allusions were in no way archaeological and were constantly modified in their impact by the clearly modern, nonhistoricist elements. In this sense the medievalist reference worked purely as a general association – as an impression – rather than as a direct quotation. Herein lay the difference between the work of Berlage and that of Cuypers. Cuypers remains an important model, however, as the father of Dutch rationalism. As Manfred Bock has indicated, the status of Cuypers was reassessed in the late 1880s, when “the image of the Neogothicist and eclectic Cuypers slowly faded behind that of a pioneer of a new method of design.”<sup>66</sup> Behind Cuypers, in turn, stood Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc; and the new generation of

Cuypers's students, notably Johannes Ludovicus Mathieu Lauweriks, Karel Petrus Cornelius de Bazel, and H. J. M. Walenkamp, showed that the application of Viollet-le-Duc's rationalist theory did not inevitably lead to the forms of twelfth- and thirteenth-century French Gothic. This reevaluation of French rationalism lay behind the foundation of the new architectural association *Architectura et Amicitia*, which launched its journal in 1893 with a keynote article by Willem Kromhout, "Het rationalisme in Frankrijk" (Rationalism in France).<sup>67</sup> More specifically, the reevaluation of French rationalism provided the essential theoretical basis for Berlage's impressionism. Indeed, Bock hailed "Bouwkunst en impressionisme" as "the most eminent manifesto" of Viollet-le-Duc's "fortunate revolution in art."<sup>68</sup> The tenor of this revolution can be characterized in a quotation from Viollet-le-Duc's entry on construction in the *Dictionnaire raisonné*.

It is unfortunate that we cannot continue to build like the ancients and forever observe those simple and so beautiful rules of Greek and Roman builders. But we cannot reasonably build a railway station, a market, an assembly hall, a bazaar, or a stock exchange by following the methods of Greek or even Roman construction. These flexible principles applied by the architects of the Middle Ages, which we have studied with care, impose on us and modern life the condition of perpetual progress. The study of the Middle Ages permits us every innovation in the use of all materials without violating the principles established by those architects, since these principles reside precisely in submitting everything — materials, forms, the design of the ensemble and its details — to reason, in achieving the limit of the possible, in replacing inert force with industrial resources, and in searching for the unknown in tradition.<sup>69</sup>

Given this *carte blanche* to use every innovation of industry and every new material so long as they are ordered by reason, Berlage's own construction design at the time of "Bouwkunst en impressionisme" appears more committed to the creation of historical reference than to the exploitation of new technical possibilities. Indeed, as Singelenberg has shown, Berlage had considerable doubts about iron construction at this time. "One should try," wrote Berlage in 1895, "to use stone also for large openings, by [employing] more daring constructions, and leave the exaggerated demands of glass expanses for the time when perhaps there will be buildings made entirely

of iron or with iron framework structures, because only in this case do I find iron beams over the lower front justified.”<sup>70</sup> Both these reservations and the built example of the insurance office with its large brick spans and ashlar impostes and voussoirs make a strong contrast to Wagner’s intentions at the Kaufhaus Neumann and point to the considerable differences between Wagner’s realism and Berlage’s impressionism.

At the simplest level, Wagner’s Kaufhaus Neumann was a trabeate construction, Berlage’s Amsterdam office an arcuate construction, at least in its external impression. From this one can determine that Wagner’s realism was still founded on classicist notions of construction, on the “free Renaissance” he appealed to in 1889. This association is confirmed by his choice of Empire decoration on the facade. Berlage, in contrast, with his arches, stair tower, and turreted silhouette sought to evoke in the observer associations of medievalism in general and of the local history in particular. Wagner was appealing, therefore, to the norms of a universal civilization, Berlage to the demands of a local culture. This contrast is one already noticed in the context of the respective projects for the Amsterdam Stock Exchange.

The intended user of Wagner’s architecture was “modern man,” an internationalist, essentially an apolitical figure equally at home on the boulevards of Paris or the *Gassen* of Vienna. In contrast, Berlage’s observer was not only specifically local but implicitly socialist. For him impressionism was specifically linked to the “beautiful principle of social equality,” which, in turn, had regionalist implications. With the progress of the great social idea, we see that conscious of its own power, of its own individuality, every nation of every significance values its own art.”<sup>71</sup> The need for large-scale housing in aesthetically coordinated blocks and the ever-present demands for economy suggested, said Berlage, the “characteristic large planes and edges” of impressionist architecture. This hope for a reductive formal language comprehensible to the wider public was ultimately judged a success by J. J. P. Oud, who contrasted Berlage’s formal language, which spoke directly to his contemporaries, with the historically grounded forms of Cuypers, “which no longer affect the mass of the people.”<sup>72</sup> At the decorative level, this difference might be noted in the contrast between the applied, Empire elements on Wagner’s facade and Berlage’s decorative stonework — a further variation on the Semperian theme of the dressed wall — which was derived from the structure and invested it with a symbolic, poetic existence.

The poetic dimension of Berlage’s impressionism has already been noted

in his preference for the picturesque and the irregular on both horizontal and vertical planes, in contrast to Wagner's predilection for rectilinearity in plan and elevation. These preferences carry significant spatial implications. Wagner's classicist construction exists as an island of calm and repose within the cityscape. Such stasis has been claimed as typical by Manfredo Tafuri, who writes:

In Wagner's work, there exists a complementarity between the activity which involved him in giving shape to the great infrastructures catering for urban mobility – underground railway, bridges, structures for navigation along the waterways – and those intended to “halt” the same movement. . . . Aren't the pavilions for the Viennese underground railway perhaps points of rest which “redeem” the flux which they emphasize? And doesn't the facade of the “Majolikahaus” represent an analogous conflict between a magical flowing and the vacancy of stasis?<sup>73</sup>

Nowhere in Wagner's work is this vacancy more directly stated than in the Kaufhaus Neumann. It is a static form set within the urban flux, neither site specific nor historically allusive. While the perception of space presupposes movement, this movement, for Wagner, was the dynamic flow of the traffic and the city pedestrians in straight lines parallel to the facade. The large windows invited spatial interaction between the observer and the built form, but this took place strictly in one direction, between a dynamic observer and a static, revelatory form composed of fixed, repeating volumes and spaces.

In the Amsterdam office, Berlage achieved the exact opposite. Here, the volumes are mobile and dynamic, intruding and receding upon the implicitly static space of the Muntplein. On the short Kalverstraat front, the facade climbs a very slight rise to reach a climax in the corner tower, while at street level the door is cut away, in both horizontal and vertical planes, to express the flow of the building around the corner and into the interior spaces. This movement from the square into the interior is massively amplified by the inviting spans of the two display windows, which do not deny, as in Wagner's case, the existence of exterior and interior space, but rather celebrate both the difference and the ability to move from one to the other. This mobility is also celebrated in the vertical dimension by the stair tower that bulges into the street, to scoop up the visitor and spiral him or

her upward. The tension between the static floor levels and the ascending staircase is expressed in the facade by the upper window bars of the windows in the stair tower, which are aligned with the lower sills of the main window courses, while the ultimate victory over gravity is confirmed by the crowning turret.

The key question behind the theoretical formulations of both Wagner and Berlage was the relationship between the architect and the engineer, between art and utility, idealism and realism. For the rationalists there was only one possible resolution. As Viollet-le-Duc fulminated in 1871: "We have an architecture of emotion, just as we have had the politics of emotion and an emotional war. . . . It is high time we thought of invoking in all this sober reason, practical common sense, the study of the demands of the age, the improvements provided by industry, economical arrangements, and hygienic and sanitary considerations."<sup>74</sup>

Reason also lay behind Wagner's definition of realism, which depended substantially on the willingness of the architect to embrace the world of the engineer. "The realism of our age must penetrate into the nascent work of art. . . . No artistic decline will result from this: instead, new pulsing life will be breathed into the forms, and in time new areas will emerge that today are still missing from art, for example the realm of engineering."<sup>75</sup> This willingness to adapt to the practice of the engineer carried with it the proviso that the architect should remain the final arbiter in questions of taste. As Wagner insisted in his "General-Regulirungs-Plan," for example: "The buildings for the transportation system, in which today only the engineer has a say, should be given to the aesthetician, to the architect for their external design."<sup>76</sup> In this compromise, whereby the architect embraced the engineer while maintaining an essential superiority, lay Wagner's vision of the architect as a "happy union" between "idealism and realism."<sup>77</sup>

Berlage, in contrast, saw an "ambiguity" in the position of the architect between aesthete and technocrat. In an essay of 1886, "De plaats die de bouwkunst in de moderne aesthetica bekleedt" (Architecture's place in modern aesthetics), he ransacked nineteenth-century German philosophy for an answer to the question of the status of architecture as a fine or applied art, merely concluding that "the question about architecture's place within the system of the arts has not been sufficiently answered by the observations of the aestheticians."<sup>78</sup> In "Bouwkunst en impressionisme," Berlage proposed, as already noted, a strongly rationalist position, which denied

any distinction between *Nutzbau* and architecture, and saw art as immanent in the “pure construction.” Yet both this lecture and the *Nederlanden van 1845* office building in Amsterdam reveal in practice a more mediating position, which seeks to compensate for the ravages of the building regulations, the traffic engineer, and the professional hygienist by giving back to the public in a simplified form the threatened, symbolic realm of architecture. In “*Bouwkunst en Impressionism*,” the engineering sciences are regarded warily, since the technical and social advances that they promised were offset by the dangers of materialist banality. The role of the architect, according to Berlage, was to exploit the former while limiting the latter. Should the architects be unprepared for this task, then they would become irrelevant and have their job taken over by the engineers. For Berlage there were only two options.

If the architects are not ready with their great impressionistic art, their work in this world will have come to an end; *sic transit gloria mundi*. If they are ready, the coming generations will be able to distinguish the artist from the scientific builder, the architect from the engineer. The architect will then have a splendid future, as mankind cannot do without an artistic ideal.<sup>79</sup>

These contrasting responses are summed up in the quotations chosen by Wagner and Berlage to head the “General-Regulierungs-Plan” and “*Bouwkunst en impressionisme*,” respectively. While Wagner’s Semperian motto – *Artis sola domina necessitas* (Necessity is the only master of art) – welcomed “necessity” as the ultimate, irrefutable criterion, Berlage’s quotation from Goethe – “*In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister*” (Limitation first reveals the master) – suggests a more defensive reaction to the industrial city of the late nineteenth century. Hatched in the same nest, the “twins” had developed quite distinct interpretations of architectural Modernism: a classicizing, technology-oriented variant in Vienna; a medievalizing, organicist variant in Amsterdam. While the focus of this study has been directed strictly at the gestative period around 1890, the further development of these two variants can readily be identified in the mature works and the major texts of the two architects: the Postsparkasse in Vienna and the Beurs in Amsterdam; Wagner’s *Moderne Architektur*, 1896, and Berlage’s *Gedanken über Stil in der Baukunst* (Thoughts on style in architecture), 1905.

## NOTES

1. J. J. P. Oud, "Dr. H. P. Berlage und sein Werk," *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk* 22 (1919): 190: "In der Lösung dieser Probleme gingen voran Männer, wie in Österreich Otto Wagner, in Deutschland Peter Behrens, in Amerika Sullivan und Frank Lloyd Wright und in meinem Vaterlande Dr. H. P. Berlage, die alle eine moderne, reelle Auffassung in der Baukunst verteidigen und nach diesem Grundsatz arbeiteten." (Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.)

2. Jan Tabor, "Otto Wagner und die verwandten Geister," in Gustav Peichl, ed., *Die Kunst Otto Wagners*, exh. cat. (Vienna: Akademie der bildenden Künste, 1984), 58: "Berlage und Wagner waren mehr als geistig verwandt. Sie glichen Zwillingenbrüdern, die unter verschiedenen Geistigen (barocke Üppigkeit versus protestantische Schlichtheit) groß geworden waren."

3. Joseph August Lux, *Otto Wagner: Eine Monographie* (Munich: Delphin, 1914), 58: "Berlage wird mir erlauben zu sagen, daß Wagners Börse für Amsterdam dauerhaftere Architekturfreuden bereitet hätte, als der brutale Ziegelschuppen, der zuletzt doch durch seinen doktrinären Puritanismus verstimmt."

4. Hendrik Petrus Berlage, "Indruk van de Jubileum-Tentoonstelling te Berlijn," *Bouwkundig weekblad* 6, no. 34 (21 August 1886): 206: "Een kunstenaar van den eersten rang blijkt te zijn Otto Wagner, door zijn project voor een parlamentsgebouw te Pesth. Het is een imposante koepelbouw. Hij die Pesth kent, met zijne heerlijke ligging aan den Donau, zal het betreuren dat de breede rivier dit gebouw niet zal kunnen weerspiegelen. Otto Wagner heeft ook getoond een meester in de penteeekunst te zijn, want op dit gebied behoort het ontwerp tot het fraaiste wat de tentoonstelling oplevert. Een allerliefst project voor eene villa te Hüttdorf bij Weenen bewijst dit ten tweeden male."

5. See *Illustrierter Katalog der internationalen Jubiläums-Kunst-Ausstellung* (Vienna: Verlag der Genossenschaft der bildenden Künstler Wiens, 1888), 288.

6. Max Eisler, "H. P. Berlage und sein Erweiterungsplan Amsterdam-Sud," *Der Städtebau* 13, no. 10/11 (1916): 112: "Unvergessen ist mir die Stunde, da zwischen uns das Gespräch über Otto Wagner ging. In vielen erscheint durch ihn Haag-Amsterdam als der nördliche Pol einer modernen Baubewegung, die in Wien ihren südlichen hat." The respect in which Wagner was held in Holland can be judged from a congratulatory letter sent to Wagner by the Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst (Society for the promotion of the building-arts) on the occasion of his seventieth birthday in 1911: "Mit Bewunderung denken wir an Ihr großes und vornehmes Talent, an Ihre Energie und die bahnbrechende Bedeutung Ihrer Arbeit für die moderne Zeit, sowohl als Architekt, als auch als Professor und bezeugen recht gerne, daß auch in den Niederlanden Ihr hoher und feiner Geist gewürdigt wird. Vor allem auch Ihre Schriften, worin Sie in hervorragender Weise die Künstlerschaft des Architekten hoch halten, und ganz im modernen Leben sich bewegend für eine harmonische und schöne architektonische Form dieses modernen Lebens Propaganda

*machen, ziehen auch in Holland die Aufmerksamkeit auf sich*" (We think with admiration of your great and distinguished talent, your energy and the pioneering importance of your work for the modern age, both as architect and as professor, and happily testify that your fine and noble spirit is valued in Holland too. Attention in Holland is particularly drawn to your writings, in which you so magnificently acclaim the community of architects and, working entirely in the spirit of modern life, advocate a harmonic, beautiful architectural form for this modern life). Letter from Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst to Otto Wagner, dated 11 July 1911. Special Collections, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Santa Monica, no. 870399-1.

7. Max Eisler, *Der Baumeister Berlage* (Vienna: Hölzel, 1920).

8. Oud (see note 1), 190–91: "*Man sieht das zum Beispiel, wenn man die Arbeiten Otto Wagners mit den Arbeiten Berlages vergleicht. Der Unterschied ist charakteristisch und nicht nur die Folge der persönlichen Gestaltungskraft, sondern auch von lokalen Bedingungen, wie Klima, Lebensgewohnheiten usw. abhängig.*"

9. Jan Gratama, *Dr. H. P. Berlage, Bouwmeester* (Rotterdam: Brusse, 1925).

10. Heinz Geretsegger and Max Peintner, *Otto Wagner, 1841–1918*, rev. ed. (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1983), 11, 203.

11. Paul Asenbaum, Peter Haiko, et al., *Otto Wagner: Möbel und Innenräume* (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1984).

12. Pieter Singelenberg, *H. P. Berlage: Idea and Style* (Utrecht: Haentjens Dekker & Gumbert, 1972).

13. Manfred Bock, *Anfänge einer neuen Architektur: Berlages Beitrag zur architektonischen Kultur der Niederlande im ausgehenden 19. Jahrhundert* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1983), 25.

14. Ákos Moravánszky, *Die Erneuerung der Baukunst: Wege zur Moderne in Mitteleuropa, 1900–1940* (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1988).

15. *Ibid.*, 77: "*Es ist die Oberfläche, die entscheidet, ob aus dem Charakteristischen eine Kunstform entsteht.*"

16. Renate Wagner-Rieger, "Semper und die Wiener Architektur," in Eva Börsch-Supan et al., *Gottfried Semper und die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Basel: E. Birkhäuser, 1976), 275–89.

17. Eduard van der Nüll, "Andeutungen über die kunstgemässe Beziehung des Ornaments zu rohen Form" (1845), in Peichl (see note 2), 28–33.

18. Wagner-Rieger (see note 16), 286: "*Insgesamt muss diese Architektur in Wien als neuartig, modern und von gesteigerter Monumentalität empfunden worden sein, und sie hat jenen romanischen Historismus abgelöst, den Sicardsburg und van der Nüll mit der Oper bis zur äussersten Grenze getrieben hatten – nicht ohne daran zugrunde zu gehen. So ist es nicht verwunderlich, dass diese Semper-Komponente fast am radikalsten von einem der jüngsten Nüll-Schüler vorgetragen wurde, nämlich von Otto Wagner, als er – ohne dazu aufgefordert zu sein – Konkurrenzentwürfe*

für einen Börsebau am Franz Josefs Kai vorlegte.”

19. For a detailed analysis of the Semper-Berlage connection, see Pieter Singelenberg, “Sempers Einfluss auf Berlage,” in Börsch-Supan et al. (see note 16), 303–14.

20. Peter Wegmann, *Gottfried Semper und das Winterthurer Stadthaus: Semper's Architektur im Spiegel seiner Kunsttheorie* (Winterthur: Stadtbibliothek Winterthur, 1985), 50: “Für Semper ist das reine Isodom, eine vollkommen glatte Steinquaderung in regelmässigem Verband, die ‘idealste’ Oberfläche einer Mauer.”

21. Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten, oder praktische Ästhetik*, 2nd ed. (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1878–1879), 1: 217: “Vernichtung der Realität, des Stofflichen, ist nothwendig, wo die Form als bedeutendes Symbol als selbstständige Schöpfung des Menschen hervortreten soll. Vergessen machen sollen wir die Mittel, die zu dem erstrebten Kunsteindruck gebraucht werden müssen.”

22. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann, trans., *Gottfried Semper: The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), 255–56. Semper (see note 21), 1: 229–30: “Der Festapparat, das improvisirte Gerüst, mit allem Gepränge und Beiwerke welches den Anlaß der Feier näher bezeichnet und die Verherrlichung des Festes erhöht, geschmückt und ausgestattet, mit Teppichen verhangen, mit Reisern und Blumen bekleidet, mit Festons and Kränzen, flatternden Bändern und Trophäen geziert, diess ist das Motiv des bleibenden Denkmals.... So ist der ägyptische Tempel aus dem Motive des improvisirten Wallfahrtsmarktes entstanden.”

23. Singelenberg (see note 12), 45.

24. Bock (see note 13), 246: “Berlages Entwürfe und ausgeführte Gebäude der achtziger Jahre sind voll und ganz von diesem Vereinsstandpunkt geprägt, den er selbst zu einem gewissen Teil mitformuliert hat.”

25. See Sergio Polano, *Hendrik Petrus Berlage: Complete Works* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), 116–17.

26. Oud (see note 1), 200: “[Ich] halte... dieses Projekt für den Wendepunkt in der Entwicklung Berlages, das heißt, ich glaube, daß Berlage in diesem Entwurf bewußt oder unbewußt einen letzten Versuch gemacht hat, die Möglichkeit des Entwerfens im Rahmen der Stilarchitektur zu erweitern. Es scheint mir der Anfang der Einsicht, daß im allgemeinen mit den Motiven eines historischen Stils nur reproduzierende oder zusammenstellende, keine wirklich bildende Arbeit zu verrichten ist.”

27. Otto Wagner, *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (1889), in Otto Antonia Graf, *Otto Wagner: Das Werk des Architekten* (Vienna: Hermann Böhlau Nachf., 1985), 1: 72: “Die Experimente mit den verschiedenen Stilrichtungen, welche vom größten Theile der architektonischen Welt in den letzten zwanzig Jahren durchgejagt wurden und die Bauweisen von Jahrtausenden, mehr oder minder karriert, mit der Hast unserer Lebensweise verbrauchten, sind ziemlich spurlos an mir vorübergezogen, und so bin ich schließlich zur Überzeugung gelangt,

*daß eine gewisse freie Renaissance welche unseren genius loci in sich aufgenommen hat, mit größtmöglichster Berücksichtigung aller unsere Verhältnisse, sowie der modernen Errungenschaften in Materialverwendung und Konstruktion für die Architektur der Gegenwart und Zukunft das allein Richtige sei."*

28. Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1988), 91. Idem, *Moderne Architektur* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1896), 54–55: "*Bedürfniss, Zweck, Construction und Idealismus sind daher die Urkeime des künstlerischen Lebens. In einem Begriffe vereint bilden sie eine Art 'Notwendigkeit' beim Entstehen und Sein jedes Kunstwerkes, dies der Sinn der Worte: 'Artis sola domina necessitas.'*"

*Kein Geringerer als Gottfried Semper hat zuerst unsere Aufmerksamkeit auf diese Wahrheit gelenkt (wenn er auch später leider davon abging)."*

29. Hendrik Petrus Berlage, *Grundlagen und Entwicklung der Architektur* (Berlin: Julius Bard, 1908), 88: "*Es ist unbegreiflich dass Semper, der Autor des Buches 'Der Stil in den technischen Künsten'...[der] mit ungemein scharfen Verstand den Kunsthubug des 19. Jahrhunderts geisselt, dass derselbe zu einer architekturellen Inkonsequenz kommen konnte."*

30. Gottfried Semper, prospectus for *Der Stil* (1859), in Mallgrave (see note 22), 179.

31. Otto Wagner, "Antrittsrede an der Akademie der bildenden Künste" (1894), in Graf (see note 27), 1: 249: "*Beinahe alle modernen Bauwerke gipfeln darin, in ihrer Aussenerscheinung auf mehr oder weniger glücklicher Disposition möglichst genaue Kopien der Stilrichtungen zu zeigen.... Wenn die Sache nicht gar zu traurig wäre, so könnte man darin eine gewisse Komik der Architektur erblicken."*

32. Hendrik Petrus Berlage, "Bouwkunst en impressionisme," *Architectura* 2, nos. 22–25 (June 1894): 93–110: "*...de moderne oud Hollandsche details, die slecht begrepen en toegepast, een gevel er uit doen zien als de doorsnede van een goed gelardeerd stuk vleesch."*

33. Wagner (see note 31), 249: "*Kunst und Künstler sollen und müssen ihre Zeit repräsentieren."*

34. Berlage (see note 32), 99: "*Het ontzaggelijk moeilijk, door het groote publiek veel te weinig gewaardeerd beroep van bouwmeester, brengt mee, slaaf zijn van zijn tijd, want die tijdgeest is helaas machtiger dan hij."*

35. Wagner (see note 27), 1: 73.

36. Berlage (see note 32), 106: "*De geeischte snelheid... maakt een kalm overdenken, een probeeren onmogelijk.... Den praktisch werkzamen architect is dit grootste aller moderne bouweuvelen zeer goed bekend."*

37. Wagner (see note 27), 1: 72: "*... daß dieser Zukunftsstil der 'Nutz-Stil' sein wird, dem wir mit vollen Segeln zusteuern."*

38. Berlage (see note 32), 95: "*Het onderscheid tusschen, wat de Duitschers noemen een 'Nutzbau' en een architektonisch werk, moest, men voelt het, niet bestaan; het is eigenlijk een*

onding, maar begrijpelijk in den modernen tijd, die door allerlei slechte voorbeelden, op een dwaalspoor geraakt. het zuiver constructieve niet vereenigbaar heeft geacht met eenige kunst hoegenaamd; terwijl het omgekeerde het geval moest zijn; de zuivere constructie juist, bevat als zoodanig, reeds alle kunstelementen, hoe eenvoudig ook, in zich; het komt er slechts op aan deze te vinden; daartoe is alleen groote bekwaamheid noodig. Voor deze bestaat die onderscheid dan ook niet; maar ook alleen de met deze begaafde architect, is in staat, met de geringste, of liever geene, d.i. zoogen. [sic] kunstmiddelen, iets moois te maken.”

39. Otto Wagner, “Antrittsrede an der Akademie der bildenden Künste” (1894), in Graf (see note 27), 1: 249: “Schon vor mir hat es einer gesagt, daß der Architect in seiner glücklichen Vereinigung von Idealismus und Realismus die Krone der modernen Menschheit sei.”

40. Berlage (see note 32), 95: “De oorzaak dezer overtuiging vind ik in het eigenaardig karakter, dat de bouwkunst onder de kunsten inneemt. Het eigenaardige van dat karakter wordt veroorzaakt door het eenigszins tweeslachtige, ontstaan door de samenwerking van ideaal en realiteit, waarvan deze laatste als het praktisch motief, zeker niet de minst belangrijke der twee is.”

41. For a closer investigation of this debt, see J. Duncan Berry’s essay in this volume.

42. Wagner (see note 27), 1: 73: “Daß dieser Realismus in der Architektur auch recht sonderbare Blüten treiben kann, davon haben wir einige recht treffende Beispiele aufzuweisen, wie den Eiffelturm, den Kursaal in Ostende etc. etc.”

43. Wagner (see note 27), 1: 73: “In der Schwesterkunst Malerei ist dieser Realismus bereits zum Durchbruche gelangt, und es heimeln uns daher diese modernen ‘plein air’-Genrebilder mehr als alle historischen Gemälde.”

44. Berlage (see note 32): 105: “De architectuur moet impressionistisch worden, juist omdat zij is een practische kunst. De tijdsomstandigheden zijn daartoe niet alleen gunstig maar gebieden het.”

45. Otto Wagner, “Erläuterungs-Bericht zum Entwurfe für den General-Regulierungs-Plan über das gesammte Gemeindegebiet von Wien” (1892–1893; 2nd ed., 1894), in Graf (see note 27), 94: “Unser Realismus, unser Verkehr, die moderne Technik, sie begehren heute gebieterisch die gerade Linie.”

46. Wagner was referring here to a debate on the virtues of linear planning (Joseph Stübben) versus picturesque planning (Karl Henrici), which began in *Deutsche Bauzeitung* in 1891 with a review of Stübben’s book *Der Städtebau* by Henrici: “Gedanken über das moderne Städtebausystem,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 25, nos. 14, 15 (18, 21 February 1891): 81–83, 86–88, 90–91. This review prompted a reply from Stübben: “Über einige Frage der Städtebaukunst,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 25, nos. 21, 25 (14, 28 March 1891): 122–28, 150–55. A further article by Henrici, “Der Individualismus im Städtebau,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 25, nos. 49, 50, 53 (20, 24 June, 4 July 1891): 295–98, 301–302, 320–22, drew a further rebuff from Stübben: “Der Individualismus im Städtebau,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 25, no. 61 (1 August 1891): 368–70. The debate continued into 1893.

47. The ceramic panels were made by the Zsolnay-Fabrik in Fünfkirchen (present-day

Pécs). Prototype panels were incorporated at the time into the facade of the Palais Vasadi in Fünfkirchen, where they still survive as mementos of the Kaufhaus Neumann.

48. Mallgrave and Herrmann (see note 22), 127–28. Gottfried Semper, *Die vier Elemente der Baukunst* (Braunschweig: Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn, 1851), 102: “*Ein großes und freies Feld für äußerliches polychromes Wirken ist uns in der Benutzung des verschiedenfarbigen Materials geblieben, dessen künstlerische Weiterbildung keine von unseren Traditionen verletzt, und dem jetzigen Standpunkte der Technik, wie oben gezeigt wurde, vollkommen entspricht.*”

49. Boris Podrecca sees in the exactitude of such layering a typically Semperian trait. “One centimeter, one protruding part becomes a problem, the superficially placed window, the ornamental band on the skin’s surface. There is a whole repertoire [in Viennese architecture] which to my way of thinking is related to the theory of Gottfried Semper,” in Bart Lootsma, “Boris Podrecca en de Weense traditie,” *Forum* 30, no. 3 (1985–1986): 125.

50. Mallgrave and Herrmann (see note 22), 257–58. Semper (see note 21), 1: 215: “*Das Maskiren aber hilft nichts, wo hinter der Maske die Sache unrichtig ist, oder die Maske nichts taugt; damit der Stoff, der unentbehrliche, in dem gemeinten Sinne vollständig in dem Kunstgebilde vernichtet sei, ist noch vor allem dessen vollständige Bemeisterung vorher nothwendig.*”

51. Wagner (see note 27), 73: “*In der Mitte der mächtigen praktischen Bestrebungen unserer Zeit und des allseitigen Kampfes ums Dasein, welcher die Kräfte des Einzelnen bis an die äußersten Grenzen anspannt, wird dieser Nutz-Stil auch am richtigen Platze sein. Legen wir ihm überdies noch das Streben nach innerer Wahrheit als Ideal in den Schoß, so wird er auch in ästhetischer Beziehung seine Berechtigung haben.*”

52. Adolf Göller, “Die Wahrheit in der modernen Architektur,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 18, no. 22 (15 March 1884): 130: “*1. Die Nachbildung irgend eines Materials durch ein anderes ist verwerflich: die Übertragung der gebräuchlichen Formen unserer Hausteinarchitektur auf Holz, Gusseisen, Zink oder Verputz ist eine Unwahrheit. 2. Wir sollen die Konstruktion offen zeigen, nicht verhüllen, und dabei sollen die Schmuckformen die Konstruktion idealisieren, d.h. die statische Leistung der Konstruktionstheile zum Ausdruck bringen. 3. Die Schmuckformen der Architektur sollen aus der Konstruktion hervor gehen: d.h. sie sollen aus der Bearbeitungsweise des Materials oder aus der Art der Zusammenfügung der Stücke abgeleitet werden.*” For a thoughtful response to Göller’s theories of architectural truth, see Cornelius Gurlitt, “Göller’s ästhetische Lehre,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 21, no. 101 (17 December 1887): 602–7.

53. Gottfried Semper, *Über Baustyle* (1869), in Mallgrave and Herrmann (see note 22), 269. Idem, *Über Baustyle* (Zurich: Friedrich Schulthess, 1869), 11: “*Styl ist die Uebereinstimmung einer Kunsterscheinung mit ihrer Entstehungsgeschichte, mit allen Vorbedingungen und Umständen ihres Werdens.*”

54. K. E. O. Fritsch, “Stilbetrachtungen,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 24, no. 70 (30 August 1890): 424: “*...dass der Stil, in welchem man baut, keineswegs die Bedeutung eines religiösen Dogmas*

*hat, sondern dass er nichts weiter ist, als ein Ausdrucksmittel für künstlerische Gedanken – darin durchaus verwandt der menschlichen Sprache, in der ja auch sehr verschiedene, gleichberechtigte Zungen herrschen.”*

55. *Ibid.*, 436: “...bereits die Baukunst eines großen Landes beherrscht, diejenige der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika.”

56. On this theme, see A. W. Reinink, “American Influences on Late Nineteenth-Century Architecture in the Netherlands,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 29, no. 2 (May 1970): 163–74.

57. K. E. O. Fritsch, “Berliner Neubauten, 55: Das ‘Künstlerhaus zum St. Lucas’ in Charlottenburg,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 25, no. 63 (8 August 1891): 378: “*Hr. Sehring, der mit dieser Schöpfung gewissermaßen sein öffentliches Glaubensbekenntnis abgelegt hat, verfolgt bekanntlich eine Richtung, die sich in schroffen Gegensatz zu allen akademischen Regeln und Anschauungen setzt und auf dem Gebiete der Architektur etwa dem entspricht, was man auf dem Gebiete der Malerie als ‘Naturalismus’ bezeichnet. Eine Richtung, die insbesondere unter den Architekten Nordamerikas sich entwickelt und dort schon sehr beachtenswerthe Leistungen gezeitigt hat, die aber je nach dem Ausgangspunkte, auf welchem der Künstler gestanden hat, sehr verschieden in die Erscheinung treten wird. Während der akademische Architekt an einem geschichtlich abgeschlossenen Stil sich hält und nicht nur in allen Einzelheiten die Einheit desselben zu wahren bestrebt ist, sondern in vielen Fällen seine Schöpfung sogar den Forderungen dieses Stils unterordnet, streben jene ‘Modernsten’ unter den Architekten in naiver Verwendung verschiedener, dem jeweiligen Zwecke entsprechender Stilformen und Motive lediglich danach, ein eigenartiges, durch seine malerische Wirkung anziehendes, der Bestimmung des Gebäudes angemessenes Gesamtbild zu erzielen.”*

58. See Bock (see note 13), 265. As Bock points out, however, Berlage’s impressionism did not derive solely from this source. Even Richard Hamann, who contrived to find evidence of Impressionist influence in most manifestations of modern life was at a loss when it came to architecture, confessing: “Impressionism must seem even more alien to architecture than it does to sculpture.” See Richard Hamann, *Der Impressionismus in Leben und Kunst* (Cologne: Dumont-Schauberg, 1907), 50–51: “*Noch fremder als die Plastik muß die Architektur dem Impressionismus sein.*”

59. Berlage (see note 32), 99: “*Onder impressionisme in het algemeen verstaat men het weergeven van het beeld, zooals dit niet objectief maar subjectief sich voordoet.*”

60. Berlage (see note 32), 105: “...*karakteristiek silhouet in harmonie met een eenvoudigen onderbouw.*”

61. Berlage (see note 32), 106: “*Zou een bouwblock... kunnen verrijzen impressionistisch kantig, gesilhouetteerd met enkele eenvoudige varieerende details van de verschillende ingangsideuren... allen gezocht naar enkele karakteristieke groote vlakken, begrenzende lijnen!*”

62. Berlage (see note 32), 94: “*Er is niet alleen gezocht naar een concentratie van kunstwerken, maar meer nog naar een concentratie voor't gezicht; naar een gesloten ruimte, evenals een vertrek. Dit doel werd op allerlei wijzen bereikt; in hoofdzaak, door niet al te breede, korte of anders kromme straten op het plein te doen uitkomen en dat bovendien in verschillende richtingen.*”

63. Berlage (see note 32), 98: “*Aan het feit, dat juist onregelmatige perceelen de beste grondplan-oplossingen geven, wordt niet alleen niet gedacht, maar zelfs niet eens voor mogelijk gehouden... Het geheele systeem van moderne stadsuitbreiding bestaat in elkaar rechthoekig kruisende straten, en plein wordt datgene wat toevallig als driehoek overblijft op het schaakbord-patroon der bouwblokken... Geen stoepen, geen voortuintjes, geen kelderingsgangen, geen voorbouw, geen arkaden, geen scheeve hoeken, geen voorsprong, geen luifel, geen wat niet al, tot in het belachelijke gedecreteerd; want's bouwmeesters heiligste gebod luidt: 'eert uwen rooilijn, opdat ge goed bouwt, en uwe praktijk zij een lange op deze aarde.'” Berlage echoes here, almost verbatim, a review of Sitte's *Der Städte-Bau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*, published in *Bouwkundig weekblad* 9 (1889): 182–83, 236–37.*

64. Ernst Braches, *Het boek als Nieuwe Kunst, 1892–1903* (Utrecht: Oosthoek, 1973), 198: “*De Gijsbrecht-versieringen zijn de eerste tekenen van Berlages overgang naar moderner vormgeving.*”

65. Berlage (see note 32), 95: “*Daarmee is niet gezegd, dat de komende kunst van de vroegere niets heeft te leeren.*”

66. Bock (see note 13), 253: “*Das Bild des Neugotikers und Eklektikers Cuypers verblich langsam hinter dem des Bahnbrechers für eine neue Entwurfsmethode.*”

67. Willem Kromhout, “Het rationalisme in Frankrijk,” *Architectura* 1 (1893): 6ff.

68. Bock (see note 13), 261: “*...heureuse révolution dans l'art.*”

69. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Morel, 1875), 4: 146: “*Il est fâcheux que nous ne puissions toujours bâtir comme les anciens et observer perpétuellement ces règles simples et si belles des constructeurs grecs ou romains; mais nous ne pouvons élever raisonnablement une gare de chemin de fer, une halle, une salle pour nos assemblées, un bazar ou une bourse, en suivant les errements de la construction grecque et même de la construction romaine, tandis que les principes souples appliqués déjà par les architectes du moyen âge, en les étudiant avec soin, nous placent sur la vie moderne, celle du progrès incessant. Cette étude nous permet toute innovation, l'emploi de tous les genres de matériaux, sans déroger aux principes posés par ces architectes, puisque ces principes consistent précisément à tout sommer, matériaux, forme, dispositions d'ensemble et de détail, au raisonnement; à atteindre la limite du possible, à substituer les ressources de l'industrie à la force inerte, la recherche de l'inconnu à la tradition.*”

70. Singelenberg (see note 12), 71. Hendrik Petrus Berlage, “Ijzer en steen,” *De kroniek* 1 (1895): 363: “*Men probeere voor groote openingen het ook met steen, door brutalere constructiën en late de overdreven eischen van glasoppervlakte voor den tijd, dat er misschien opbouwingen*

*zullen zijn geheel van ijzer, of wel ijzeren vakwerkbouw, want alleen in dat geval vind ik de ijzeren puibalken gerechtvaardigd."*

71. Berlage (see note 32), 99: "... *het zoo schoone beginsel der maatschappelijke gelijkheid... Wij zien juist bij de voortschrijding der groote maatschappelijke idee, elk volk van eenige beteekenis, zijner eigen kracht, zijner ikheid bewust, ook zijn eigen kunst hoog houden.*" For an account of Berlage's close relationship with the Radical Party, see Bock (see note 13), 314–18.

72. Oud (see note 1), 203–4: "... *die Menge des Volkes nicht mehr berührten.*"

73. Manfredo Tafuri, "Am Steinhof," in Peichl (see note 2), 63.

74. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Entretiens sur l'architecture*, no. 17 (Paris: Morel, 1863–1872), 2: 296: "*Nous faisons de l'architecture de sentiment, comme nous avons fait de la politique de sentiment, la guerre de sentiment... Il faudrait songer à faire intervenir en toute ceci la froide raison, le bon sens pratique, l'étude des nécessités du temps, des perfectionnements fournis par l'industrie, des moyens économiques, des questions d'hygiène et de salubrité.*"

75. Otto Wagner, "Antrittsrede an der Akademie der bildenden Künste" (1894), in Graf (see note 27), 1: 249: "*Der Realismus unserer Zeit muss das werdende Kunstwerk durchdringen... kein Niedergang der Kunst wird daraus hervorgehen: er wird vielmehr neues pulsirendes Leben den Formen einhauchen und sich mit der Zeit neue Gebiete, welche heute noch der Kunst entbehren, wie beispielweise das Gebiet des Ingenieurwesens erobern.*"

76. Otto Wagner, "Erläuterungs-Bericht zum Entwurfe für den General-Regulierungs-Plan über das gesammte Gemeindegebiet von Wien," (1892–1893; 2nd ed., 1894), in Graf (see note 27), 1: 95: "*Die Hochbauten der Verkehrsanlagen, bei welchen heute nur der Ingenieur spricht, sind dem Aesthetiker, dem Baukünstler zur Ausgestaltung zu überweisen.*"

77. Wagner was never specific about how this union was to be achieved in practical terms. As Harry Mallgrave has noted, "*Moderne Architektur* only hints at how constructional form becomes artistic form." See Wagner, 1988 (see note 28), 36.

78. Hendrik Petrus Berlage, "De plaats die de bouwkunst in de moderne aethetica bekleedt," *Bouwkundig weekblad* 6, nos. 27, 28 (July 1886): 161–63, 169–72: "*Men ziet hieruit dat de oplossing van de vraag naar de plaats die die architectuur in het system der kunsten moet innemen, door de beweringen der aethetici tot op onzen tijd nog geen bevredigende uitkomst heeft opgeleverd.*"

79. Berlage (see note 32): 110: "*Zijn dan de architecten niet klaar met hun groot impressionistische kunst, dan heeft hun taak op deze wereld een eind genomen; 'sic transit gloria mundi'. Zijn zij het wel, dan zullen ook de komende geslachten den artiest van den wetenschappelijken bouwmeester, den architect van den ingenieur kunnen onderscheiden, en ook dan zal voor den architect een schoone werkkring zijn weggelegd, omdat de mensch het kunst-ideaal niet kan ontberen.*"



1. Gottlieb Kempf-Hartenkampf,  
portrait of Otto Wagner, 1896.  
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Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

Ákos Moravánszky

## THE AESTHETICS OF THE MASK:

*The Critical Reception of Wagner's Moderne Architektur and*

*Architectural Theory in Central Europe*

Otto Wagner's ideas and buildings had a much greater influence on the architecture of the eastern half of Central Europe than on the architecture of the lands west of Vienna. This may seem surprising, for we know that the influence of Vienna, the political capital of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, was viewed with resentment or was even rejected outright in Prague and Budapest, depending on the political situation. Yet a considerably greater number of buildings reflecting the aesthetics of the Wagner circle can be found in Nagyvárad (present-day Oradea, Romania), for instance, than in Salzburg or Innsbruck. The home for a Swiss industrialist (1910–1911) or the Gendarmerie School (1912), for instance, both in Nagyvárad and both designed by József Vágó, stand with their smooth, stone-clad surfaces in sharp contrast to the heavy, plastic articulation of the “regional style” (*Heimatstil*) facades in western Austria.

In a short essay for the catalog accompanying the Vienna exhibition of Otto Wagner's drawings, I attempted to explain his significance east of Vienna by stating that Wagner's architecture demonstrates the influence of oriental forms and aesthetic principles.<sup>1</sup> I would now like to go a step further and argue that the architectural language of form developed by Wagner was particularly suited to express the acute social tensions of the eastern half of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with its crumbling feudal structure and liberalism tinged with nationalism. Otto Wagner's architecture with its ties to the imperial court, on the one hand, and to the utopia of the modern metropolis, on the other, represents an “aesthetics of the mask,” the basis of which was Semper's theory of “dressing” (*Bekleidung*).

If we speak of Wagner today as a pioneer of modern architecture, we

ignore the fact that his contemporaries, in placing his work alongside the new structures by engineers, often viewed him as a conservative artist. The anonymous author of a tract written in 1897 and titled *Moderne Architektur, Prof. Otto Wagner und die Wahrheit über beide* (Modern architecture, Prof. Otto Wagner, and the truth about both), who by no means advocated the “constructional language of forms,” noted that Wagner’s architecture was perceived “in its essence as anything but *constructional*, no matter how much Wagner himself with surprise (or denial) might protest against it.”<sup>2</sup> In another anonymous essay appearing in 1900 in the Budapest journal *Budapesti építészeti szemle* (Budapest architecture review), the author reproached Wagner stating that “despite every effort to create something new,” he “could not deny his past and still represented the concept of ‘traditional art as a treasury.’”<sup>3</sup> Architects should not follow Wagner’s path, the author went on to say, but should instead develop their own architectural concepts, adhering to “correct proportions.” Iron, the material of the present, would serve independently minded architects “like a guardian angel.”

Fritz Schumacher, a founding member of the German Werkbund and the influential representative of early Modernism (*Reformstil*) in Germany, also had reservations concerning Wagner. In his book of 1903, *Strömungen in deutscher Baukunst seit 1800* (Tendencies in German architecture since 1800), he reviewed Wagner’s Viennese Modernism from the perspective of a craftsman well acquainted with materials. “One can see that this world of a new modern language, elaborated upon by such talented students as [Joseph Maria] Olbrich, Josef Hoffmann, and Leopold Bauer, has nothing in common with Belgian Modernism and is equally distant from the Dutch Modernism of [Hendrik Petrus] Berlage – the latter’s hard, calloused hand of the master craftsman stands in contrast to the elegant, manicured hand of the man of the world [*Weltmann*].”<sup>4</sup>

A portrait of Wagner from 1896 reveals this *Weltmann* (fig. 1). The pastel painting by Gottlieb Kempf-Hartenkampf hung in the billiard room of Wagner’s first villa in Hütteldorf, which in Vienna was said to have been built for Crown Prince Rudolf. Be that as it may, the grandeur of the Hapsburg court is reflected in the architect’s home, just as his portrait reveals his view of himself as a court artist in evening dress and fur with the five-pointed star of an officer of the Legion of Honor on his chest.

He was indeed a court artist. He began his career designing pompous processions for the silver wedding anniversary of Emperor Franz Josef

and Empress Elisabeth (1879) and for the arrival in Vienna of Princess Stephanie of Belgium (1881); these designs (see pp. 20, 23, 27) were in the manner of Hans Makart, the court painter and master of festive celebrations, whom Wagner held in high esteem. The presence of Albrecht Dürer's portrait (fig. 2) on a medallion in a frieze on Wagner's Rennweg townhouse (1889–1890) shows that Wagner consciously accepted the legacy of an imperial festival designer, for Dürer had designed the famous processional for Emperor Maximilian I. In an article of 1901 for the Munich journal *Die Kunst*, Ludwig Abels honored Wagner as “the great pathfinder” of modern architecture with a “gift of prophecy.” He correctly acknowledged the Rococo in the facade of Wagner's small building on Rennweg in Vienna and noted that “Wagner, the offspring of a wealthy patrician family, has always shared Vienna's love of pomp; he relishes it, and many of his latest interiors, as novel as their motifs may be, are still reminiscent of the Rococo in their refined complexity.”<sup>5</sup> This “Viennese love of pomp,” Wagner's well-known epithet for the architect as the “crowning glory of modern man,”<sup>6</sup> and his stated desire that “officials in authority” make use (under his patronage) of the “assistance” of the Wiener Architekten-Club (Vienna architects' club) “in settling all important and relevant questions”<sup>7</sup> — all gave his critics opportunity to rage against the “Viennese architectural papacy.”<sup>8</sup> “In matters of art,” noted one critic, “there has seldom been a more self-complacent case of *pro domo*.”<sup>9</sup> Wagner's “condottiere nature,” which Dagobert Frey pointed out admiringly, was evidence, in the eyes of many of his peers, of Vienna's patriarchal backwardness.<sup>10</sup>

By 1900 the architect as court artist had long since become an anachronism. Even a century earlier, the architectural profession had lost its affiliation with the feudal court and had been forced to assert itself in the capitalist free market. The architect, however, was to find strong competition in the person of the engineer, who had superior technical training for solving the problems of the industrial age. By century's end it appeared that planning the infrastructure of the modern world was no longer the task of the architect. Many had to earn their daily bread by sketching facades for builders, and the vagueness with which the neo-stylists applied architecture's wealth of historical forms to walls directly from pattern books reinforced the feeling that the profession, once so rooted in society, had outlived itself. This professional crisis was felt by every architect, and many of them tried to redefine their own responsibilities. It is clear that legitimation was pos-



2. Otto Wagner,  
medallion containing a portrait of Albrecht  
Dürer (part of an exterior frieze), townhouse,  
Rennweg 3, Vienna, 1889-1890.  
Photo by author.

sible only through the affirmation of the new industrial era, that is, by approximating the engineer's mode of thinking, which was logical, technically oriented, and therefore not individualistic (but at the same time easier to manipulate politically).

But how could this mode of thinking be coupled with the personal vision of the artist and the critical view of one's social surroundings – the will to communicate with one's environment and historical experience? In Central Europe, this question could be answered, on the one hand, by means of Semper's theory of *Bekleidung*, which accepted the work's conditioning forces as *necessitas* and subordinated the structure to them. On the other hand, an answer to the question could be sought in the architect's use of the mask as "poetry," expressing the fascination of the old, feudal world, which had by no means disappeared in this part of Europe.

According to Semper, the origin of a work of art is influenced by such factors as materials and modes of construction, local and ethnological influences, climate, religious and political institutions, and the personal influences of the patron, artist, and producer of the work. But Semper also maintained that human culture had always been enchanted by the veil or mask, "the haze of carnival candles is the true atmosphere of art. The annihilation of reality, of the material, is necessary if form is to emerge as a meaningful symbol, as an autonomous creation of man."<sup>11</sup>

Wagner's motto – *Artis sola domina necessitas* (Necessity is the only master of art) – has its origin in the theory of Semper, which sought the totality of factors influencing a work of art. For Semper even the most primitive structure was enveloped in an outer aesthetic veil; the monumental works of antiquity, such as triumphal arches, were derived from provisional structures adorned with actual objects – weapons, wreaths, and garlands. Only when rebuilt of durable materials did these works become invested with the "commemorative perpetuation" of the historical moment. The mask was the constant element, the symbol representing themes that cannot be expressed by the inner structure. "The dressing and the mask are as old as human civilization, and the joy in both is identical with the joy of those things that drove men to be sculptors, painters, architects, poets, musicians, dramatists, in short, artists."<sup>12</sup>

The necessity of the mask for communication has been emphasized by many of this century's thinkers. Umberto Eco, for instance, mentions this need in *Postscript to the Name of the Rose*.<sup>13</sup> What may come as a surprise is

that Adolf Loos, the indefatigable combatant of the lie in architecture, also advocated its use in his essay “Von der Sparsamkeit” (On thriftiness). “The modern, intelligent person must have a mask for other people... only the mentally handicapped... need to scream out to the world what and how they are.”<sup>14</sup> Georg Simmel, in his “Soziologische Ästhetik” (Sociological aesthetics), 1896, stressed that metropolitan life necessitated

an inner barrier... between people, a barrier, however, that is indispensable for the modern form of life. For the jostling crowdedness and the motley disorder of metropolitan communication would simply be unbearable without such psychological distance. Since contemporary urban culture... forces us to be physically close to an enormous number of people, sensitive and nervous modern people would sink completely into despair if the objectification of social relationships did not bring with it an inner boundary and reserve.<sup>15</sup>

In Simmel’s essay of 1908, “Das Problem des Stiles” (The problem of style), the modern style is interpreted as veiling what is internal, of masking.

What drives the modern individual so strongly toward style is the unburdening and veiling of the personal, which is the essence of the style. Subjectivity and individuality have reached the point of collapse, and in the stylized making of form – from social manners to the furnishing of a dwelling – resides an appeasement, a toning down of this acute personality to a general idea and its law. It is as if the ego could no longer support itself solely, or at least no longer wished to reveal itself, and so it puts on a more general, more typical, in short, a stylized garment... Stylized expression, the way of life, taste – all are limits or ways of distancing, in which the exaggerated subjectivity of the period finds a counterbalance and a mask.<sup>16</sup>

The issue of “depth” versus “surface” appears to have been more prominent in the urban centers of the Danube monarchy – with their feudal traditions, liberal ambience, growing national and social tensions, and illusion of stability – than elsewhere. It is hardly coincidental that Sigmund Freud described the phenomenon of “repression” in Vienna; he arrived at his views by observing a stratum of Viennese society.<sup>17</sup> Many poets and writers of Vienna, Prague, and Budapest were concerned with the tension between the personality’s external mask and its depth. In Mihály Babits’s novel

*A gólyakalifa* (The stork caliph), 1916, the hero's schizophrenia leads him to wander back and forth between consciousness and unconsciousness – as an allegory of the surface and depth of society.

The mask represents a kind of link between the internal and external worlds, between surface and depth. The mask of ancient Greek drama was called the “persona.” In the psychology of Carl Gustav Jung (as a compromise between the individual and society) it plays the same role as that of the Semperian mask: it forms a necessary, but not opaque, protective wall against the world outside.<sup>18</sup>

The persona, as Jolande Jacobi interprets Jung's thought, should not “become so impenetrable that the individual characteristics it conceals cannot at least be intimated behind it. It should not be so solidly ‘attached’ that it can no longer be ‘taken off’ . . . a correctly fitted and functioning persona is, so to speak, . . . a principal condition of mental health and of major importance to mastering the demands of the world outside.”<sup>19</sup> Let us compare this quotation with Semper's observation on the correct mask.

Masking does not help, however, when *behind* the mask the thing is false or the mask is no good. In order that the material, the indispensable (in the usual sense of the expression) be completely denied in the artistic creation, its complete mastery is the imperative precondition. Only by complete technical perfection, by judicious and proper treatment of the material according to its properties, and by taking these properties into consideration while creating form can the material be forgotten, can the artistic creation be completely freed from it, and can even a simple landscape painting be raised to a high work of art.<sup>20</sup>

But such a sympathetic and elegant theory of masking was quite foreign to most architectural theorists of the nineteenth century. They understood the notion of a mask to be simply deception and lies. The rejection of an outmoded historicism meant the propagation of a formal language directed toward materials and construction – whatever might be understood by these terms. Relatively early in the century we already find polemics anticipating the formulations of the representatives of “the new building” (*das neue Bauen*). In 1832 the Berlin architect Carl August Menzel published a work on the contemporary architectural situation in which he rejected the architectural mask as a lie. “Masking is that process in architecture by which

one gives to an architectural part or to the whole of a building a form different from that prescribed by natural criteria and construction.” According to Menzel, “We must build in such a way that form is intimately related to the requirements, the chosen materials, and the construction, and so that it makes the parts harmonize beautifully with their whole and the whole with its parts.”<sup>21</sup>

Adolf Göller, a professor of architecture in Stuttgart, took a similar position in his lecture of 1884, “Was ist Wahrheit in der Architektur?” (What is truth in architecture?). In his opinion, the architectural detail should derive solely from construction; the transfer of form from one material to another was “untruth and deception.” Construction should appear without a mask, “the ornamental details of architecture should idealize the structure, that is, express the structural achievement of the constructional parts, the force operating within the mass.”<sup>22</sup>

By the turn of the century, most representatives of the “engineer’s aesthetic” (*Ingenieurästhetik*) held the same or very similar views on construction as the source of architectonic truth. But most were also dissatisfied with the naked iron structures produced by engineers. The “brittleness” and “stilted dryness” of these “fleshless, bodiless, and linear creations” were criticized by such architects and critics as Richard Streiter, Heinrich Leibnitz, Walter Gropius, and Eugen Ehmann.<sup>23</sup> The German critic Karl Scheffler, in his influential book *Moderne Baukunst* (Modern architecture), 1907, emphasized the surprisingly modern effect of the Berlin elevated railway under construction. “As long as the constructional intention alone was at work and the skeleton was uncovered, revealing the purpose and the function of its parts, as long as the assembly labored, so to speak, from the bones of the structural problem outward, this primitive sight often had the effect of artistic promise.”<sup>24</sup> This does not mean, however, that Scheffler considered the skeleton itself to be a work of art. “All construction is merely the starting point. The creative imagination receives its impetus from functional thought, then it distances itself greatly from the profane, and only when it finds a pure and beautiful form can it charitably return to functional architecture.”<sup>25</sup>

It appears that most architects and critics of early Modernism – in addition to their rejection of historicism – were in agreement that truthful construction and logical structure should be the basis for architecture’s renewal. But the question of how to achieve a “pure form of beauty” was difficult to

answer when they rejected the Semperian mask as a solution. “One is on dangerous ground when one seeks the artistic in building in the superfluous... in what is appended to needs,” wrote Hermann Muthesius in 1907.<sup>26</sup> Architects sought assistance from the analogy of the human body: just as the body follows the form of skeletal construction, so architecture should reveal its inner structural truth.

Even Joseph August Lux, the author of the first monograph on Otto Wagner, supported this view.

It is simply untrue that the bare skeleton is the final word in beauty. A railway bridge, an Eiffel Tower, and similar works of engineering are simply skeletons. They can please my intellect, but they can never please my heart. The artistic eye sees with the heart and not with the intellect. Permit me a metaphor: the human skeleton is surely the most perfect work of engineering. But it is rosy flesh that is essential to my eye in seeking beauty, from which it follows that we are dealing not only with the public but also with the professional, who will not fulfill culture’s desire for beauty with construction, material, and function alone... artistic form must be rediscovered in the new elements.<sup>27</sup>

The metaphor of skeleton and flesh appears in numerous writings on truth in architecture of the time — from Fritz Höber to Hendrik Petrus Berlage. The latter wrote in his study of 1905, *Gedanken über Stil in der Baukunst* (Thoughts on style in architecture), “With every creation of nature the dressing is, to a certain extent, an exact mirroring of the skeleton... in which the logical principle of construction predominates; the dressing does not slip over it like a suit, like a loose veil that completely negates this construction, but rather merges fully with the inner structure. In the final analysis it is embellished construction, as it were, trying to reclaim the body.”<sup>28</sup>

Herman Sörgel tried to take this idea further, or rather, to base it in psychological observations. He found that the viewer who is unfamiliar with the compressive and tensile stresses of a structure, and who therefore cannot project himself “into the braces and bars” of a support system, is incapable of appreciating its beauty. A structure’s dressing, therefore, has the task of producing an effect that can be traced back to the observer’s experiences with tectonics.<sup>29</sup> Sörgel’s demand most certainly was influenced by Theodor Lipps and Wilhelm Worringer’s *Einfühlungstheorie* (theory of empathy).

Though at first glance it may appear that the construction's dressing of the skeleton/body analogy is related to Semper's theory of *Bekleidung*, in reality, however, this was essentially the position that Semper criticized as "designed construction, more or less illustrated statics and mechanics."<sup>30</sup> In his view the "mask" should communicate much more than structural laws. What this "more" was is discussed by Heinrich Leibnitz in his book of 1849, *Das struktive Element in der Architektur und sein Verhältnis zur Kunstform* (The structural element in architecture and its relation to the art-form).

We understand *architecture* to be that building activity capable of impressing the mask of spiritual and moral (ethical) meaning on works arising out of naked need and mechanically assembled, therefore elevating a materially necessary form to an *art-form*. . . . It is true that form is determined by mechanical theory and structural laws, similar to how the parts of a machine perfectly fulfill the function for which they are created, but form will forever remain rigidly constrained as long as it lacks the exterior habit, the characteristic that can elevate this *mechanism* to a living *organism* that can speak and signify its inner essence. This moment will occur only when the visual *art-form* places a transparent mask over this mechanical *core-form*. . . . This characterizing element will be the creation of form or the *ornament* of architecture. Its purpose resides not in the building's structural functioning but, on the contrary, will articulate only symbolically the function of the core-form, precisely displaying all of its relations, and in this way endowing the work with that independent life and that ethical sanction through which it alone can be elevated to a work of art.<sup>31</sup>

Leibnitz's "transparent mask" – the mask-persona – was a refinement of Carl Bötticher's theory of "core-schema" and "art-schema."<sup>32</sup> Bötticher's dichotomy of core-form and representational additions, however, has nothing to do with Semper's refined unity, the *symbolism of construction*.

Otto Wagner, whose architecture conforms to the Semperian principles, failed to acknowledge the importance of these theories and, instead, radically simplified Semper's theory by discarding this most important symbolic element. But as a few of his critics correctly observed at the time, he could not even convincingly explain his own architecture with this simplified theory. As Wagner notes in *Moderne Architektur*: "Logical thinking must therefore convince us that the following tenet is unshakable: every

architectural form has arisen in construction and has successively become an art-form. . . . It is therefore certain that new purposes must give birth to new methods of construction, and by this reasoning also to new forms.”<sup>33</sup>

Wagner does point out that it is to Semper’s credit that he “referred us to this postulate, to be sure in a somewhat exotic way,” but at the same time Wagner emphasizes that Semper “lacked the courage to complete his theories from above and below and had to make do with a symbolism of construction, instead of naming construction itself as the primitive cell of architecture.”<sup>34</sup> Wagner overlooks the problem that “construction itself” cannot explain the origin of the form. Indeed, he by no means believes that architectural form simply derives from construction, as he points out in another passage. “The engineer who does not consider the nascent art-form but only the structural calculation and the expense will therefore speak a language unsympathetic to man, while on the other hand, the architect’s mode of expression will remain unintelligible if in the creation of the art-form he does not start from construction.”<sup>35</sup>

The anonymous author of the previously cited polemic of 1897 called attention to Wagner’s misinterpretation of Semper and emphasized Semper’s antipositivism and idealism. “If anything can be considered a specific characteristic of the most recent movement in art (formulated by Semper in his field), it is simply a natural and strong reaction against materialism. . . . And it is just in this period that a self-appointed champion of ‘modern architecture’ is preparing now and – if he has his way – for all time to put art under the yoke of materialism!”<sup>36</sup>

One year later Richard Streiter, a professor at the Münchner Polytechnikum, published a small book entitled *Architektonische Zeitfragen* (Contemporary architectural questions), in which he critically examined even more carefully the inconsistency of Wagner’s thinking. Streiter shows that Wagner in his architectural activity follows Semper’s theory, although Wagner

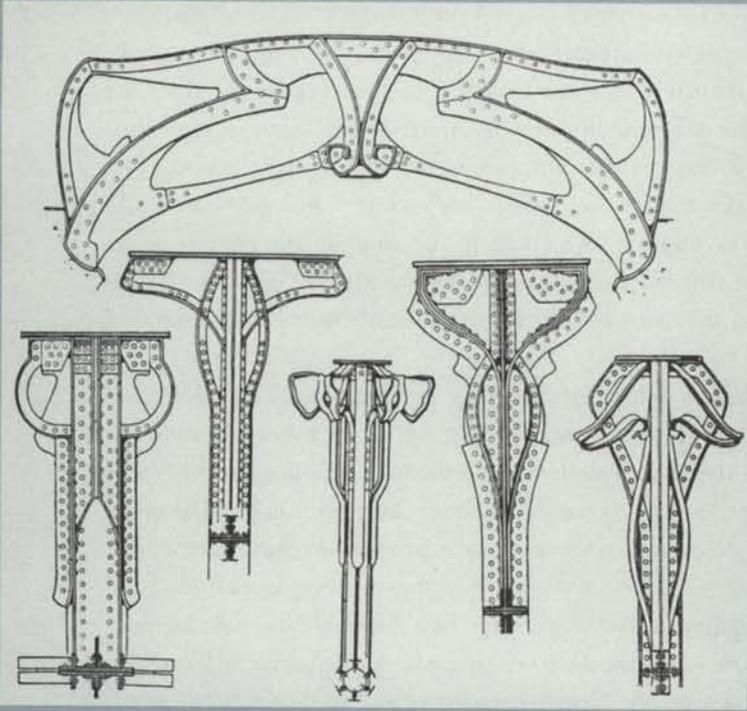
is very unclear about the underlying issue. For how else could he object to Semper’s adherence to a “symbolism of construction” when it is precisely this symbolism that allows the art-form to develop out of constructional form. . . . For what use is it to shout to the architect: “You must develop the art-form out of the construction!” if we do not show him a way to do this, or if the way that so far has been the only correct one is now represented as false? It would not be wrong to assume that Wagner’s objection to Semper results only from a

theoretical misunderstanding, since even in his own practice Wagner cannot do away with the symbolism of construction. . . . When Wagner proclaims, "What can be more logical than to maintain: when art is supplied with so many completely new methods of construction, there must no doubt arise from them a new way of shaping form and gradually a new style," then his logic suffers from the false assumption that construction and technology are in themselves crucial to the making of form, to style.<sup>37</sup>

Streiter was at the same time questioning the legitimacy of the modern metropolis, which for Wagner was the expression of rationalism and the "basic democratic tendency" of the time. Such projects are only truly satisfactory, writes Streiter, "when they are executed under the guidance of *one* discerning and powerful will, with the most lavish means and the best forces."<sup>38</sup> He believes that Wagner's "basic democratic tendency" is in fact an expression of an "ultra-industry" working at "express train speed," an industry that suits not the demands and wishes of the public but the "speculative market of factory owners."<sup>39</sup> He criticizes Wagner's enlightened, liberal rationalism from the ideological base of English socialism.

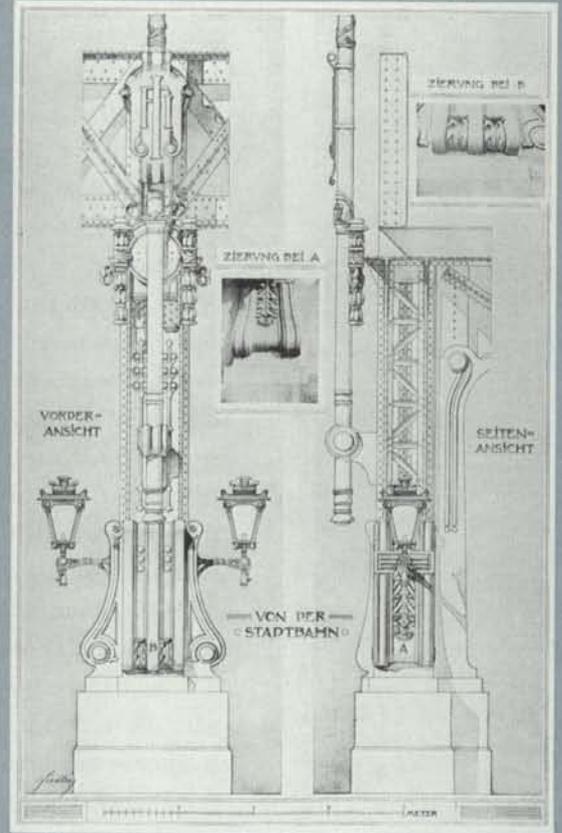
Yet would not an art that in the sense of illustrating our democratic, self-confident nature and taking into account man's colossal technical and scientific achievements, as well as his thoroughly practical tendency result in an art of big industry, of entrepreneurs, of "promoters," an art of the narrow-minded bourgeoisie now dominating the marketplace, an art of a "practical" Manchesterism, which so enjoys draping itself in the ideal mantle of democratic liberalism in order to gain as much space as possible in which to pursue its material interests according to the well-known law of the "free play of forces"? Can such an art really illustrate our better, ideal nature? Is not the wretched "parvenu taste" that we have come to know as a regrettable characteristic of the art of the second half of our century precisely the result of this type of "democratic art"? To fight this "parvenu taste" also means to fight the leveling, democratic trend in art!<sup>40</sup>

The alternative for Streiter was a regional art of the twentieth century, based on the Arts and Crafts Movement in England. In Germany it was even introduced to serve the interests of industry. The "basic democratic tendency" of the metropolis proved to be more viable, for its structure



3. Alfred Gotthold Meyer,  
iron arch and support capitals.  
From Alfred Gotthold Meyer, *Eisenbauten:  
Ihre Geschichte und Ästhetik* (Esslingen:  
Paul Neff, 1907), 182.  
Los Angeles, Helen Topping Architecture  
and Fine Arts Library, University of  
Southern California.

4. Otto Wagner,  
iron pillar from the Meidling Stadtbahn  
viaduct, 1898.  
From L. Fiedler, ed., *Das Detail in der  
modernen Architektur* (Vienna: F. Wolfrum,  
1902), 1: 22.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.



corresponded exactly to the invisible economic forces shaping the city. The new aesthetically treated surfaces were supposed to reintegrate art into the life of the urban dweller. Wagner's metropolis, as represented in his elegant drawings, is not a hectic big city with streams of automobiles and bustling inhabitants. It evokes a solemn, somewhat nostalgic mood. The golden spikes of obelisks, fountains, lamps, and monuments conform to the homogenous grid of the streets, as well as to the marble sheathings of its facades. The values of the culture of the past were still strong enough in this Central European city to provide its inhabitants with a comfortable and aesthetic life.

Among those, however, who rejected this aesthetic as the "perfumed wave"<sup>41</sup> of Viennese architecture and who strove for a more elementary "unmasked" design – the pure "performance form" (*Leistungsform*) – was Alfred Gotthold Meyer, author of a book on iron construction published in 1907.<sup>42</sup> It is interesting to compare several of his proposed solutions for iron capitals with Otto Wagner's iron columns for the municipal railway viaduct in Meidling, designed in 1898 (figs. 3, 4). In a theoretical sense, Meyer's suggestion appears to be more modern: nothing is appliquéd, the iron profiling of the capitals is curved. Notwithstanding (or perhaps because of) this, they appear to be scrolled like the serpentine lines of Jugendstil, which had just gone out of fashion. By comparison, the iron structure of the Meidling viaduct is ornamented, although its "performance form" appears fundamentally less compromising, more industrial, than Meyer's capitals. The structure is covered with a festive embellishment of laurel branches, which are connected with the softly molded streamers of Franz Josef's scepter-shaped trophy. Today this solution seems to be artistically more successful because of its discordance, which accentuates, rather than blurs, the contradictions. The columns of the viaduct allude to the ornamentation of costume galas of the Makart era; the modern technological and industrial world is artistically ennobled with a gesture that is visibly permanent.

The famous facade of the Postsparkasse in Vienna (1903–1906), sheathed in panels of Sterzing marble attached with metal bolts, clearly reveals Wagner's intention to present a carefully detailed facade formed of a thin, elegant material – a visible contrast to the heavy stone blocks of earlier times with their rusticated surface treated as a solid structure (fig. 5). In his biography of Wagner, Lux criticized the "lack of a true architectural effect of mass in the use of aluminum heads and sheets of marble to *sheathe* the structure."<sup>43</sup>

The apotropaic nails in the facade were,<sup>44</sup> at the same time, an expression of the architect's determination not to let the new functions of the metropolis slip away, that is, to nail them fast with his creative power. Many of his contemporaries, including the art historian Dagobert Frey, have emphasized in particular Wagner's tremendous vitality and referred to him with such terms as the "Ulrich von Hutten of the joy of living and spirit," a "standard bearer and military leader."<sup>45</sup>

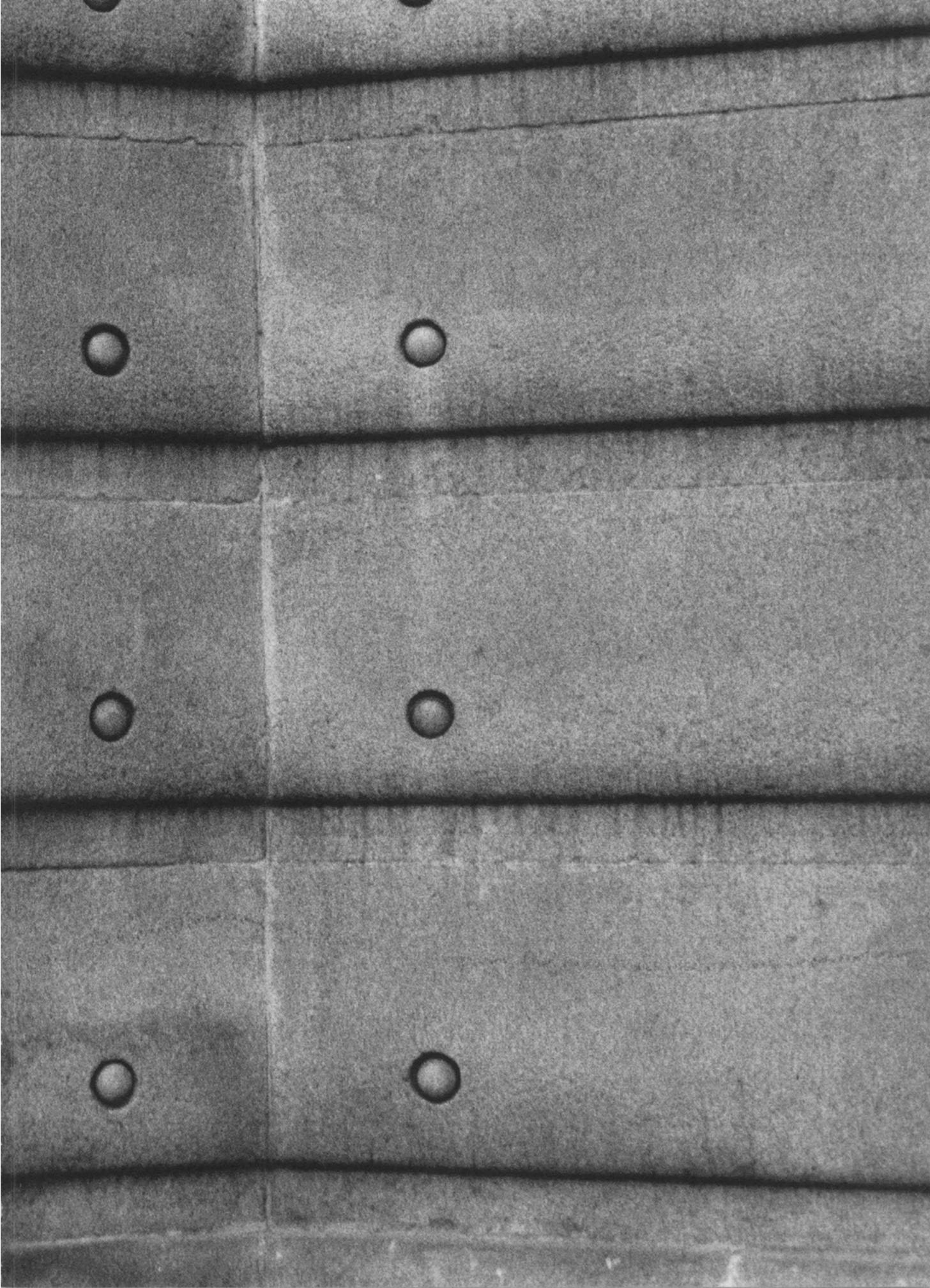
Around the turn of the century Wagner was a kind of father figure in eastern and Central European architecture, although he was often rejected by the younger generation. Nevertheless, he was seen as the starting point for future development and emulated as such. The visible mounting of the sheathing panels of the Postsparkasse inspired similar solutions in Budapest, where wall surfaces were frequently animated with dotted motifs. Sometimes these dotted elements were actually bolts affixing the panels, as was the case with the Budapest office and residential building designed in 1911 by the architects Dávid and Zsigmond Jónás (fig. 6). But often they were simply a new type of ornamentation, like the ceramic knobs attached to the facade of the Árkád-Bazár toy store in Budapest, designed in 1909 by the brothers József and László Vágó (fig. 7).

Wagner was also highly regarded in Bohemia, even when architects seemed to strike out in different directions. We should therefore like to modify somewhat Wolfgang Pehnt's remark on the relative independence of the Prague Cubist Movement around 1910. "Ideas from Paris were used as weapons against Vienna and the Austrian Secession, which had influenced Bohemian architects through the successful teaching activity of Otto Wagner."<sup>46</sup> Rather, the younger Czech architects, many of whom were themselves trained by Wagner at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna, had a kind of love-hate regard for their former master and Viennese developments in general.

"The basis for the analysis of the present situation in modern architecture must be the direction taken by Wagner. This direction is the focal point of the entire movement in modern architecture, for it is the first to be formed intellectually. It is the most concrete and conclusive direction in Europe," wrote Pavel Janák in 1910 on the occasion of the publication of the Czech edition of *Moderne Architektur*.<sup>47</sup> Janák himself was a student of Wagner (according to Marco Pozzetto, he was even the "prototypical student for whom Wagner yearned"),<sup>48</sup> and he was emerging as the standard-bearer

5. (Next page)  
Otto Wagner,  
detail of the Postsparkasse, Vienna,  
1904–1906.  
Photo by author.







MAISON  
SZILÁGYI

KALAP  
TERME

STENÁSY ÖYÜLÁ  
ES  
BAREAI ANDRÁS

STENÁSY ÖYÜLÁ  
ES  
BAREAI ANDRÁS

SELYMEK

CSIPKEK

FÜGGÖNYÖK

3  
NO  
FENK

3



6. Dávid and Zsigmond Jónás,  
Szénásy and Bárczai apartment house with  
shops, Budapest, 1911.  
From *Budapester Neubauten* (Vienna: Anton  
Schroll, 1910), vol. 2.  
Vienna, Verlag Anton Schroll & Co.
7. József and László Vágó,  
Árkád-Bazár toy store, Budapest, 1909.  
From *Der Architekt* 17 (1911): 16.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.

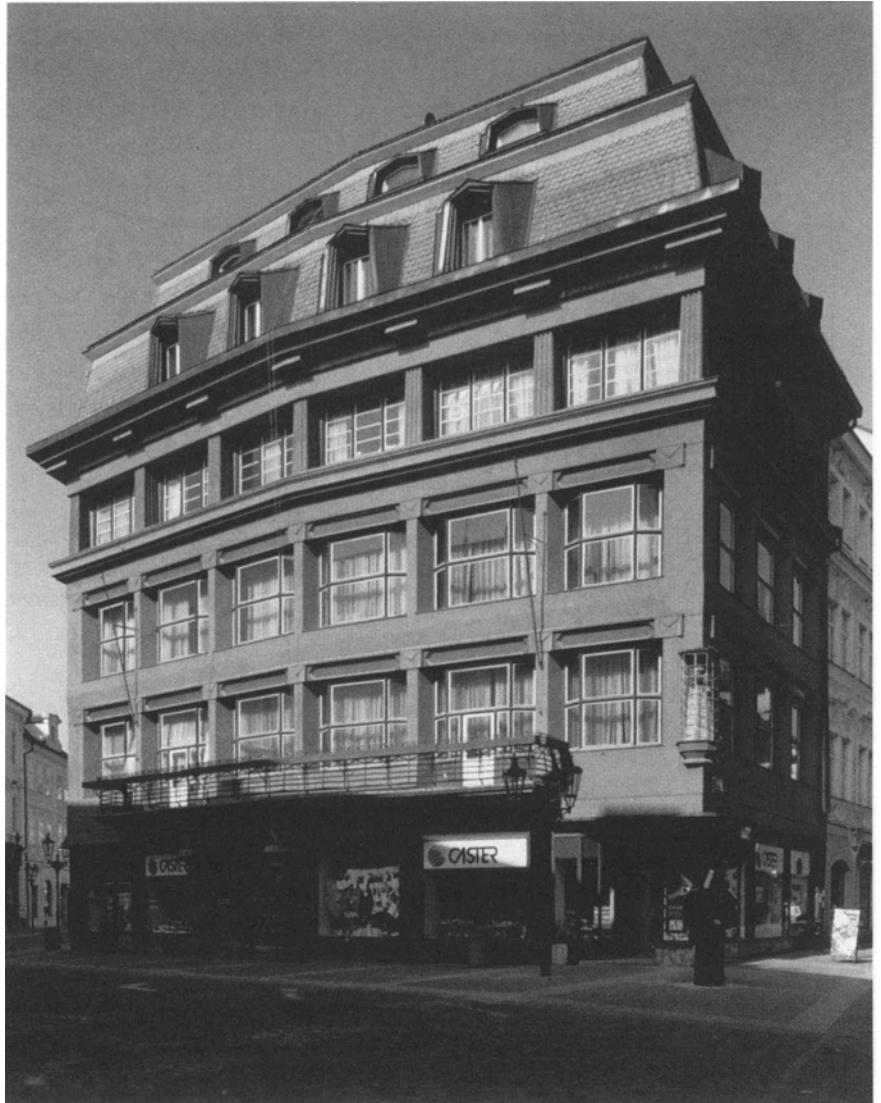
of architectural Cubism in Bohemia. In this essay entitled “Od moderní architektury k architektuře” (From modern architecture to architecture), Janák was sharply critical of the “poetry” of Wagner’s designs and argued for an architecture of substance to replace Wagner’s practice of “modern architecture.” The latter’s designs, he argued, were too sentimental or too poetic and contained too little architectural beauty. By poetry, Janák meant a dilettantish showering of architecture with sweetly poetic details, that is, ornaments, masks, flowers, squares, and profuse, stylistic curves. “Architectural beauty,” argued the Czech, “can only be a constructed beauty expressed through the materials but residing in almost a dramatic counterweight to the material.”<sup>49</sup>

Janák went on to criticize Olbrich (the “great linearist of architecture”) as well as Hoffmann (the “great ornamentalist of furniture style”), but he expressed admiration for the work of Jože Plečnik. “Artistic thinking and abstraction will take the lead, and we will move away from pure functionality. The architecture of the future . . . will be marked by a striving for plastic form. It will then also be in accord with the accumulated creative energy, which, strengthened in this way, will be in a position to penetrate deeply into the material and liberate form from the material.”<sup>50</sup>

Janák also wrote a programmatic essay on architectural Cubism, “Hranol a pyramida” (The prism and the pyramid), which represented an unequivocal expressionistic point of view, coupled with the architectural demand that “the inanimate mass must be formatively overcome” and dramatized. Nationalist tradition plays a certain role in the grounding of these theses. “It is indicative of the creation of our spiritual and national substance that our tendencies, in their breadth and depth, have primarily developed out of Baroque art, that is to say, in a period marked by abstract thought.”<sup>51</sup>

The buildings of Prague’s architectural Cubism, such as Josef Gočár’s apartment building “At the Black Madonna” (1911–1912), reveal a facade with a prismatic profile expressively worked out to its last detail. It is, however, more a new type of facade ornamentation than a radically new aesthetic (fig. 8).

Yet an interpretation of Cubism as a movement adverse to Wagnerian architecture is dubious, for designs tending in this direction had already been created by Wagner students in Vienna. The first decisive step in this direction was the “discovery” of Mediterranean and Balkan peasant villas with their precisely cut cubes and flat roofs.<sup>52</sup> Wagner’s students undertook



8. Josef Gočár,  
"At the Black Madonna" (apartment house),  
Prague, 1911–1912.  
Photo by author.

their *voyages à l'Orient* much earlier than Le Corbusier, and they noted and sketched the beauty of the “wise, correct, and wonderful play of bodies in light.” Hoffmann’s essay of 1895 “Architektonisches aus der österreichischen Riviera” (Architecture of the Austrian Riviera), together with the drawings of his southern travels (fig. 9), were enthusiastically received by Wagner students; these buildings “in their original naturalness... free of an over-civilized appreciation of art” appear suited to inspire a new architecture liberated from the models of historicism.<sup>53</sup> Leopold Bauer in his book *Verschiedene Skizzen, Entwürfe und Studien* (Various sketches, designs, and studies), 1899, also attempted to make use of the “plain, clear, prismatic, basic forms” and “large white walls” of these villas.<sup>54</sup>

The “Mediterranean house,” with its clear, plastic, stereometric volumes and flat roof, became one of the most important themes of the Wagner school in the years following 1900, as seen in the designs of Emil Hoppe, Marcel Kammerer, Oskar Felgel, and Wunibald Deininger. The Habich residence in Darmstadt, designed by Olbrich in 1901, and the two studio buildings for the painters at the art colony in Gödöllő (1904–1906) by the Hungarian Wagner student István Medgyaszay, are the earliest built examples of the stepped cube as a new building form (fig. 10).

The decorative decomposition of the cube began to replace the earlier monumental fantasies of the Wagner school around 1902. At first the edges were emphasized; later the volumes were transformed into surfaces arranged behind one another. The representation of any suggestion of space was rejected, and the compositions were treated as a collage. A building from this period that reflects this development is Hoffmann’s Palais Stoclet in Brussels (1905–1911), with its bronze profiling and refined atectonic solution. Wagner in his own architecture does not take the process so far, but in his Viennese apartment building at Neustiftgasse 40 (1910–1912), the linear grid of the facade framed with blue tiles shows how the surface was highlighted at the expense of mass. This solution makes the building appear as if it were assembled from planes; the facade seems to be composed of thin plates without actual mass — its essence as a “mask” is clear, even without visible attaching bolts.

The Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà Insurance Company in Budapest, a work of 1913 by Móric Pogány and Emil Tőry, is an example of this same approach. But in this case the classicist roots of the formal language, perhaps inspired by the firm’s Italian origin, are even clearer. It may appear

## Architektonisches aus der österreichischen Riviera.



Skizze  
zu einer Villa.



age und Lebensgewohnheiten bestimmen die Bauweise der Menschen auch dort, wo kaum eines vielgewandten Architekten Hand jemals beim Erbauen mit im Spiele war.

Jene architektonischen Scenerien, die der Besucher der österreichischen Riviera in den so überaus malerischen Orten findet, sind frei von übercivilisiertem Kunstverständnis und doch in ihrer ursprünglichen Natürlichkeit von so großem Reiz, dass es wohl der Mühe wert ist, sich mit diesen Kindern naiver, volkstümlicher Kunst ein wenig zu befassen.

Dass in nachfolgender Beschreibung nicht die modernen Villen von Abbazia gemeint sind, brauche ich nicht zu erwähnen, denn diese sind leider fast durchwegs (eine lobenswerte Ausnahme bilden dortselbst die Bestrebungen des Architekten Karl Seidl) von einer ungläublichen Geschmacklosigkeit, welche theilweise durch die bahnhofartigen Hôtelbauten und die Curanlagen der Südbahn beeinflusst, theilweise aber auch durch den Mangel an tüchtigen Kräften bedingt ist.

Man muss auch bekennen, dass dies umso bedauerlicher ist, als gerade in einer durch die Natur so sehr bevorzugten Gegend, die so reich an baulichen Traditionen wäre, sich leicht, zumal hier wie in den meisten Bädern, die pecuniären Verhältnisse keine ungünstigen sind, vieles Gute und Schöne hätte machen lassen. — Nun aber sieht Abbazia, abgesehen von den natürlichen Reizen, einem großen Bahnhof gleich, und uns können daher nur die übriggebliebenen Reste alter Baulichkeiten interessieren.

Voloska, Ica, Lovrana, Montenize und alle die um Abbazia liegenden Orte bergen noch eine Fülle der interessantesten Häusermotive, welche nicht nur von den dort gerne weilenden Malern, sondern auch von Architekten, namentlich solchen, die sich mit Villenbauten abgeben, aufgesucht werden sollten.

Der Zeit nach gehören die meisten dieser malerischen Gebäude in die letzten 200 Jahre und charakterisieren sich vor allem durch die Wahl vieler freier Motive, wie Loggien, Freitreppen, Arcaden u. s. f., was durch die Lebensweise der dortigen Menschen, die gerne im Schatten und doch im Freien sich aufhalten, begründet ist.

Ein fast immer originelles Bild bietet der Kamin, der stets in der Außenmauer angelegt ist und oft erkerartig hervortritt.

Außer Säulen, welche aber meist von früheren Bauten herrühren, findet man beinahe keine einzig ausgesprochene Architekturform, wie Gesimse, Pilaster u. dgl.

Die Fenster sind einfach mit glatten Steinumrahmungen eingefasst und nur hie und da von einem simaartigen Glied bekrönt.

Unterhalb ihnen ragen zumeist weit ausladende Consolen aus der Mauer hervor, die zur Aufnahme eines Brettes oder einer Waschestange bestimmt sind. Das Dach ist sehr flach, weit ausladend und mit Coppis gedeckt. Die geputzten Mauerflächen sind ohne jegliche Decorierung.

Der große Reiz der dicht neben-, an- und übereinander gebauten Häuser liegt in der großen Mannigfaltigkeit der Motive, worauf man aus den beigedruckten Beispielen schließen kann, geordneter ähnlicher Anlage nicht verloren gehen, wenn, da ja eine Benützung ähnlicher Motive mehr oder weniger nur für Villen und Landhäuser gedacht sein kann, natürliche Baumgruppen und weinumrankte Perguli das Bild angenehm unterbrechen und beleben würden.

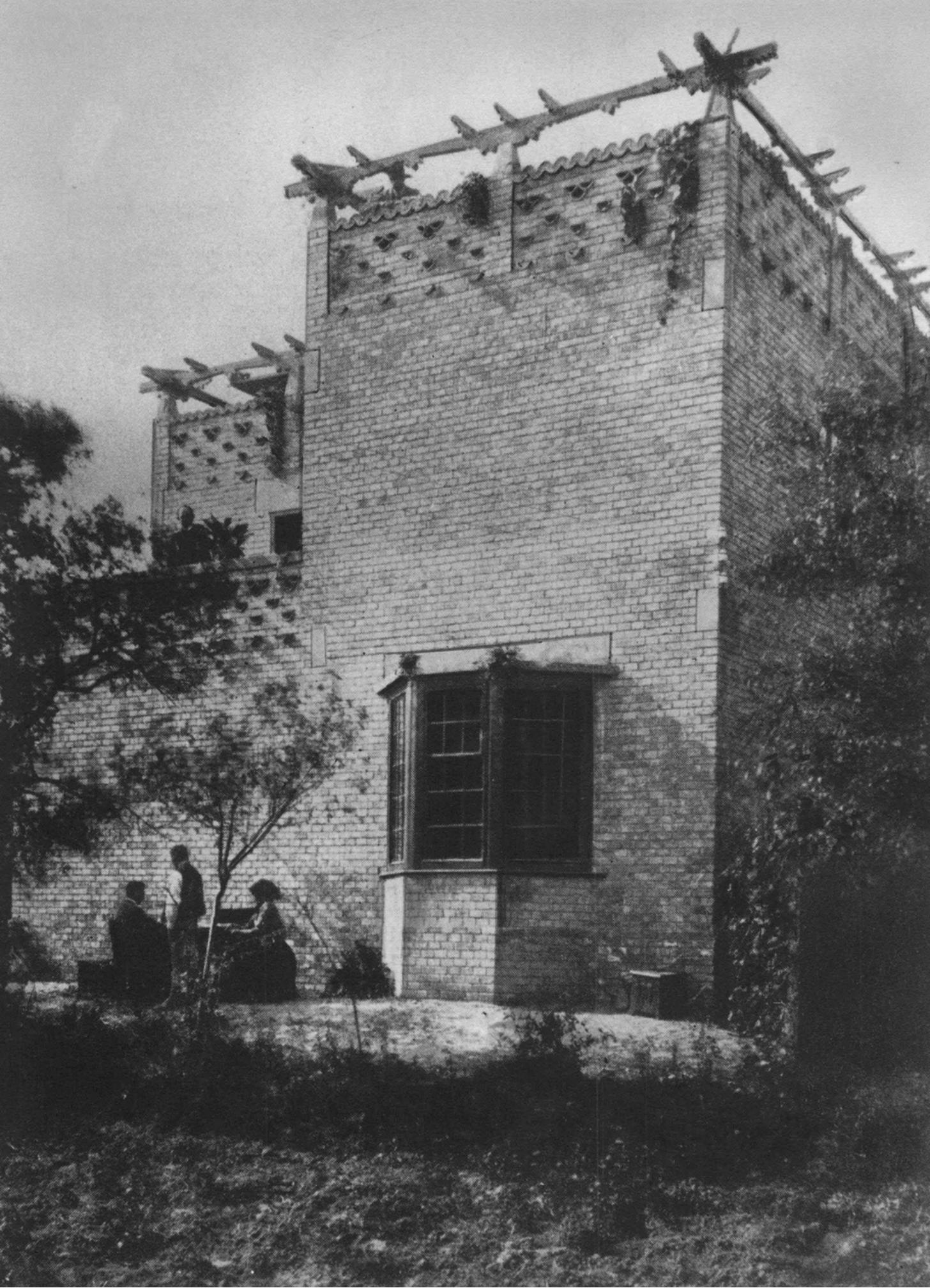
Diese Erläuterungen und Bilder seien vor allem den Villenerbauern in südlicheren Gegenden warm ans Herz gelegt, doch mögen dieselben auch sonst befruchtend und anregend wirken!

Hoffmann.

Bemerkenswert ist auch, dass durch das Benützen jeglicher Zufälligkeit und jeder aus der Nothwendigkeit entspringenden Form die Schablone vollständig ausgeschlossen ist. Man findet beinahe keine zwei Häuser von gleicher Anlage und gleicher äußerer Gestaltung.

Hätte der Istrianer mehr Vorliebe für Reinlichkeit und stünde nicht jeder dieser Bauten beinahe vor dem Verfall, man könnte sich kein angenehmeres Wohnen denken als hier. Letzterer Umstand, die Unreinlichkeit und Zerrissenheit, ist allerdings von ungemein malerischem Reiz; jedoch würde dieser auch bei

9. Josef Hoffmann,  
sketch for a villa.  
From "Architektonisches aus der  
österreichischen Riviera," *Der Architekt*  
1 (1895): 37.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.



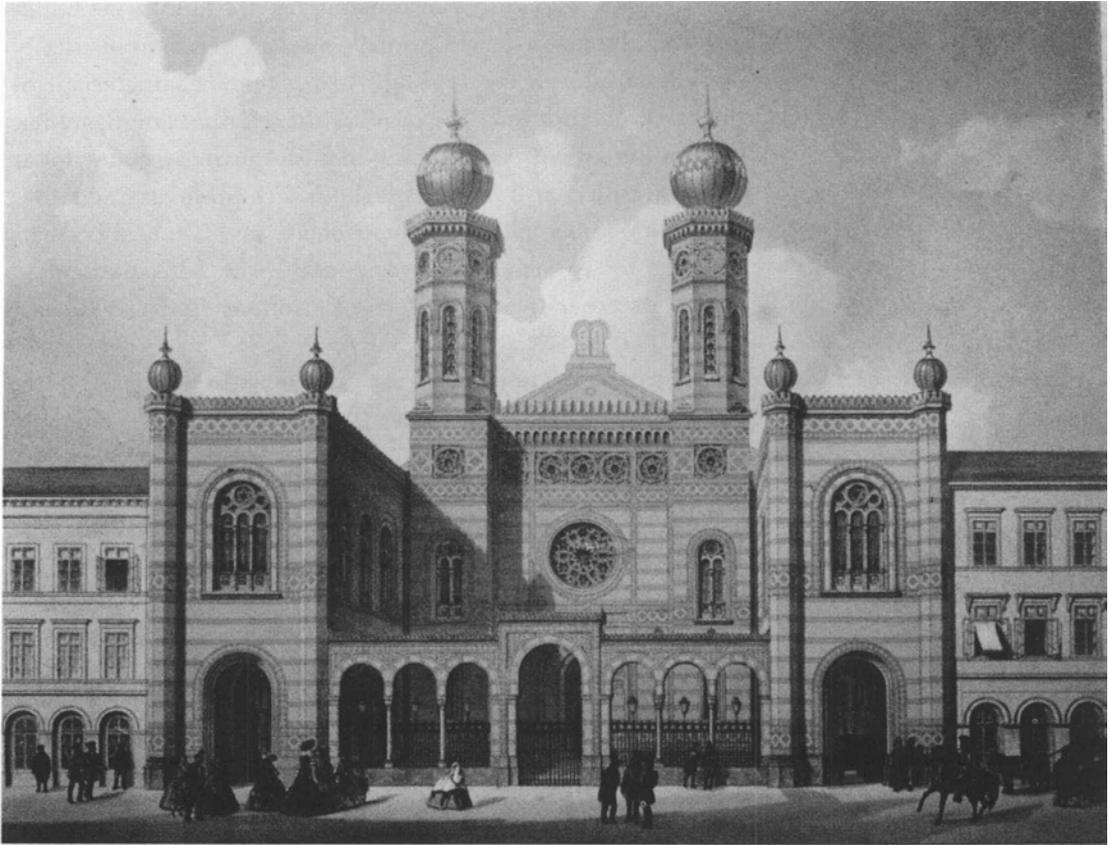
contradictory that Pogány had shortly before designed the Hungarian building for the 1910 World's Fair in Turin, which consisted of a monumentally towering mass and an interior resembling "Attila's tent," characteristic of Hungarian national romanticism. The striving for a formal language that would express a nation's identity was strong in most European countries at the end of the nineteenth century, particularly in such places as Catalonia, Finland, and Hungary, whose national independence was often being threatened or even suppressed. The peasant art and folklore of these countries – strongly tied as they were to the soil – were even sources for fresh expressive possibilities.

Wagner was considered by the Hungarian press to be an enemy of efforts to create a national style. At the same time his architecture was criticized for its use of "Assyrian forms" without any national justification – as was the case in Hungarian architecture. The same criticism could also be read in the German press, as when Karl Henrici, in reviewing *Moderne Architektur* in 1897 for *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, chastised Wagner's theory for its "one-sidedness," that is, for being "almost exclusively tied to the technical achievements of recent times, to modernity, and to the ever grander improvement of modes of transportation and metropolitan life."<sup>55</sup> Wagner's task of modern architecture, he went on to argue, had already been solved in a practical sense in America. Henrici argued instead for "the support of a specifically national art."<sup>56</sup> These words were written at the same time that the previously mentioned anonymous critic of 1897 was faulting Wagner for the fact that his emphasis on the diversity of national ideals of beauty was irreconcilable with the "cosmopolitan bias of our modern view of life."<sup>57</sup>

Although, in fact, Wagner often spoke out against nationalist trends in architecture, it is interesting to study the similarities between his work and the architecture of the "father figure" of the Hungarian national style, Ödön Lechner. The latter was four years younger than Wagner; both were students at the Bauakademie in Berlin, and they were personal friends. The experience of oriental art and architecture also played a major role in the development of both architects, in particular, the Moorish-Byzantine synagogue built by Ludwig Förster in Budapest in 1859 (fig. 11).

In 1870 the Jewish community of Budapest commissioned the then unknown Wagner to design a new orthodox synagogue, probably because he had once been employed in Förster's office (fig. 12). Wagner's synagogue consisted of a hexagonal central space with a filigree support system of iron.

10. István Medgyaszay,  
Belmonte house in Gödöllő, near Budapest,  
1904–1906.  
From *A Ház* 1 (1908).  
Author's collection.



11. Ludwig Förster,  
synagogue, Budapest, 1859.  
Budapest, Budapesti Történeti Múzeum.



12. Otto Wagner,  
facade detail, synagogue, Budapest,  
1870-1873.  
Photo by author.

The street facade was modeled on a mosque and covered with plaster, fashioned after stone. Blue-glazed ceramic panels set into the plaster divided the facade into horizontal layers. This was the first appearance of one of the most important characteristics of Wagner's architecture – a facade creating not a structural but an ornamental or textilelike effect, clearly manifesting its oriental origin.

It was Semper who sought the origin of the wall in textile spatial dividers (tents and woven mats); and it was also Semper who built the Dresden synagogue (1839–1840), the prototype of a central temple construction in an oriental style. Wagner's Budapest synagogue stands at the beginning of a development that displays an ever freer use of Semper's aesthetic principles, progressing through his *Majolikahaus*, with its still pronounced, carpetlike, but already Secessionist, ornament of the facade (1898–1899) to the *tabula rasa* of the second Wagner villa in Hütteldorf (1912–1913).

In a similar way, the lessons of oriental architecture also formed for Lechner the starting point for the creation of a new language of form. In his "Mein Lebens- und Werdegang" (My life and career), Lechner noted that his preference for colorful ceramic sheathings began in his father's tile factory, which produced the glazed majolica and terra-cotta tiles for Förster's synagogue.<sup>58</sup> But by 1872, when he opened his architectural firm in Budapest (together with Gyula Pártos) and began designing several buildings in the contemporary Neorenaissance style, he reported that he felt that the German culture he had absorbed as a student had a "riveting hold" on him, stifling him, "overpowering any free, independent, artistic thought."<sup>59</sup> He tried "seeking help," first by turning his attention to French culture, which he wished to "crossbreed" with the ornamental wealth of Hungarian folklore, and second by traveling to England, where he examined the colorful oriental ceramics in the South Kensington Museum and became familiar with the "Indian style" of the English. "If the English people," he wrote, "have not refused to... investigate the culture of their colonies in order to appropriate it in part or to incorporate what it offers with their own knowledge, then how much more fitting it is that we in Hungary study the art of our own people and merge it with our general European culture!"<sup>60</sup> He started with the idea of the oriental origin of the Hungarian nation. The similarities between the ornaments of Hungarian folklore and those of oriental art were then being studied by József Huszka; on the basis of ornamental collections he compared Hungarian embroideries with gold work

found in Avarian burial grounds and with Sassanian palmettes.<sup>61</sup> As he noted, “Ornamentation is also a language, the language of a particular expression of national character and taste, which has its own vocabulary.”<sup>62</sup>

Lechner’s buildings from the period around 1900, such as the Arts and Crafts Museum (1891–1896), the Geological Institute (1896–1899), and the Postal Savings Bank in Budapest (1899–1901), have compact ground plans and simple articulated masses, but they are extremely picturesque and colorful with tentlike roofs popping up behind a highly animated cornice (fig. 13). The facades are large, unbroken planes and are particularly conspicuous when compared with the public buildings of the time, which were articulated with niches, columns, and projections. Lechner’s works are covered with glittering, colorful sheathings of glazed ceramic panels and formal elements, articulated throughout with decorative brick strapwork. The windows in the textilelike facade of the Arts and Crafts Museum are framed with and accentuated by a flat stone profiling, alluding to the lavish ornamentation found on the wool coats (*cifraszür*) worn by Hungarian shepherds. Huszka had earlier considered them to belong to the Ten Commandments of Hungarian taste. “The ornamentation of the . . . festive attire of the . . . Hungarians has been caught in a struggle against strangers for a thousand years, just like the nation itself.”<sup>63</sup>

It is interesting to quote Lechner on the choice of ceramics as a sheathing material, for it reveals his attempt to create a modern, urban architecture that could express a national identity.

From the very beginning I was sure that the starting point for a truly artistic decor could only be a monumental material. The various techniques of plastering . . . can be justified as surrogates on inexpensive utilitarian buildings, but they are unsuited to the development of new artistic forms. Another reason I chose majolica is of general interest and came from a discovery that can be applied as a valid rule in every modern metropolis and on every modern building. The soot and dust of urban smog settle into the pores of house facades and give them a dingy appearance, so that the entire city seems gray and dismal. A washable, porous material covers the walls hygienically and preserves the original pleasant color. The regard for the problem of color led me to choose ceramics; the thinness of the majolica panels, the minimal space they take up, was also a factor that had to be considered for economic reasons in modern structures. In addition to these general principles, the specific



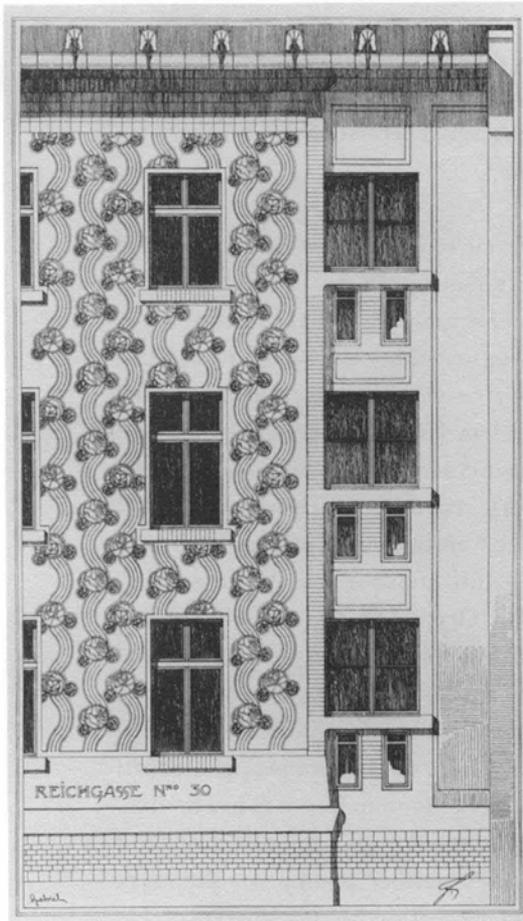
13. Ödön Lechner,  
postal savings bank, Budapest, 1899–1901.  
From *A Magyar Királyi Postatakarékpénztár*  
(Budapest: A Magyar Királyi  
Postatakarékpénztár, 1924).  
Author's collection.

situation in Hungary also compelled me to use majolica. In our country no stone has as yet been found that would be suitable as a construction material....Ceramics is an ancient folk tradition.... What previously had been only a natural corollary corresponding with the actual necessities of life now became the most important starting point.<sup>64</sup>

The affinity of Wagner and Lechner's views is manifest not only in the desire to adapt to the reality of the modern metropolis, to the "actual necessities of life," but also in terms of the need for a covering that could communicate something to the urban dweller. Wagner's Majolikahaus; the facades designed by Wagner's students with their flowers, forests, and migratory birds, for example, Plečnik's Villa Langer in Hietzing, 1900–1901 (fig. 14); designs for apartment buildings by Hans Schleicha or István Medgyaszay for Wagner's studio, 1900 and 1902; the Portois and Fix office and residential building in Vienna, 1899–1900, by Max Fabiani (fig. 15); as well as Lechner's facades — all are "tattooed facades" in Adolf Loos's sense. All have their archetype in the Orient. We can add to the "Orient" the Palace of the Doges in Venice with its woven facade, which has the effect of a hung carpet. Lechner (the Arts and Crafts Museum) and Fabiani (the Slovenian Savings Association in Trieste, 1902–1905) quote this prototype almost literally.

The fact that the architecture mentioned here totally accepts the modern metropolis as an expression of the dominant economic forces is irrefutable. The following generation, which explicitly rejected this liberal direction (and the capitalist metropolis as well), demanded neither poetry nor the mask of surface ornamentation but an elementary creation, that is, an expressive spiritualization of the material, an "authentic" national style that does not describe but is experienced. It would go beyond the framework of this essay to show how their proposals turned out to be in conflict with the reality of the great city. What were created were often built "models" that were not, or only barely, viable in an alien and hostile environment. The designs and buildings of the expressionist avant-garde can be cited here as examples.

The other alternative is a "mute" architecture without the need for communication and therefore unmasked. It can be seen in the great city (*Großstadt*) of Ludwig Hilberseimer, which is related to Wagner's vast metropolis only in a superficial way. Although Hilberseimer also emphasized the possibility of further developing the limitless grid of his city with the "intention toward design," his enthusiasm for a centralized state and



14. Jože Plečnik,  
Villa Langer, Vienna-Hietzing, 1900–1901.  
From L. Fiedler, ed., *Das Detail in der  
modernen Architektur* (Vienna: F. Wolfrum,  
1902), 1: 52.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.
15. Max Fabiani,  
Portois and Fix apartment house with shops,  
Vienna, 1899–1900.  
Photo by author.

economic system is evident in the concluding passages from his *Großstadtarchitektur* (The architecture of the great city). “Nietzsche understood style to be the formation of great masses by the suppression of various things, according to a general law. The general case, the law, is revered and elevated, the exception is put aside, nuance is swept away, mass is master, chaos is forced to become form – logical, unambiguous, mathematics and law.”<sup>65</sup>

In Nietzsche’s collection of aphorisms *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (Human, all too human), 1878, the masklike character of modern architecture is also discussed in a negative light.

As a general rule we no longer understand architecture, at least by no means in the same way as we understand music. . . . Everything in a Greek or Christian building originally had a meaning and referred to a higher order of things; this feeling of inexhaustible meaning enveloped the edifice like a mystic veil. Beauty was only a secondary consideration in the system, without in any way materially injuring the fundamental sentiment of the mysteriously exalted, the divinely and magically consecrated; at the most, beauty *tempered horror* – but this horror was everywhere presupposed. What is the beauty of a building now? The same thing as the beautiful face of a stupid woman, a kind of mask [Nietzsche’s emphasis].<sup>66</sup>

No doubt, the drawings of the Wagner school reveal a certain megalomania and symbolism of power, which are in line, on the one hand, with Wagner’s regard for architecture as “the highest expression of man’s ability bordering on the divine,”<sup>67</sup> and, on the other hand, with the substance of the quotation by Nietzsche. Hilberseimer’s city, however, lacks a persona and refuses to present its “Self.” It is the act of unmasking – the dissociation of the actor from the role – that becomes the relevant gesture.<sup>68</sup> Wagner’s attempt to reintegrate the values of the past in his metropolis is certainly a Central European idea: the feudal “mask culture” of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (fiercely rejected as an atavistic “degeneration” by Adolf Loos) presupposed not only the basic stability of forms as a consequence of social life as totality but also the necessity of differentiation through the mask that gives the form individual dignity, social existence, and cultural significance.

NOTES

I would like to thank Harry Mallgrave and Brigitte Dümmling for their help and suggestions in the revision of this essay.

1. Ákos Moravánszky, "Byzantinismus in der Baukunst Otto Wagners als Motiv seiner Wirkung östlich von Wien," in Gustav Peichl, ed., *Die Kunst des Otto Wagner*. exh. cat. (Vienna: Akademie der bildenden Künste, 1984). 40–45.

2. *Moderne Architektur, Prof. Otto Wagner und die Wahrheit über beide* (Vienna: Spielhagen & Schurich, 1897), 23: "...im innersten Wesen nichts weniger als constructiv empfunden, wie sehr vielleicht auch Wagner in wunderlicher Verkennung (oder Verleugnung?) seiner selbst dagegen protestieren möchte."

3. "A 'modern' építészet," *Budapesti építészeti szemle* 9 (1900): 43–44.

4. Fritz Schumacher, *Strömungen in deutscher Baukunst seit 1800* (1903; reprint, Cologne: E. A. Seeman, 1955), 114: "Man sieht, daß diese Welt einer neuen modernen Sprache, die durch zahlreiche talentvolle Schüler, wie Olbrich, Josef Hoffmann, Leopold Bauer reich weitergestaltet wurde, mit dem belgischen Modernismus gar keine Berührungspunkte hat; aber auch der holländischen Modernität eines Berlage liegt sie ebenso fern: der harten schwierigen Hand des Werkmeisters steht die elegant gepflegte Hand des Weltmannes gegenüber."

5. Ludwig Abels, "Wiener Moderne," *Die Kunst* 4 (1901): 97: "Wagner als Sprößling einer reichen Patricierfamilie ist von jeher gern der Wiener Prunkliebe entgegengekommen, er gustiert gern und manche seiner neuesten Innendekorationen, so neuartig sie im Motiv sind, gemahnen in ihrer raffinierten Kompliziertheit noch immer ans Rokoko."

6. Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1988), 61.

7. *Ibid.*, 128 n. 33.

8. *Moderne Architektur, Prof. Otto Wagner* (see note 2), 28.

9. *Moderne Architektur, Prof. Otto Wagner* (see note 2), 12.

10. Dagobert Frey, "Otto Wagner: Historische Betrachtungen und Gegenwartsgedanken," *Der Architekt* 22 (1919): 1–6.

11. Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten, oder praktische Ästhetik*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Fr. Bruckmann, 1878–1879), 1: 231n: "Der Karnevalskerzendunst ist die wahre Atmosphäre der Kunst. Vernichtung der Realität, des Stofflichen, ist nothwendig, wo die Form als bedeutungsvolles Symbol als selbstständige Schöpfung des Menschen hervortreten soll."

12. Gottfried Semper, "Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts or Practical Aesthetics" (1878–1879), in Harry Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann, eds., *Gottfried Semper: The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), 257. Semper

(see note 11), 1: 231: "Das Bekleiden und Maskieren sei so alt wie die menschliche Civilisation, und die Freude an beidem sei mit der Freude an demjenigen Thun, was die Menschen zu Bildnern, Malern, Architekten, Dichtern, Musikern, Dramatikern, kurz zu Künstlern machte, identisch."

13. Umberto Eco, *Postscript to the Name of the Rose* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 19.

14. Adolf Loos, "Von der Sparsamkeit," in idem, *Die Potemkin'sche Stadt: Verschollene Schriften, 1897-1933* (Vienna: Prachner, 1983), 206: "Der moderne intelligente Mensch muß für die Menschen eine Maske haben... nur geistig Beschränkte... haben das Bedürfnis, in alle Welt hinauszuschreien, was sie sind und wie sie eigentlich sind."

15. Georg Simmel, "Sociological Aesthetics," trans. K. P. Ezhorn, in David Frisby, ed., *Fragments of Modernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 73. Idem, "Soziologische Ästhetik," in *Die Zukunft* 17 (1896): 78.

16. Georg Simmel, "Das Problem des Stiles," *Die Kunst* 18 (1908): 307: "Was den modernen Menschen so stark zum Stil treibt, ist die Entlastung und Verhüllung des Persönlichen, die das Wesen des Stiles ist. Der Subjektivismus und die Individualität hat sich bis zum Umbrechen zugespitzt, und in den stilisierten Formgebungen, von denen des Benehmens bis zur Wohnungseinrichtung, liegt eine Milderung und Abtönung dieser akuten Personalität zu einem Allgemeinen und seinem Gesetz. Es ist, als ob das Ich sich doch nicht mehr allein tragen könnte oder sich wenigstens nicht mehr zeigen wollte und so ein generelles, mehr typisches, mit einem Worte: ein stilisiertes Gewand umtut... Die stilisierte Äußerung, Lebensform, Geschmack – alles dies sind Schranken und Distanzierungen, an denen der exaggenierte Subjektivismus der Zeit ein Gegengewicht und eine Hülle findet."

17. See István Hermann, *Sigmund Freud, avagy a pszichológia kalandja* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1964).

18. Carl Gustav Jung, "Die Beziehungen zwischen dem Ich und dem Unbewußten," in *Gesammelte Werke von C. G. Jung* (Olten: Walter, 1964), 173.

19. Jolande Jacobi, *Die Psychologie von C. G. Jung: Eine Einführung in das Gesamtwerk* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1977), 36–39: "[Die Persona darf niemals] so undurchdringlich werden, daß man die individuellen Charakterzüge, die sie 'verdeckt', nicht zumindest ahnungsweise hinter ihr erspüren kann. Sie darf auch nicht so fest 'angewachsen' sein, daß sie nicht mehr 'ablegbar' ist... Eine sozusagen richtig sitzende und funktionierende Persona ist... eine Hauptbedingung psychischer Gesundheit und von größter Wichtigkeit, wenn die Forderungen der Außenwelt erfolgreich bewältigt werden sollen."

20. Gottfried Semper, "Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts or Practical Aesthetics" (1878–1879), in Mallgrave and Herrmann (see note 12), 257–58 n. Semper (see note 11), 257–58: "Das Maskieren aber hilft nichts, wo hinter der Maske die Sache unrichtig ist oder die Maske nichts taugt; damit der Stoff, der unentbehrliche, in dem gemeinten Sinne vollständig in dem Kunstgebilde

*vernichtet sei, ist noch vor allem dessen vollständige Bemeisterung vorher nothwendig. Nur vollkommen technische Vollendung, wohl verstandene richtige Behandlung des Stoffs nach seinen Eigenschaften, vor allem die Berücksichtigung dieser Letzteren bei der Formgebung selbst können den Stoff vergessen machen, können das Kunstgebilde von ihm ganz befreien."*

21. Carl August Menzel, *Versuch einer Darstellung des jetzigen Zustandes der Baukunst in ästhetischer Hinsicht* (Berlin: Logier, 1832): "Maskiren nennt man in der Baukunst dasjenige Verfahren, wodurch man irgend einem architektonischen Theile, oder dem ganzen Bauwerke, eine andere Form giebt, als dasselbe seiner natürlichen Bedingung und seiner Construction nach, haben müßte." According to Menzel, "muß man so bauen, daß die Form mit den gegebenen Bedingungen, mit dem gewählten Material und mit der Construction im genauesten Zusammenhang stehe, und eine schöne Harmonie der Theile mit dem Ganzen, und des Ganzen mit den Theilen, die Vollendung ausmache. Hieraus wird jedesmal der Styl des Gebäudes von selbst entstehen."

22. Adolf Göller, "Was ist Wahrheit in der Architektur?" in *Zur Ästhetik der Architektur: Vorträge und Studien* (Stuttgart: Konrad Wittwer, 1887), 89: "... dabei sollen die Schmuckformen der Architektur die Konstruktion idealisieren, d.h. die statische Leistung der Konstruktionstheile, die in den Massen wirkende Kraft, zum Ausdruck bringen."

23. See Richard Streiter, *Architektonische Zeitfragen: Eine Sammlung und Sichtung verschiedener Anschauungen mit besonderer Beziehung auf Professor Otto Wagners Schrift Moderne Architektur* (Leipzig: Cosmoz, 1898), 103; Heinrich Leibnitz, *Das struktive Element in der Architektur und sein Verhältnis zur Kunstform: Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Geschichte der Baukunst* (Tübingen: L. F. Fues, 1849), 80; Walter Gropius, "Monumentale Baukunst und Industriebau" (1911), in Karin Wilhelm, ed., *Walter Gropius: Industriearchitekt* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1983), 116; Eugen Ehmann, *Der moderne Baustil: Ein Beitrag zur Klarstellung des Wesens der neuen Architekturen im Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland* (Stuttgart: J. Hoffmann, 1919), 18.

24. Karl Scheffler, *Moderne Baukunst* (Berlin: Julius Bard; Leipzig: Julius Zeitler, 1907), 19: "So lange die konstruktive Absicht allein am Werke war, das Gerippe noch, unverkleidet, die Bestimmung und Funktion jedes Theils zeigte, und die Montage sozusagen von den Knochenpunkten des statischen Problems aus ihr Werk begann, wirkte der Anblick dieser Primitivitäten oft wie ein Kunstversprechen."

25. *Ibid.*, 21: "Alle Konstruktion darf nur Ausgangspunkt sein. Vom Zweckgedanken empfängt die gestaltende Phantasie den Anstoß, dann entfernt sie sich weit von Profanen, und erst wenn ihr die reine Schönheitsform gelungen ist, läßt sie sich, Almosen austeilend, zur Nutzarchitektur wieder herab."

26. Hermann Muthesius, "Das Moderne in der Architektur," in *Kunstgewerbe und Architektur* (Jena: Diederichs, 1907), 32: "Man begibt sich auf ein gefährliches Gebiet, wenn man das

*Künstlerische des Bauens im Überflüßigen, ... dem Bedürfnisse angehefteten sucht."*

27. Joseph August Lux, *Ingenieur-Ästhetik* (Munich: G. Lammers, 1910), 3–4: "Es ist einfach nicht wahr, daß das blosses Skelett das letzte Wort der Schönheit sei. Eine Eisenbahnbrücke, ein Eiffelturm und ähnliche Ingenieurwerke sind blosses Skelett. Es kann meinen Verstand befriedigen, es befriedigt aber niemals mein Herz. Und das künstlerische Auge sieht mit dem Herzen und nicht mit dem Verstand. Ich wähle ein Gleichnis: Das menschliche Skelett ist wohl das vollkommenste Ingenieurwerk. Aber für mein schönheitssuchendes Auge entscheidet das blühende Fleisch, woraus hervorgeht, daß wir es nicht nur mit dem Laienpublikum zu tun haben, sondern auch mit dem Fachmann, der mit der Konstruktion, mit dem Material, mit dem Zweck allein nicht den auf Schönheit gerichteten Kulturwillen erfüllen wird... Die künstlerische Form muß aus den neuen Elementen neu erfunden werden."

28. Hendrik Petrus Berlage, *Gedanken über Stil in der Baukunst* (Leipzig: Julius Zeitler, 1905), 23: "Die Bekleidung bei jedem Naturgebilde ist gewissermaßen eine genaue Abspiegelung des Gerippes... wobei das logische Konstruktionsprinzip vorherrscht, und der eigentlich bekleidete Teil nicht wie eine lose, diese Konstruktion ganz verneinende Hülle, nicht wie ein Anzug, darum sitzt, sondern mit dem innern Bau völlig verwachsen, in letzter Instanz gezielte Konstruktion ist, so wollen wir versuchen, den Körper wieder zu finden."

29. Herman Sörgel, *Architektur-Ästhetik*, 3rd ed. (Munich: Piloty & Loehle, 1921), 257.

30. Gottfried Semper, "Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts or Practical Aesthetics" (1878–1879), in Mallgrave and Herrmann (see note 12), 257.

31. Leibnitz (see note 23), 6–7: "Wir verstehen unter Architektur: jede bauliche Thätigkeit, die im Stande ist, ihren aus dem nackten Bedürfnis hervorgegangenen und mechanisch zusammengesetzten Werken den Stempel geistig-sittlicher (ethischer) Bedeutung aufzudrücken, also die materiell nothwendige Form zur Kunstform zu erheben... Sie [die Form] ist zwar ein mechanisch Gedachtes und von statischen Gesetzen Bedingtes, das gleich den Gliedern einer Maschine, die Funktion, für die es geschaffen, vollkommen erfüllt, aber stets in starrer Gebundenheit verharren wird, so lange ihm der äußere Habitus, das Charakteristikon fehlt, das diesen Mechanismus nun zum Sprechenden, sein inneres Wesen lebendig bezeichnenden Organismus erheben kann. – Dieses Moment wird nur dann eintreten, wenn sich an diese mechanische Kernform nun die bildende Kunstform gleich einer durchscheinenden Hülle anlegt... Dieses charakterisierende Element wird die Formenbildung oder das Ornament in der Architektur sein. Sein Zweck kann nicht dahin gehen, im Bau statisch zu fungieren, es wird vielmehr nur gehen, im Bau statisch zu fungieren, es wird vielmehr nur symbolisch die Funktion der Kernform aussprechen, nach allen ihren Beziehungen hin prägnant vor Augen stellen und dem Werke so jenes selbstständige Leben und jene ethische Weihe zu verleihen, durch die es allein zum Kunstwerk erhoben werden kann."

32. The first volume of Carl Bötticher's *Die Tektonik der Hellenen* appeared in 1844.

33. Otto Wagner (see note 6), 92, 93. Idem, *Die Baukunst unserer Zeit* (Vienna: Anton Schroll,

1914), 60: "Ein logisches Denken muß uns daher zur Ueberzeugung führen, daß der Satz: 'Jede Bauform ist aus der Konstruktion entstanden und sukzessive zur Kunstform geworden.'... Es kann daher mit Sicherheit gefolgert werden, daß neue Zwecke und neue Konstruktionen neue Formen gebären müssen."

34. Wagner (see note 6), 93. Idem, 1914 (see note 33), 61: "[Semper hatte] nicht den Mut, seine Theorien nach oben und nach unten zu vollenden, und hat sich mit einer Symbolik der Konstruktion beholfen, statt die Konstruktion selbst als die Urzelle der Baukunst zu bezeichnen."

35. Wagner (see note 6), 94. Idem, 1914 (see note 33), 62–63: "Der nicht auf die werdende Kunstform sondern nur auf die statische Berechnung und auf den Kostenpunkt Rücksicht nehmende Ingenieur spricht daher eine für die Menschheit unsympathische Sprache, während andererseits die Ausdrucksweise des Architekten, wenn er bei Schaffung der Kunstform nicht von der Konstruktion ausgeht, unverständlich bleibt."

36. *Moderne Architektur, Prof. Otto Wagner* (see note 2), 21–22: "Wenn etwas als spezifisches Kennzeichen der allerjüngsten (durch Semper eben auf seinem eigenen Gebiete vorbereiteten) Kunstbewegung bezeichnet werden kann, so ist es geradezu eine natürliche und kräftige Reaktion gegen den Materialismus... Und in eben dieser Zeit schickt sich nun ein angeblich berufener Verfechter der 'modernen Architektur' an, diese Kunst aufs Neue und – wenn es nach seinem Sinne ginge – für alle Zukunft ins Joch des Materialismus zu spannen!"

37. Streiter (see note 23), 91: "[Wagner ist] über jene grundlegende Frage... nicht im Klaren... Wie könnte er sonst bei Semper das Festhalten an einer 'Symbolik der Konstruktion' beanstanden, da doch gerade diese Symbolik das ist, was aus dem Konstruktionsglied die Kunstform werden läßt... Denn was nützt es, dem Architekten zuzurufen: 'Du mußt aus der Konstruktion die Kunstform entwickeln!', wenn man ihm nicht den Weg zeigt, wie das zu machen ist, wenn man ihm vielmehr den Weg, der bisher als der einzig richtige gegolten hat, noch als falsch hinstellt? Man wird wohl nicht fehlgehen mit der Vermutung, daß Wagner nur infolge eines theoretischen Mißverständnisses jenen Einwand gegen Semper gemacht, daß er dagegen in Praxis selbst sich der Symbolik der Konstruktion... nicht einschlagen kann... Wenn Wagner ausruft: 'Was kann logischer sein, als zu behaupten: Wenn der Kunst so Vieles und völlig Neues an Constructionen zugeführt wird, muß daraus unbedingt eine neue Formgebung und allmähig ein neuer Stil entstehen,' so krankt diese Logik an der falschen Voraussetzung, Konstruktionen, Techniken seien an sich schon das Entscheidende für die Formgebung, den Stil."

38. Streiter (see note 23), 152: "...wenn sie geleitet von einem einsichtigen und mächtigen Willen mit den reichsten Mitteln und durch die besten Kräfte zur Ausführung gelangen."

39. Streiter (see note 23), 152.

40. Streiter (see note 23), 152: "Ob... eine Kunst, die... unser demokratisches, selbstbewußtes Wesen veranschaulichen und den kolossalen technischen und wissenschaftlichen Erfolgen, sowie dem durchgehenden praktischen Zug der Menschheit Rechnung tragen soll, nicht auf eine Kunst

des Großbetriebs, der Unternehmer, der 'Gründer,' eine Kunst der den Markt beherrschenden banausischen Bourgeoisie, des 'praktischen' Manchestertums hinausläuft, das sich so gerne mit dem idealen Mäntelchen des demokratischen Liberalismus behängt, um nach der bekannten Forderung des 'Freien Spiels der Kräfte' möglichst viel Raum zur Verfolgung seiner eigenen materiellen Interessen zu gewinnen? Ob eine solche Kunst wirklich auch 'unser besseres, ideales Wesen' veranschaulicht? Geht nicht gerade von dieser Art 'demokratischer Kunst' jener schlechte 'Parvenugeschmack' aus, den wir als ein bedauerliches Charakteristikum der Kunst der zweiten Hälfte unseres Jahrhunderts kennen lernten? Diesen Parvenugeschmack zu bekämpfen, heißt aber auch den nivellierenden, demokratisierenden Zug in der Kunst bekämpfen!"

41. Schumacher (see note 4), 114.

42. Alfred Gotthold Meyer, *Eisenbauten: Ihre Geschichte und Ästhetik* (Esslingen: Paul Neff, 1907).

43. Joseph August Lux, *Otto Wagner: Eine Monographie* (Munich: Delphin, 1914), 74: "...nicht eigentlich baumässige Wirkung der Aluminiumköpfe und Marmorplatten, die das Bauwerk umkleiden."

44. Anthropologists inform us that nails were once used on building exteriors to avert evil spirits.

45. Frey (see note 10), 1.

46. Wolfgang Pehnt, *Die Architektur des Expressionismus* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1973), 61: "Die Anregungen aus Paris wurden als Waffen gegen Wien und den österreichischen Sezessionismus verwendet, der durch Otto Wagners erfolgreiche Lehrtätigkeit auch die böhmischen Architekten... beeinflusst hatte."

47. Pavel Janák, "Od moderní architektury k architektuře," *Styl* 2 (1909–1910): 105–9.

48. Marco Pozzetto, *Die Schule Otto Wagners, 1894–1912* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1980), 105.

49. Janák (see note 47), 105.

50. Janák (see note 47), 105.

51. Pavel Janák, "Hranol a pyramida," *Umělecký měsíčník* 1 (1911–1912): 162.

52. Josef Hoffmann, "Architektonisches aus der österreichischen Riviera," *Der Architekt* 1 (1895): 37.

53. Ibid.

54. Leopold Bauer, *Verschiedene Skizzen, Entwürfe und Studien* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1899), 40.

55. Karl Henrici, "Moderne Architektur," *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 31 (January 1897): 14: "die Lehre O.W.'s unter einer gewissen Einseitigkeit litte, sofern sie sich fast ausschließlich an die technischen Errungenschaften der Neuzeit... knüpft."

56. Ibid., 15.

57. *Moderne Architektur, Prof. Otto Wagner* (see note 2), 19.

58. Edmund [Ödön] Lechner, "Mein Lebens- und Werdegang," in *Bildende Künstler* (December 1911): 562.

59. Ibid.

60. Lechner (see note 58), 568: "Wenn dieses englische Volk... nicht verschmähte, der... Kultur seiner Kolonien nachzuforschen, sich sie zum Teile anzueignen und mit seinem Können zu vereinen, um wieviel mehr geziemt es uns, Ungarn, die Kunst unseres eigenen Volkes zu studieren und mit unserer im allgemeinen europäischen Kultur zu verschmelzen!"

61. József Huszka, *Magyar ornamentika* (Budapest: Pátria, 1898). Other important publications by Huszka were *A magyar diszítő stíl* (Budapest, 1885), and *A székelly ház* (Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda-Részvény-Társaság, 1895).

62. Huszka, 1898 (see note 61).

63. Huszka, 1898 (see note 61).

64. Lechner (see note 58), 558: "Im ersten Augenblick schon war ich dessen sicher, daß der Ausgangspunkt eines wirklich künstlerischen Dekors nur ein monumentales Material sein könne. Die verschiedenen Putztechniken... sind als Surrogate bei einem billig herzustellenden Nutzbau verzeihlich, aber nicht als Ausgang für die Ausbildung neuer künstlerischer Formen zu gebrauchen. Ein zweiter Grund dafür, daß ich mich für Majolika entschied, ist von allgemeinem Interesse und ergab sich aus einer Feststellung, die als gültige Regel auf jede moderne Großstadt und jeden modernen Bau anwendbar ist. Der Ruß und Staub der rauchigen Großstadtluft setzt sich in den Poren der Häuserfronten fest und verleiht ihnen ein schmutziges Aussehen, wodurch das ganze Stadtbild grau und trübe wird. Ein waschbares und poröses Material verdeckt die Wände hygienisch und erhält sie in ihrer angenehmen Originalfarbe. Auch die Rücksicht auf das Problem der Farbe ließ mich für die Keramik entscheiden, ebenso die Dünne der Majolikaplaten, ihre geringe Raumfülle, die bei den hohen Preisen des Großstadtgrundes, bei der Sparsamkeit der modernen Konstruktionen auch ein Faktor ist, mit dem man rechnen muß. Außer diesen allgemeinen Prinzipien drängten mich auch unsere speziellen ungarischen Verhältnisse zur Anwendung der Majolika. In unserem Lande wurde bisher kein Stein gefunden, der als konstruktives Material anwendbar wäre... die Keramik [ist] bei dem Volke eine alte Tradition... Was früher nur eine natürliche Begleiterscheinung war: den tatsächlichen Lebensbedürfnissen zu entsprechen, das wurde jetzt zum wichtigsten Ausgangspunkt."

65. Ludwig Hilberseimer, *Großstadtarchitektur* (Stuttgart: Julius Hoffmann, 1927), 103: "Große Massen bei Unterdrückung der Vielerleiheit nach einem allgemeinen Gesetz zu formen, ist was Nietzsche unter Stil versteht: der allgemeine Fall, das Gesetz wird verehrt und hinausgehoben, die Ausnahme wird umgekehrt beiseite gestellt, die Nuance weggewischt, das Maß wird Herr, das Chaos gezwungen, Form zu werden: logisch, unzweideutig, Mathematik, Gesetz."

66. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. Helen Zimmern (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 197, para. 218. Idem, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (Frankfurt am Main:

Insel, 1982), 153, para. 218: "Wir verstehen im allgemeinen Architektur nicht mehr, wenigstens lange nicht in der Weise, wie wir Musik verstehen....An einem griechischen oder christlichen Gebäude bedeutete ursprünglich alles etwas, und zwar in Hinsicht auf eine höhere Ordnung der Dinge: diese Stimmung einer unausschöpflichen Bedeutsamkeit lag um das Gebäude gleich einem zauberhaften Schleier. Schönheit kam nur nebenbei in das System hinein, ohne die Grundempfindung des Unheimlich-Erhabenen, des durch Götternähe und Magie geweihten wesentlich zu beeinträchtigen; Schönheit milderte höchstens das Grauen – aber dieses Grauen war überall die Voraussetzung. – Was ist uns jetzt die Schönheit eines Gebäudes? Dasselbe wie das schöne Gesicht einer geistlosen Frau: etwas Maskenhaftes."

67. Wagner (see note 6), 62.

68. I follow here the argument of Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Harper Collins, 1963), 245ff.

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PART III

THE CHANGING DIALECTICS OF MODERNITY





J. Duncan Berry

FROM HISTORICISM TO  
ARCHITECTURAL REALISM:  
ON SOME OF WAGNER'S SOURCES

The emergence of a self-consciously "modern" enterprise among Central European architects of the late nineteenth century appears to exhibit many of the conceptual dilemmas that contemporary historians face in examining these efforts. That is, without a grasp of the changing meaning of "the modern" through time, the concept dilates into absurdity. For instance, by the 1980s the criteria devised to analyze the decisive stylistic rupture of the 1920s, though anticipated throughout the previous century, unraveled to the point of permitting even generational tension to be considered a "modern" condition.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, from today's vantage point, the retrospective clarity that furnishes us with the larger trajectory toward "the modern" renders that which is *not* modern essentially indiscernible. For the historian, the content of "the modern" has become so diffuse as to no longer possess strict denotative value.

By contrast, for those engaged in architectural practice, Modernism has become an all too clear and identifiable phenomenon. Disaffection with doctrinaire Modernism, long in brewing, triumphed finally and mightily by the 1980s largely because of the perceived clarity of its antetype. That the "historian's revenge" involves a "return of historicism," or vice versa, indicates how the mythology of ex-nihilo Modernism (*pace* Nikolaus Pevsner and Sigfried Giedion) has also become artifactual.

Because these cultural conditions represent opposite sides of the same historiographic coin, neither historian nor architect is satisfied. Whether invisible (to the historian) or invincible (for the architect), the idea of "the modern" is still undergoing substantial historiographic metamorphoses. It is thus on the horizon of historical semantics that we can perhaps recover

1. Constantin Lipsius,  
east wall, Kunstakademie- und  
Ausstellungsgebäude, Dresden, ca. 1893.  
Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek,  
Abteilung Deutsche Fotothek.

some sense of value in the signification of “the modern.” And one of the pivotal figures in the history of the semantic revolution that ultimately endowed the term with polemical and actual potency is Otto Wagner.

In the following pages, I examine the ground against which Wagner articulated his early claims as a self-conscious architectural innovator; relate his claims as a “modern” to comparable utterances of contemporaries and potential sources; and finally suggest that his early theoretical activity marks a uniquely situated, conceptually supple, and largely neglected episode in the emergence of “modernist” theory. By treating Wagner’s contribution in this way, I hope to destabilize the static target seen by many postmodernists, as well as to shore up the historiography of modernist architectural theory.

It may appear unduly indignant to claim at the outset that Otto Wagner stands in such vivid contrast to his contemporaries largely because we know so little about them. Yet this entire generation of architects, born during the middle third of the nineteenth century, has suffered greatly at the hands of historians. Considering that they were the last group to endorse historicism enthusiastically as well as the first to be genuinely threatened by the professional, social, and mythic advance of engineers, it is not hard to understand why the eventual historiographic “victors” could afford to allow so many members of this generation to slip into oblivion.

Yet it is precisely his early “unexceptionality,” now quite impossible to recover, that rendered Wagner’s mature radicality intelligible. Wagner’s sustained importance for history is certainly due to the many similarities that his vision for a reinvigorated architectural culture shares with the culture that ultimately prevailed. But to read Wagner as progenitor is to deny the fullness of his contribution; at the opposite extreme, by placing him as yet another idol to worship on the altar of originality, we perpetuate equally the romantic myth of autochthonous genius, which has, for decades, done a great disservice to a more thoroughgoing understanding of Modernism. Instead, a fine balance must be struck.

Fortunately, Wagner himself provides a few modest, textual guidelines for such an assessment in his first published theoretical statement, the preface to the first volume of his *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Some sketches, projects, and executed buildings), published in 1889.<sup>2</sup> In this pivotal year, we read the prescient rumblings of a man who, although maddened by a perceived spiritual dead end of historicism, nevertheless

proclaims for his own work a certain distance from this tendency. For those shaped by a later sensibility, it has become exceedingly difficult to discern from Wagner's early work the traces of his future brilliance. Indeed, so adverse are we to granting historicism the wide range of invention understood by Wagner when distinguishing himself from his contemporaries, that a recent scholar could wryly note that "theory and practice are separated by a wide gulf" in Wagner's first publication.<sup>3</sup>

If we examine what Wagner wrote about his intentions, this "wide gulf" gradually evaporates. Although much attention has been paid, and duly so, to his seemingly clairvoyant declaration of a "utility style" (*Nutzstil*) in this work, the underlying precondition for this breakthrough was the positing of a "realistic" approach to architecture. As employed by Wagner, the notion of a "realistic" architecture permitted him to establish his vision as doubly intelligible. On the one hand, the concept allowed for a certain, easy exchange with innovations in the sister arts, especially literature, painting, and music. On the other hand, as we shall see presently, there was a more precise and focused meaning to realism when applied to the nonrepresentational arts in the late 1880s, which, while brief in duration, was nonetheless long in consequence. That the meaning of an "architectural realism" has been almost wholly without currency among historians<sup>4</sup> for decades simply signals the need for a more sustained discussion of the terrain of self-consciously "modern" theory in this generation of late historicist architects. That the concept of a "realistic" architecture eventually achieved a much broader currency in Vienna is attested to by Hermann Bahr, Wagner's counterpart in Vienna's literary world, who claimed in 1900 that "if you walk across the Ring, you have the impression of being in the midst of a real carnival. Everything masked, everything disguised. . . . Life has become too serious for that sort of thing. We want to look life in the face. This is what we mean when we talk of 'realist architecture,' that is, that the building must not only serve its intended purpose, but must also express, not conceal, that purpose."<sup>5</sup>

It would be wise to attend briefly to the semantic and historiographic complexities entailed in Wagner's appeal to "realism," his self-descriptive label for the gentle disengagement from historicist practice and theory. By the time of his utterance, *Realismus* would have comprised three relatively popular, concentric meanings, which collectively served as a banner for artistic renewal and innovation. First was a native German movement

founded upon the mid-century republican revolutionary program that pronounced its political-aesthetic progressivism primarily in literary manifestations.<sup>6</sup> Second, a more nebulous signification of a general and radical stylistic rupture – implied by French *réalisme* and beginning with Gustave Courbet's mid-century break with academic painting – would also have been a familiar semantic overlay to this previous, more local meaning.<sup>7</sup> Finally, there was the literary socialist realism of Emile Zola and his disciples in Germany: Michael Georg Conrad and the Hart brothers.<sup>8</sup> A certain amount of confusion about this sprawling concept must be accepted, for there simply was no uniform, monolithic school or even notion of architectural realism. What we are here tracing is an *attitude* that crystallized in thought and in act, in the theory and practice of architecture in the late 1880s on the continent. Unlike all prior theoretical claims to innovation in the nineteenth century, architectural realism was unique in its utter dismissal, even disavowal, of the concept of style.

Thus, the social content of the concept of realism by the late 1880s had two roots: a mid-century German republican-nationalist sentiment, as well as a slightly later French socialist internationalism.<sup>9</sup> Wagner's transition from the "strong historicism" of his masters' generation is doubly impressive insofar as he, as an Austrian free from the politicization of either alternative, engaged *both* realist roots. For the former, Wagner relied principally on the example of Gottfried Semper (1803–1879) and the broad stream of theoretical-historical work that took Semper as its point of issuance;<sup>10</sup> as to the latter, Wagner drew upon the theory and practice of the progressive French eclectics and, as I argue here, most probably Paul Sédille (1836–1900), whom Henry-Russell Hitchcock claimed as "one of the less tradition-bound French professionals of this period."<sup>11</sup> Common to both roots of realism was a penetrating theoretical justification for the embrace of wholly new design imagery – imagery that threatened established positions in the academic world. Whether understood as the incorporation of subartistic motives, or as a renewed appeal to "nature," the cultivation of architecture's *actuality* was the basis for each of Wagner's "realistic" sources. In short, by investing the *literal* level of architecture's conventional language of symbols with contemporary exigencies of material, function, and iconography, Wagner sought a broad renewal in practice.

Returning to the text of *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke*, Wagner was blunt about his work's independence from contemporary archi-

tectural fashion in 1889, if somewhat (and not surprisingly) evasive about the nature and origins of his own attitudes and design solutions. In the third paragraph of his introductory remarks, Wagner proclaimed that “the experiments with various styles hurried through by most of the architectural world in the last twenty years” essentially “passed [him] by leaving little trace.” Wagner seamlessly added that he “thus . . . reached the conclusion that a certain free Renaissance that has been absorbed by our genius loci is . . . for present and future architecture the only correct course.”<sup>12</sup> This particular flow of ideas, a declared independence from historicism coupled with a stated reliance upon the Neorenaissance, has beguiled generations of critics. That they were uttered in a single sentence only compounds the inconsistency of the larger theory/practice non sequitur. But what we read as a logical fallacy was nothing less than an article of faith, for this “certain free Renaissance” refers undoubtedly to Gottfried Semper’s architectural vision, which had only recently been “absorbed by the genius loci” in Vienna – if, perhaps, without universal appeal.

As such, it represents Wagner’s second “public” declaration of loyalty to Semper; the first occurred in 1886, when Wagner mounted a plaque on the facade of his new villa in Hütteldorf bearing the inscription *Artis sola domina necessitas*. This pithy Latin motto is at once a free translation and a hypostatized immortalization of Semper’s 1834 dictum that “Art knows only one master: Necessity.”<sup>13</sup> Wagner went to some pains to declare his Semperian heritage in each of the four editions of his *Moderne Architektur*,<sup>14</sup> by which time the unseemly rumors associated with Semper’s character and professional integrity during his years in Vienna (1871–1874) had abated.<sup>15</sup>

Only recently have scholars come to see the internal coherence of Semper’s theory and practice in a way that illuminates his appeal to Wagner’s generation.<sup>16</sup> Semper’s sponsorship of the Renaissance, his belief that it represented “the most complete objectivity and freedom in the symbolic application of those primitive types that, cleansed by the Greeks, awoke after a long hibernation,”<sup>17</sup> allows one to understand how Wagner’s “certain free Renaissance” could have been intended to mean restrained innovation within the established range of conventional architectonic expression. Semper’s concern for the primordial context of classical architecture’s symbolical language (particularly the ethnological dimension of ritual and sacrifice that informs the *real*, figurative core of its imagery), necessitated a conservative approach to invention.<sup>18</sup> This demanded a concern for innovation in form that nev-

ertheless scrupulously conserved the role of symbolic content.

Conceived as grandiloquent meditations upon the history of tectonic expression, Semper's own Viennese projects, especially the *grandes machines à penser* that are the Natur- and Kunsthistorische Museen, demonstrated to contemporaries how the language of the Renaissance could be masterfully disengaged from slavish imitation in the service of new functional and iconographic demands.<sup>19</sup> But whereas Semper envisioned the Renaissance as still capable of stylistic completion, Wagner and his generation saw it, and Semper's use of it, as a conceit with which to interpret and display the exigencies of form, material, and meaning.

One architect whose buildings and writings exemplify this tendency is Constantin Lipsius (1832–1894).<sup>20</sup> A native Saxon, he was a self-styled Semperian. His own teacher, Georg Hermann Nicolai, practiced a particularly dry and studied Neorenaissance style that was quite at odds with Semper's sculpturally animated and highly polychromatic interpretation. When he assumed Nicolai's post in 1881, Lipsius sought to restore the more fully developed Semperian Neorenaissance as the distinctive feature of Dresden's urban fabric. This he accomplished in his imposing Kunstakademie- und Ausstellungsgebäude, designed and erected from 1883 to 1894 on Dresden's renowned Brühlsche Terrasse (fig. 2). In many respects, his Kunstakademie represents the most progressive design of the early 1880s in Central Europe. Yet so swift were the developments during the latter half of the decade that the bureaucratic complexities that delayed the erection of the Kunstakademie rendered it a painful anachronism by its completion.

As Semper's most astute biographer within the profession, Lipsius betrayed his own architectural intentions when assessing the value of Semper's theoretical efforts in a monograph of 1880.<sup>21</sup> Of special importance are Lipsius's remarks on the relation between Semper's theory and practice. Lipsius praised as the "penetrating significance of Semper for our age and art...[the fact] that he understood, on the basis of architectural tasks as well as their essence in function and beauty, how to form buildings *as living organisms* that articulate...their arrangement with physiognomic sharpness [and] without a trace of arbitrariness, but bear the stamp of internal necessity, self-imposed limitation, and artistic freedom" (emphasis mine).<sup>22</sup> While Semper "emphasized the symbolic," he nonetheless endowed it with a "realistic sense," according to Lipsius, by emphasizing the naturalness of his structures' physical connection to their site; this Semper achieved



2. Constantin Lipsius,  
Kunstakademie- und Ausstellungsgebäude,  
Dresden, 1883-1894.  
Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek,  
Abteilung Deutsche Fotothek.



3. Constantin Lipsius,  
ceremonial entrance to exhibition building  
with "Lemon Press," Kunstakademie- und  
Ausstellungsgebäude, Dresden, ca. 1894.  
Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek,  
Abteilung Deutsche Fotothek.

by fetishizing material (stone), its handling (dressing), and its expressiveness (rustication).

For instance, Semper's rusticated quoining is decisively handled in his major Viennese commissions, the Hofmuseen and Burgtheater: from the symbolic textural roughness of the lowest lithic zone to their highest cornices, his mature buildings "evolve" telescopically. Although he preached the "denial of reality" as a precondition for all true art, Semper celebrated rugged lithic referentiality while simultaneously proclaiming its artifice. Stereotomy was, in fact, the topic of some of the most inspired prose in his book *Der Stil*; he even went so far as to claim that in the assembling of cut and dressed stones was to be found the origin of "the spatial idea." Rustication in particular was envisaged both as the basis of powerful structural symbolism and its sublimation as architecture's "motif of natural growth." By relying upon such a conception, a building's form could thus be said to reflect the manifold circumstances of its origin, thrusting up from the ground as a majestic symbol of its own growth, and hence, of evolution in general.<sup>23</sup>

The high drama of Lipsius's east wall of the Kunstakademie, seen still under construction in figure 1, is virtually an illustration of Semper's conception of the building-as-organism. Making thematic the relation of building to site via exaggerated rustication and emphasizing technique by enlarging each course's channels and joints, Lipsius's own Semperian meditation on tectonic evolution begins, as it should, at ground level. Due to the idiosyncrasies of the site, his scheme is continued on the north facade with didactic clarity. Because light is the functional basis for any art studio, Lipsius handled the window as the prime artistic motif around which his entire facade was composed. Thus, the "hung frames" of the ground-floor windows depict the postlithic age of architecture when, for Semper, the wall was composed of atectonic, woven hangings. The next story illustrates, through the use of two Ionic columns *in antis* in each bay across the facade, the invention of trabeation. Finally, the uppermost story depicts the invention of arcuate architecture.

The climax of Lipsius's vision occurs in the ferrovitreous dome, popularly dubbed the "Lemon Press," surmounting the octagonal hub of the exhibition facilities of the Kunstakademie (fig. 3). On the basis of Lipsius's own published views, "Über die ästhetische Behandlung des Eisens im Hochbau" (On the aesthetic handling of iron in building construction), one can say with certainty that this bizarre, pleated paraboloid represented for him a

balanced, objective shape that, insofar as it avoided the arbitrary touch of personal caprice, strove for ideal value. As the prime task for architects tackling the aesthetic use of metal, Lipsius declared that architecture was far more the “embodiment of special architectural thoughts [*Baugedanken*] than the representation of construction as such.”<sup>24</sup> In finishing his Dresden Kunstakademie with a highly abstract glazed metallic dome, Lipsius was looking ahead by endowing a material (what he and Semper referred to as *Realistik*, a presymbolic reminder of raw tectonic reality) with symbolic potential.

Lipsius’s *Pavillonstil*, as he referred to it, is a characterization that parallels Wagner’s equally indeterminate inclination for a “certain free Renaissance,” and perhaps it allows one to view Wagner’s allegedly historicist work as the product of a similarly informed imagination. To be sure, Wagner was eventually much less didactic and dogmatic than Lipsius about his reliance on Semperian motifs. However, there are certain obvious formal similarities that establish a direct filiation from Semper to Wagner, such as the long-recognized connection between Semper’s Imperial Forum and Wagner’s *Artibus* fantasy of 1880. Perhaps less immediately recognizable is the inspiration taken from Semper’s incomplete *Kunsthistorisches Museum* (depicted in Wagner’s rendering of the pageant celebrating the silver jubilee of the royal wedding in 1879 [see p. 23])<sup>25</sup> and Wagner’s many subsequent domeless drum designs, for instance, the Reichstag competition entry of 1882 (fig. 4).<sup>26</sup> The clarity of Semper’s posthumous, poetic, present-day primitivism and Wagner’s lifelong fascination with the notion of a magisterial yet “modern” ruin-in-reverse mark an interesting beginning for the anti-rational backlash endemic to subsequent strains in the Viennese avant-garde.

Similar to Lipsius’s absorption of Semperism, Wagner engaged the elusive theoretical aspects as well. Semper’s definition of style, which demanded “the conformity of an artistic appearance with its developmental history and with all the preconditions and circumstances of its becoming [*Werden*],”<sup>27</sup> as well as the requirement that architecture always demonstrate its debt to its conditions of origin, certainly found expression in many of Wagner’s early designs. From the heft of the rusticated, lithic *Realistik* borne up to the cornices of his various apartment complexes, public designs, and even one “private museum,” the stamp of Semper’s evolutionary design iconography upon Wagner’s otherwise rather conventional Neorenaissance compositions was unmistakable throughout his first publication.<sup>28</sup> Semper’s interest in primitive elements as the basis for all stylistically valid archi-



4. Otto Wagner,  
German Reichstag, competition entry, 1882.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u.  
ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Anton Schroll,  
1889), 1: pl. 29.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

tectural invention is also to be seen in Wagner's often keen distinction of frame from infilling in his facades. Most indicative here are the designs for his Rennweg residence as well as the apartment block at the head of Universitätsstraße.<sup>29</sup> Hardly a more emphatic expression of the mural superstructure as an atectonic "hanging" could be imagined; indeed, the superposition of window frames and aedicular motifs of his Stadiongasse and Schottenring complexes recalls quite specifically Semper's handling of the entry wings of the Burgtheater.<sup>30</sup>

During the 1880s, the principle of "frame and infilling" assumed a theoretical life of its own, parallel to the principle of load and support, as a generator of architectural composition. Its roots were specifically Semperian,<sup>31</sup> yet it soon came to be employed as an explanatory device for a wide variety of historical styles from Gothic to Rococo. In fact, by the late 1870s this principle was largely recognized as uniquely responsible for the stylistic development of the Rococo and therefore of immediate relevance for those who sought a way out of the paradox of historicism by tapping the eternal laws of stylistic growth. Because it was operative in the recent past, then suddenly overtaken by the untimely nostalgia of historicism, this principle of Rococo design briefly came to be considered the last "authentic" style and hence uniquely suited to continuing the evolutionary path through contemporary use in the 1880s.<sup>32</sup> In this sense, Wagner's adoption of paneling as a generative motif in his early work may indeed represent a theoretically sophisticated effort to return architecture to the point at which it had become derailed from the prevailing evolution; this, too, explains Max Fabiani's apology of 1895 for Wagner's apparent historicism.<sup>33</sup>

A second condition of Semperian *Realismus* has to do with the historical evolution of form in which the literal referentiality of primitive archetypes, as opposed to theoretical principles, is a key agent in the dynamic of stylistic evolution. This, of course, was Semper's intention in singling out the Caribbean hut (*Karaibische Hütte*) as "no imaginary picture, but rather a highly *realistic* example of wooden construction" (emphasis mine).<sup>34</sup> And while he emphatically proscribed its imitation, he wistfully envied the primitive's ability to confront architectonic problems with such utter frankness. In more developed cultural conditions, Semper maintained that style was possible only by preserving and celebrating the power of original motives of space, detail, and structure. For instance, in his discussions of the emergence of the orders, Semper frequently described the columnar base

as a “realistic” reference to the binding of what were originally multiform upright elements, claiming, “Tectonic structure first achieves monumentality through emancipation from the structural-material *Realistik*, through symbolic spiritualization of expression of its arrangement.”<sup>35</sup> Hence, only the existence of a literal *Realistik* of scroll and leaf made possible the expressive and symbolic range of the Ionic and Corinthian orders.<sup>36</sup> One need only consider the emphasis upon bound supports in the portico of Wagner’s first villa to see how the realist disengagement from style demanded a conservation of symbolic richness. It was just such a union of art history and architectural pragmatism that allowed K. E. O. Fritsch, editor of *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, to declare in 1890 in his “Stilbetrachtungen” (Observations on style) that Semper was “the leader of this healthy, pure realistic movement.”<sup>37</sup>

The realistic dimension of Semper’s theoretical edifice would have been common knowledge among younger architects, for it established the point of departure for the most sustained theoretical enterprise of the 1880s and early 1890s: the architectural theory of Georg Heuser. During these years, Heuser advanced his Darwinian vision of architectonic renewal in approximately a dozen didactic, scholarly essays. Most astonishing to today’s reader is his divinatory praise for several all-too-familiar elements of orthodox Modernism: radically restricted ornament, the raw I-beam as a new *Realistik*, the naked tectonic frame as an object of beauty in and of itself, and the appeal of industrial and engineering forms (including the grain elevators so dear to Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier in the teens)<sup>38</sup> as evidence of an instructive contemporary naïveté. However, his gospel of an emerging contemporary taste (*aufkommende Zeitgeschmack*) had been prepared in advance for over a decade by many of Germany’s most prominent intellectuals, and Heuser made his debts very clear. Consider, for instance, Hermann Lotze’s praise of “a mathematical element of exactitude...[as] the good genius of our age” in the late 1860s or Emil DuBois-Reymond’s stated interest in the appeal of “mechanical beauty” in the 1870s; the consequences for architectural theory and design were indeed anticipated by nonarchitects.<sup>39</sup>

Heuser’s specific recipes for architectural innovation were rather conservative, though, because his advocacy of the emerging contemporary taste was tempered by faith in the evolution of the general laws of style as formulated by Semper. That is why, for instance, he could reject the theory of dressing, or *Bekleidung*, as “convenient and dangerous”<sup>40</sup> yet assume Semper’s uneasiness with metallic architecture as the basis for his own the-

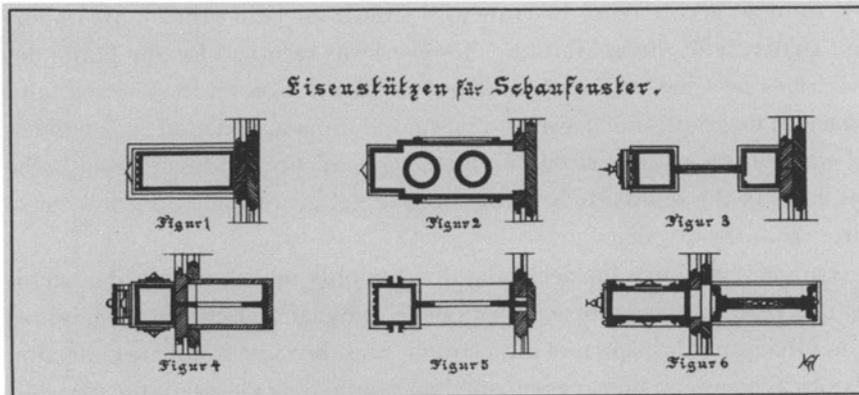
oretical undertaking. His attempt to disprove Semper's claims that metal would always be antimemorial and result in an invisible architecture (*unsichtbare Architektur*)<sup>41</sup> was nothing short of a Semperian exercise in form and scope. Befitting the new "iron age," metallic architecture, in order to possess style, would have to ground itself in its physical *Realistik*. This, for Heuser, was to be achieved in three ways. First, beginning with the stylistic principle of frame and infilling, the structural system of metallic supports was to be conceived as a composite of hollow bodies (fig. 5) that were to be so arranged as to maximize visible surface area in order to achieve the appearance of solidity – a demonstratively conservative point of view (fig. 6) and a simple extension of Semper's historical claims for tubular construction. Second, a congruence between constituent members and the overall structure was to assure a resonance of frames between two levels of order: structure and plan. Finally, in order to transcend mere construction, artistically conceived compositions of ornament and detailing, in this instance rivets, were imperative. The direct and acknowledged source for his argument was Semper's discussion of the Pantheon door.<sup>42</sup> Heuser's particular conception of a metallic architecture went unobserved, of course, until Wagner executed the glittering, studded glory of the Postsparkasse. However, it was only after 1889 that Heuser became systematically self-conscious about his cause, for only then did he declare his program to be "realistic": this is to say, at virtually the same time that the concept exerted a powerful spell over Otto Wagner.

The central event that bestowed upon architectural realism both its identity and restricted temporal specificity was the Universal Exposition in Paris of 1889. On the grounds of the exposition, noted Pierre Planat, one saw even country bumpkins leading their young children "in order to inculcate the sentiment of the realist beauties of modern industry."<sup>43</sup> Among German architectural critics, it was Albert Hofmann, coeditor of *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, who was responsible for giving currency to the specific idea of an architectural realism in an engaging review published in early November of that year. The elements praised by Hofmann add up to a catalog of realist features: the employment of the scientific method and technology for design, the "conscious and systematic" separation of construction from restrained decoration, and liberal use of polychromy in a multitude of materials. He singled out for praise Joseph-Antoine Bouvard's Dôme Central as "an architectonic dithyramb of the greatest opulence... a triumph of mod-

ern rational architecture in France.”<sup>44</sup> Credit for being the “most important structure of the exhibition,” however, was reserved for the Halle des Machines by Charles Dutert and the engineers Contamin, Pierron, and Charton; its grand linear sweep, vast spatial impact, and modest ornamental elaboration assured Hofmann that a “geometric progression” was to be observed in the relatively brief developmental history of exhibition structures from 1851 to 1889.

Hofmann’s source for declaring that not only must one consider architectural realism to be “thoroughly modern” but that “*objective* realism [grew] out of the innermost spirit of our century” was the most complete collection of critical essays on literary realism then available in German: the first and only number of the Hart brothers’ *Kritisches Jahrbuch*, subtitled *Beiträge zur Charakteristik der zeitgenössischen Literatur sowie zur Verständigung über den modernen Realismus* (Contributions to a characterization of contemporary literature and to an agreement about modern realism). Hofmann’s praise for an inductive, scientific design attitude (“unprejudiced research”)<sup>45</sup> betrays his faith in the unsentimental, Zolaesque conception of modernity sponsored by the Hart brothers — collectively, these positions mark his review as a milestone in architectural criticism. In fact, it represents nothing less than one of the earliest instances of nineteenth-century continental architectural criticism for which “the modern” is deployed in an unabashedly polemical, antihistoricist fashion. The cleft between contemporary and modern design was clear: all current design was *contemporary*, but only realistic design was specifically *modern*.

The similarity of the eclectic French exhibition architecture of 1889 to Art Nouveau, which was soon to overtake it, has often been noted.<sup>46</sup> As Harry Mallgrave demonstrates in his essay in this volume, so-called Art Nouveau theory constitutes little more than an epiphenomenon in the broader trajectory of architectural realism. But the formal similarities between realist and Art Nouveau design are plainly visible in Sédille’s drawing for the monumental ceramic portal marking off the exhibition of national manufacturers in the Dôme Central (fig. 7).<sup>47</sup> The stylized palmiform motifs and the Semperian theme of tapestry and ceramics as the motifs of both structure and iconography make this a telling, if transitory, monument to the realist spirit in France. It also serves to underscore the voluptuous modernity of Wagner’s avowed Francophile inspiration (“our teachers in the arts for the past two centuries, [who] have once again pointed out the



Arten	Bau und Naturformen.				
Hohlformen	Gestein Gemäuer	Bäume Säulen	Pfosten Balken	Bekleidung (Semper I S. 343)	
Hohlformen	Räume Pfeiler	Hohrpflanzen Leitrdhren	Stützen Träger	Thür von Pautpeon	
Gefachformen	Kassetten Balkenfache	Kelche Nischen	Sparren Pautpeon	Gurtgefache Stabilrahmen	
Flachformen	Wände Decken	Blätter. Platten	Gewölbe Schalen	Häute Stoffe	
Langformen	Sakken Wänder	Stengel Stäbe	Seile Stabel	Dräpfe Fäden	

Arten	Gefache aus Flachformen				
Einseitig	Winkeleisen Stabilrahmen	Dampschwelle	Strassenschleus	Schub „Fach“	Ehon Rinne
Zweiseitig	Schmiedeeisen	Gusseisen	Walzeisen	Stein, Gips	Maschinenkrille
Mehrfachig	(Paris 1878)	Kastengefach	Klein Festungs-Thorpfeiler	Deckenmulde	
Bekleidet	(Wien, 1875)	Putz auf Eisen	Breiteste Klein	Putz. Console	Stück mit Metallgurt
Gerecht	Glas, Ziegel	Ofen Kachel	Decken. Kacheln	Trog Bleche	Well Bleche.

5. Georg Heuser,  
taxonomy of hollow frame supports, 1888.  
From *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* 53 (1888),  
pl. before p. 27.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.
6. Georg Heuser,  
project for an exhibition hall, 1886.  
From *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 20 (1886),  
pl. to no. 13.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.





7. Paul Sédille,  
drawing for a ceramic portal to the exhibition  
of national manufacturers, 1889.  
From *Revue des arts décoratifs* 10 (1889/1890):  
pl. after p. 268.  
Boston, Trustees of the Boston Public Library.

proper goals to us... I consider this triumph of realism to be favorable"). Like Hofmann, Wagner found that "realism in architecture can also bear quite peculiar fruit... such as the Eiffel Tower."<sup>48</sup> This makes it all the more likely that Sédille's "tasteful" departure from historicism at this point would have appealed to Wagner. To round out the contemporary allure for Wagner of Sédille's brand of French modernity, and of progressive French architectural culture in general, it must be mentioned that Sédille was the author of one of the most penetrating critical analyses of Viennese architecture in the mid-1880s.<sup>49</sup> It is indeed possible that Wagner's reading of the exposition architecture of 1889 was in some measure conditioned by this Frenchman's incisive account of his native country's design weaknesses. And it is tantalizing to speculate that it may well have been the stamp of Semper upon Sédille's thinking that Wagner admired.<sup>50</sup>

Hence the emergence of architectural realism out of French eclecticism and German theory is certain. Whether through firsthand acquaintance or through the trade journals, it is likely that the most important, if unwitting, French advocate for architectural realism known to Wagner and his colleagues in Central Europe would have been Paul Sédille. Praised by one critic many years after his death as "this innovator, our Suger... [architect of] the first French cathedral of mercantilism," Sédille was second only to Charles Garnier in terms of name recognition among his generation in the Germanic community of architects.<sup>51</sup> As spurious as the comparison with Suger may at first seem, the ideal of a light, structurally lithe, vitreous and polychromatic architecture was the hallmark of the kind of design Sédille advocated throughout the 1880s; indeed, insofar as one can point to a certain critical uniformity in the reception of these qualities as the very essence of the new exhibition structures in 1889, one might very well describe the stylistic departure presented by this French brand of realism as Sédillian.<sup>52</sup> Of course, the point of reference for this self-consciously progressive, commercially savvy, and stylistically innovative attitude of the mid- to late 1880s was Sédille's famous Printemps department store (fig. 8), erected in Paris between July 1881 and March 1885.<sup>53</sup> One need only consider the spectacle of the metallic cage of the *grande nef* to appreciate its value as a powerfully monumental expression of new, secular, market-conscious demands. Here was a building that proudly displayed, indeed celebrated, novelty in both function and structure; the departure for both was a recognition of the real, concrete experience of contemporary life as worthy of serious artistic attention.



As early as 1873 Sédille discussed realism, in an unprogrammatically fashion, as a virtue in domestic architecture. “Private architecture is a monument of prose, but a living prose, a prose of a powerful realism that characterizes and relates, day by day, the physiognomy of the individuals and generations that pass.”<sup>54</sup> Two years later, Sédille seems to have been made aware of the baser nature of realism (as crass materialistic design) in his report of Victor-Marie-Charles Ruprich-Robert’s declaration that “the tendencies of our Ecole must be seen as [a battle of] the ideal against realism. Realism is a manifestation from below, art is a beaming from above.”<sup>55</sup> Ruprich-Robert appears to have taken as his point of departure the brief and inconclusive “debate” of the mid-1860s involving the vociferous anti-Gothic Revival camp in the Ecole, and the antagonisms between the structural rationalism of Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc and that of Louis-Auguste Boileau.<sup>56</sup> By the 1880s, of course, a new generation was embarking upon the realist path without much direct impetus from Courbet and Viollet-le-Duc’s generation. Yet in an important speech in 1885 lauding the award-winning residential designs of the previous year, Sédille seems to have relied upon the older generation’s definition of realism as “construction with an absence of art.”<sup>57</sup> Sédille distinguished what he called “apparent construction” as a virtue from the threat posed by “exaggerated realism.”

All reactions are excessive: After the gracious fantasies of the eighteenth century, after the ambitions of the following epoch, after the fantasies of romanticism, we are falling toward a contrary excess and *we are here becoming realists*; like many others, we are satisfied to vie among one another in the search for precedents and in the exaggerated accentuation of materials... But this return to truth, which inspired us by the better disposition of the most beautiful monuments of all ages, this return to traditions, the most essential [ones] of our art, should not conceal its goal: Beauty... Apparent construction should only be a means and not the end [emphasis mine].<sup>58</sup>

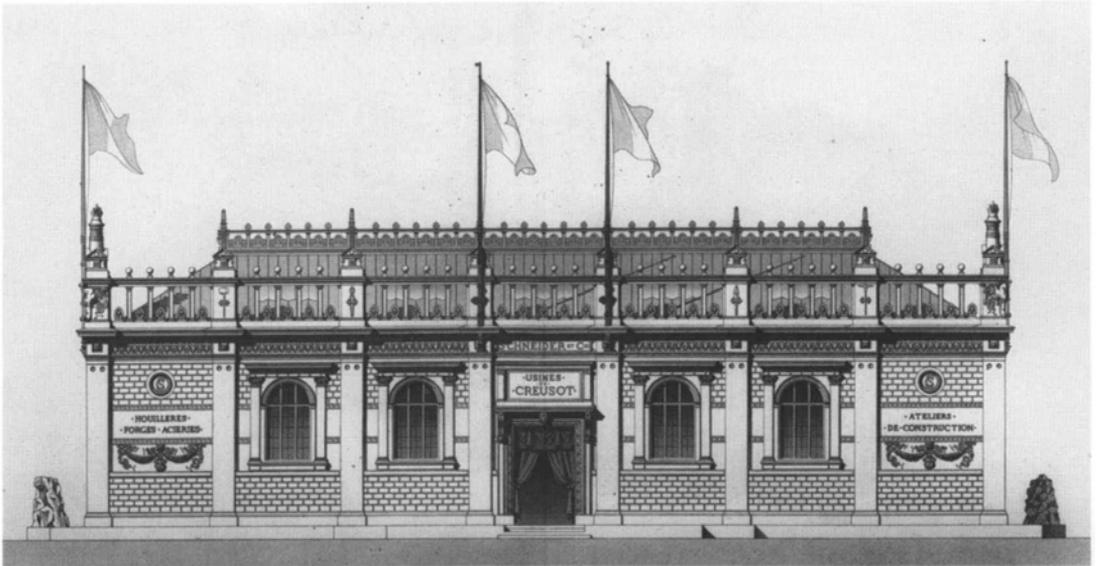
Sédille’s warning against excessive realism in this instance indicates that there was some degree of terminological equivocation involved in the matter. Remember that Wagner, too, was disturbed by the “peculiar [realist] fruit” presented by the Eiffel Tower, yet he was a partisan of the same rational antihistoricism set forth time and again by Sédille. It should be noted that Sédille’s strident pleas for a release from “this folly of imitation,

8. Paul Sédille, Printemps department store, Paris, 1881–1885. From *Encyclopédie d’architecture*, 3rd ser., 3 (1884): pls. 927–28. Boston, Trustees of the Boston Public Library.

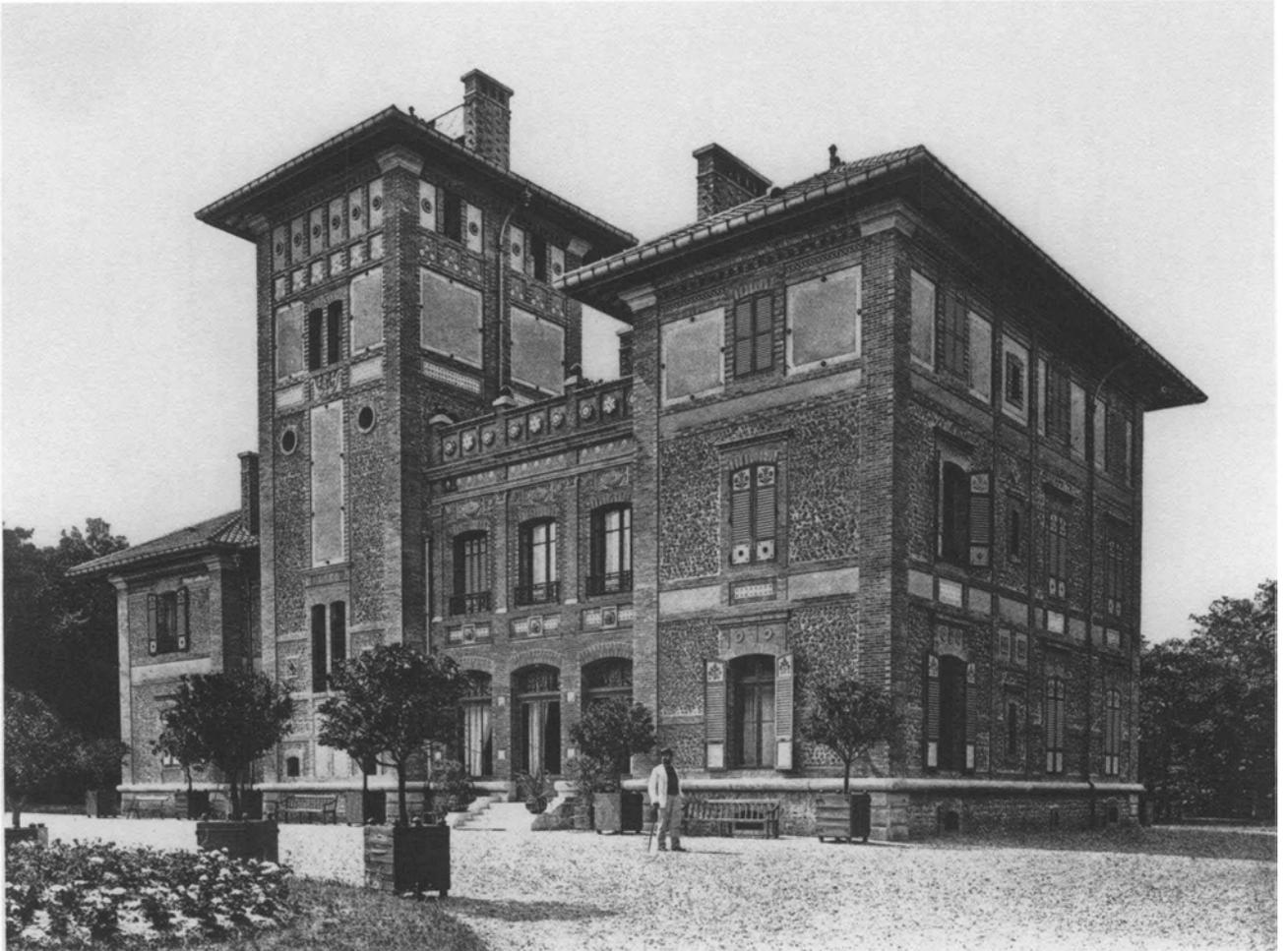
this false need to live in the past”<sup>59</sup> were briefly enshrined as academic dogma when Lucien Magne, Julien-Azais Guadet’s predecessor as professor of the theory of architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, enthusiastically adopted them as his own, and thus as the Ecole’s. Magne demanded that “it is necessary for our good, old, French sense to react against this mania of imitation that charges our century with the [stylistic] castoffs of past centuries. Archaeology should not teach us to make pastiches, but to find in ancient forms the expression of needs or ideas of past societies, as well as to satisfy — through original works — the ideas and demands of modern society.”<sup>60</sup> In his outstanding critical history of nineteenth-century French architecture, Magne claimed that rationalism, “that is to say, the appropriation of decorative forms by construction itself, is tending to become the principle of all modern composition.” For Magne, as for Sédille, modernity was “the spirit of sincerity and liberty, which permits everyone [to assume] the responsibility of his works.”<sup>61</sup>

Sédille, in fact, came from just such a rationalist background in his training at the Ecole under François-Jean-Baptiste Guénepin beginning in 1857. Certainly, Sédille’s academic pedigree alone would have precluded him from becoming an outspoken advocate of architectural realism. An important early commission, the pavilion for the Creusot Foundry at the Universal Exposition of 1878, displays his heritage quite effectively (fig. 9). Relying upon what was in the late 1870s a traditional Labroustian solution — an internal spine of slender iron colonnettes supporting a web of light iron trusses (to display the iron manufacturer’s wares and their applications) set in a handsome classicizing masonry sheath — it was Sédille’s use of ceramic ornament for a richly chromatic effect that was singled out by one critic as uniquely innovative.<sup>62</sup> In fact, architectural polychromy was a central element of Sédille’s architectural theory. “We may logically hope that color will reassume over architecture those rights that are acknowledged as having belonged to it from time immemorial.”<sup>63</sup>

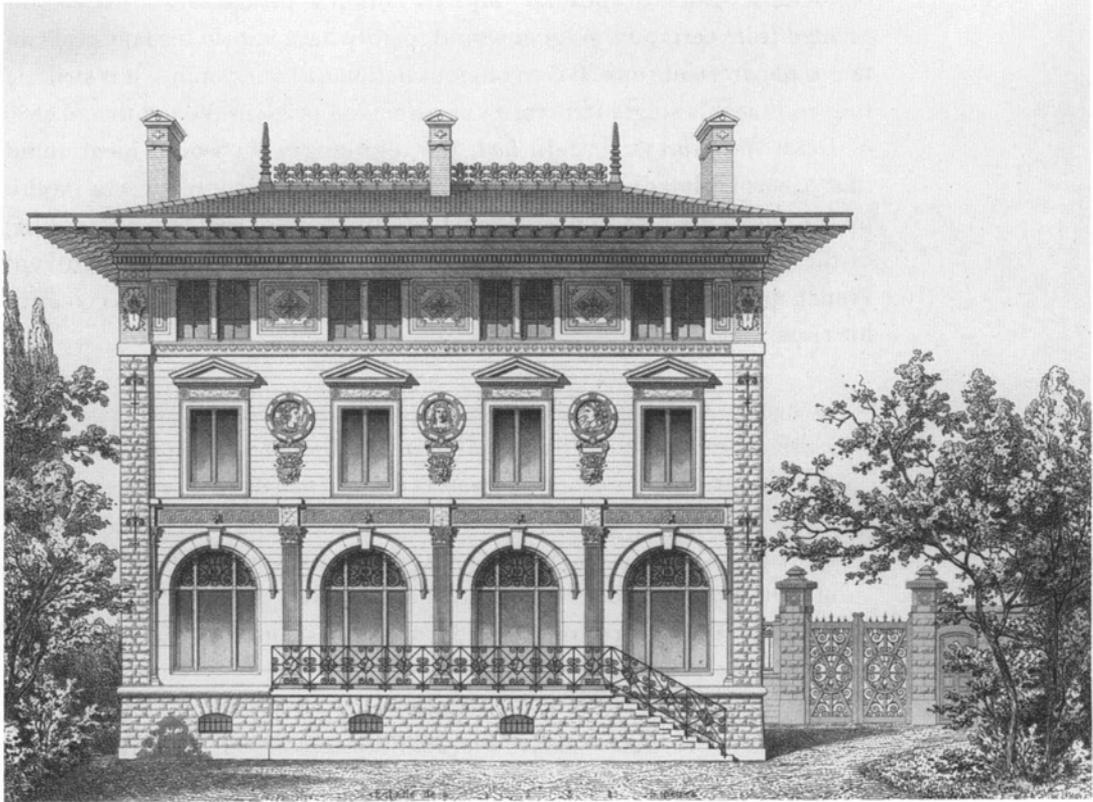
The “honest” display of a multitude of constructional materials, and their chromatic panoply, in Sédille’s many residential designs led to some very potent realist inventions, such as his villa at Boisrond (fig. 10).<sup>64</sup> This rugged residential realism, with its emphatic articulation of frame and infilling, of towering chimneys and proud socle, is a worthy anticipant of Wagner’s more luxuriant use of the same architectural theme, ceramics, in his apartment house at Linke Wienzeile 40 of 1898 (p. 311). In a similar way, the hard, pris-



9. Paul Sédille,  
pavilion of the Creusot Foundry, Universal  
Exposition, Paris, 1878.  
From *Encyclopédie d'architecture*, 2nd ser.,  
3 (1879): pls. 567-68.  
Boston, Trustees of the Boston Public Library.



10. Paul Sédille,  
villa at Boisrond, near Villeneuve-sur-Yonne,  
ca. 1884.  
From *Encyclopédie d'architecture*, 3rd ser.,  
3 (1884): pl. 987.  
Boston, Trustees of the Boston Public Library.
11. Paul Sédille,  
villa, rue Lafontaine 82, Auteuil, ca. 1882.  
From *Encyclopédie d'architecture*, 3rd ser.,  
1 (1882): pl. 790.  
Boston, Trustees of the Boston Public Library.



matic block of Wagner's own residence in Hütteldorf recalls Sédille's handsome design for a villa in Auteuil (p. 2, fig. 11).<sup>65</sup>

Beyond the admittedly distant possibility of Wagner having seen Sédille's residences, which despite any and all enticing similarities must be suspended from certainty, Wagner would readily have known his famous Printemps department store. Given obvious nationalist antinomies, it is striking indeed that this single structure was discussed twice in the volume of 1886 of *Deutsche Bauzeitung*.<sup>66</sup> In fact, the regular reader would have noted that Albert Hofmann, in his lengthy discussion of "Die französische Architektur der dritten Republik" (French architecture of the Third Republic) of the very next year, quoted Sédille exclusively on matters of current French architectural theory.<sup>67</sup> Sédille's antihistoricist approach is clear in his claim that

strengthened by modern science, contemporary art renews past traditions while satisfying new needs. . . . It is by the sincere application of the continually multiplying procedures and elements of construction that our architecture finds the moment and medium to revivify its own inspiration. Therefore, in addressing new programs without hesitation, in making use of all the resources of scientific innovation, the art of architecture gradually sheds its more conventional than rational finery in order to rejuvenate its beauty by the truth of revealed forms and decorative logic.<sup>68</sup>

Wagner certainly seems to have digested this lesson well, considering that Sédille's notion for a vast central vessel established by an internal iron cage and faced by a load-bearing lithic sheath in the Printemps was adopted by Wagner in his early bank designs, specifically those for the Austrian Boden-Creditanstalt and the Länderbank.<sup>69</sup> Of special note is the fact that each of these programs reflects primarily commercial, mercantile interests: new enterprises requiring new forms. That they appeared in Wagner's *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke*, ostensibly as examples of his realistic posture, makes them all the more engaging.

Given the thoroughness of Wagner's absorption of the twin roots of architectural realism, it may be wise to note in closing that its eventual metamorphosis into *Sachlichkeit* was, in some measure, anticipated in Sédille's theory of Modernism. During a speech delivered in 1888 to an award ceremony lauding current residential work, Sédille noted that architects had

recently opted for a “a sober style” characterized by conscientious and careful design.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps even more astonishing, especially in light of Wagner’s later distance from the Secessionists, was Sédille’s rebuke in 1884 of contemporary Viennese architecture, which declared that her native architects “have won by their *sobriety*, a grandeur of style that they lose by their abuse of an ornamentation that becomes banal by its very repetition” (emphasis mine).<sup>71</sup> Indeed, as the following essays indicate, Sédille’s statement might have carried greater force were it uttered two decades later.

## NOTES

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1. For an engaging account, see Adolf Max Vogt, “Die ersten ‘Modernen’ in der Architekturgeschichte: Joseph Rykwert und Wolfgang Herrmann zur ‘Battle of Neo-Classicism,’” *Neue Züricher Zeitung* 202, no. 269 (20 November 1981): 34.

2. Otto Wagner, *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke*, vol. 1 (Vienna: Author, 1889; 2nd edition, Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1891). A recent, integrated edition with a preface by Peter Haiko exists: E. V. Humphrey, trans., *Sketches, Projects and Executed Buildings by Otto Wagner* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987).

3. Haiko, in Humphrey (see note 2), 6.

4. Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), 209, declares that one can only discuss realism in relation to the nonrepresentational arts “figuratively, analogically or metaphorically rather than descriptively.”

5. Hermann Bahr as quoted in Peter Vergo, *Art in Vienna, 1898–1918* (London: Phaidon, 1981), 90. Bahr also perceptively compared Wagner to Alfred Messel, claiming that Berlin, unlike Vienna, was capable of sustaining genius; cf. Vergo, 16–17.

6. René Wellek, “Realism in Literature,” in Philip Weiner, ed., *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (New York: Scribner, 1974), 4: 51–56; Helmut Kreuzer, “Zur Theorie des deutschen Realismus zwischen Märzrevolution und Naturalismus,” in Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand, eds., *Realismustheorien in der Literatur, Malerei, Musik und Poetik* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975), 48–67.

7. Nochlin (see note 4), *passim*. An instance of the nebulous nature of French *réalisme* is to

be seen in Champfleury's letter of 1855 to George Sand in which he declares, "I will not define *realism* for you, Madame: I do not know where it comes from, where it goes, what it is." Although Champfleury took credit for having "discovered" Courbet, both Homer and Richard Wagner were also ranked among important realists. See Linda Nochlin, ed., *Realism and Tradition in Art: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 36–45.

8. See above all Erich Rupprecht, *Literarische Manifeste des Naturalismus, 1880–1892* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1962). Fritz Schumacher wrote of the appeal of Conrad's *Realismus* among students in Munich during the early 1880s as a reaction against the *Scheinwelt* of historicist culture; see Fritz Schumacher, *Stufen des Lebens: Erinnerungen eines Baumeisters* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1935), 98, 389 n. 33. As we shall see, another restricted contextual meaning of "architectural realism" is to be apprehended through the impression left upon contemporaries by the Universal Exposition held in Paris in 1889.

9. For a discussion of the political positions in the dominant strains of realism, see Eugenia W. Herbert, *The Artist and Social Reform: France and Belgium, 1885–1898* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1961).

10. Heinrich von Ferstel (1828–1883) and Joseph Bayer (1827–1910), as members of the Technische Hochschule's faculty, were also responsible for assuring Semper's teachings a long afterlife in Vienna. Evidence of Ferstel's stridently Semperian perspective leaps from the pages of his two major theoretical efforts: The 1880 *Antrittsrede* published as "Rede des neu antretenden Rectors Heinrich Freih. v. Ferstel," in *Reden gehalten bei der feierlichen Inauguration des für das Studienjahr 1880/1881 gewählten Rectors der k. k. technischen Hochschule in Wien* (Vienna: L. W. Seidel und Sohn, n.d.), 37–53, and *Über Stil und Mode: Vortrag gehalten im niederösterreichischen Gewerbevereine am 3. November 1882* (Vienna: A. Keiss, 1883). Bayer's thoughtful biography of Semper in *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 14 (1879): 293–306, 357–71, triggered a series of Semperian critical essays about contemporary architecture written in the 1880s and published posthumously in his *Baustudien und Baubilder: Schriften zur Kunst*, ed. R. Stiassny (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1919). However, this is not to deny the impact of Eduard van der Nüll claimed by Otto Antonia Graf but merely to broaden the theoretical base upon which Wagner drew for his piece of 1889 (cf. Otto Antonia Graf, "Der Pfeil der Zukunft: Umriß eines Desideratums," in Gustav Peichl, ed., *Die Kunst des Otto Wagner*, exh. cat. [Vienna: Akademie der bildenden Künste, 1984], 15–34).

11. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 4th ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), 384.

12. Humphrey (see note 2), 17. Otto Wagner, *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (1889), in Otto Antonia Graf, *Otto Wagner: Das Werk des Architekten* (Vienna: Hermann Böhlau Nachf., 1985), 1: 72: "Die Experimente mit den verschiedenen Stilrichtungen, welche vom größten Theile der architektonischen Welt in den letzten zwanzig Jahren durchgejagt wurden... sind ziemlich

*spurlos an mir vorübergezogen, und so bin ich schließlich zur Überzeugung gelangt, daß eine gewisse freie Renaissance, welche unseren genius loci in sich aufgenommen hat...für die Architektur der Gegenwart und Zukunft das allein Richtige sei."*

13. Gottfried Semper, *Vorläufige Bemerkungen über bemalte Architektur und Plastik bei den Alten* (Altona: J. F. Hammerich, 1834), viii. This has been translated into English by Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann, "Preliminary Remarks on Polychrome Architecture," in *Gottfried Semper: The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), 45–73.

14. Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1988), 91.

15. See the exhaustive presentation published by Manfred Semper, "Hasenauer und Semper: Eine Erwiderung und Richtigstellung," *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* 59 (1894): 57–63, 73–82, 85–96, pls. 61–66. On the heels of this article, Ferdinand von Feldegg issued a civic apologia to the Semper family and to Semper's memory: "Eine Ehrenschild Wiens," *Der Architekt* 1 (1895): 21–22.

16. Two recent dissertations have, from opposite points of view, made enormous strides in clarifying Semper's contributions. See Peter Wegmann, *Gottfried Semper und das Winterthurer Stadthaus: Sempers Architektur im Spiegel seiner Kunsttheorie* (Winterthur: Stadtbibliothek, 1985); H. Laudel, "Das Problem der architektonischen Form in der Theorie Gottfried Sempers" (Ph.D. diss., Technische Universität Dresden, 1984).

17. Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten, oder praktische Aesthetik*, 2nd ed. (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1879), 2: 457: "Aber zu vollster Objektivität und Freiheit in der symbolischen Verwerthung der, durch den Hellenismus gereinigten, uraltesten Typen erhebt sich erst, nach langem Winterschlaf, die neuerwachte alte Kunst." (Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.)

18. It must be considered one of the very few, if telling, weaknesses of George Hersey's recent study that Semper's nineteenth-century contribution, quite possibly the direct impetus for Nietzsche's vision of ancient Greece and its architecture, was left unremarked. See George Hersey, *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988). Cf. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, eds., *Friedrich Nietzsche: Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Einzelbänden* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag de Gruyter, 1988), 7: 16.

19. See Alphonse Lhotsky, "Die Baugeschichte der Museen und der neuen Burg," in Fritz Dworschak, ed., *Festschrift des Kunsthistorischen Museums zur Feier des fünfzigjährigen Bestandes* (Vienna: Ferdinand Berger, 1941), 1: esp. 103–10 and Appendix 2, 165–75.

20. For Lipsius, see my "The Legacy of Gottfried Semper: Studies in *Späthistorismus*" (Ph.D. diss., Brown Univ., 1989), esp. ch. 2 ("Constantin Lipsius and Saxon Semperism"), 111–90.

21. Constantin Lipsius, *Gottfried Semper in seiner Bedeutung als Architekt* (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Bauzeitung, 1880), esp. 95–103. The essay was originally also published serially in *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 14 (1880): 2–4, 13–14, 33–34, 65–66, 75–77, 87–88, 91, 109–11, 129–30, 145, 181–85, 193–95; it was also released in the commemorative volume: *Festschrift zur Enthüllungsfest der Semperdenkmals am 1. September 1892*, ed. Ernst Fleischer (Dresden: Von Zahn & Jaensch, 1892).

22. Lipsius, 1880, *Gottfried Semper* (see note 21), 100: “Die durchschlagende Bedeutung Sempers für unsere Zeit und unsere Kunst liegt aber darin, daß er es verstand, auf Grund der baulichen Aufgabe und auf dem Wesen derselben nach Zweckmäßigkeit und Schönheit Bauten zu gestalten als lebendige Organismen, die im ganzen und einzelnen ihre Bestimmung mit physiognomischer Schärfe aussprechen, die nicht die Spur der Willkür, sondern den Stempel der inneren Nothwendigkeit und selbstgewollten Beschränkung, darum aber der künstlerischen Freiheit tragen.”

23. Semper (see note 17), 1: 216 n. 3; 2: 370, 347. Georg Germann has made similar claims, apparently without knowledge of Lipsius’s interpretation, in an article entitled “Sempers Werk über den Stil als Einleitung zur Praxis,” in Katharina Medici-Mall, ed., *Fünf Punkte in der Architekturgeschichte: Festschrift für Adolf Max Vogt* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1985), 122–33.

24. Constantin Lipsius, “Über die ästhetische Behandlung des Eisens im Hochbau,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 12, no. 72 (4 September 1878): 363–66.

25. It is interesting to note that in the previous image in this series as it appears in *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (see p. 20 in this volume), Wagner’s isolation of a single “hung” triglyph echoes Semper’s account of this motif’s sartorial, as opposed to tectonic, origins (cf. Semper [see note 17], 1: 84–85). Important, too, is the isolation of the tapestry backdrop for the significantly undressed allegorical figure of History labeled “ΧΡΟΝΙΚΑ.”

26. See Graf (see note 12), esp. listing no. 48. For other “domeless drums,” cf. his various designs for a Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum (nos. 115, 157, 164), the Palast der Wiener Gesellschaft (no. 129), the House of Glory (no. 135), the K. K. Reichs-Kriegs-Ministerium and K. K. Ministerium des Handels (nos. 138, 139), the Neubau der K. K. Akademie der bildenden Künste in Wien auf der Schmelz (no. 156), as well as his design for a university library (no. 172). In many respects, his mature treatment of the motif came under the spell of Paul Wallot’s glazed Reichstag dome; cf. esp. the Imperial Crypt design of 1898 (no. 95; fig. 530,95,11). For a Baroque origin of this peculiar motif, see Robert W. Berger, “Antoine Le Pautre and the Motif of the Drum-without-the-Dome,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (1966): 165–80.

27. Gottfried Semper, *Über Baustile* (Zurich: Friedrich Schulthess, 1869). Reprinted in idem, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. Hans and Manfred Semper (Berlin: Spemann, 1884), 402: “Stil ist die Uebereinstimmung einer Kunsterscheinung mit ihrer Entstehungsgeschichte, mit allen Vorbedingungen und Umständen ihres Werdens.”

28. Humphrey (see note 2), 25, 27, 34, 48–49, 53, 58–59.

29. Humphrey (see note 2), 54–55.
30. See the historic photograph in Wegmann (see note 16), 60.
31. Semper (see note 17), 1: xxvii; 2: 199–224.
32. Salli Philipp, “Das Rococo und die allgemeine Prinzipien der Baustile,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 13 (1879): 278–80, 288–91, 298–301, 308–11; Karl Böhme, *Der Einfluß der Architektur auf Malerei und Plastik: Ein Buch für Freunde und Studierende der bildenden Kunst* (Dresden: Gilbers, 1882), esp. 10–12, 100–37 (I would like to thank Professor Kathy Brush, London, Ontario, for bringing the latter to my attention); and Hans Schliepmann, *Betrachtungen über Baukunst: Zum Verständniß moderner Architekturfragen* (Berlin: Polytechnische Buchhandlung A. Seydel, 1891), 60–69.
33. Max Fabiani, “Aus der Wagner Schule,” *Der Architekt* 1 (1895): 53–56. Cf. Wagner (see note 14), 27.
34. Semper (see note 17), 2: 263: “...kein Phantasiebild, sondern ein höchst realistisches Exemplar.”
35. Semper (see note 17), 2: 381–82: “Monumentalität erreicht die tektonische Struktur erst durch Emancipation von der struktiv-stofflichen Realistik, durch sinnbildliche Vergeistigung des Ausdrucks ihrer Bestimmung.” For the binding of column bases, see Semper (see note 17), 1: 17–20, 73–79, and more intensively 2: 380–81 n. 2. For the Egyptian orders, see Semper (see note 17), 1: 389–98.
36. Semper (see note 17), 2: 419, 445, respectively.
37. K. E. O. Fritsch, “Stilbetrachtungen,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 24 (1890): 417–24, 425–31, 434–40, esp. 423.
38. Georg Heuser, “Die Stabilrahmen, Strukturformen der Metall-Tektonik und ihre Nachbildung in anderem Rohstoffe,” *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* 49 (1884): 97–103. See also his (wholly different) version of 1886 published under the same title in *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 20, no. 13 (13 February 1886): 73–76. My claim here is that the appeal of industrial imagery traced so carefully by Reyner Banham represents the *second* stage of a larger overall phenomenon; see Reyner Banham, *A Concrete Atlantis: U.S. Industrial Building and European Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986).
39. Hermann Lotze, *Mikrokosmos: Ideen zur Naturgeschichte und Geschichte der Menschheit: Versuch einer Anthropologie*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1876–1880), 3: 328; Emil DuBois-Reymond, “Culturgeschichte und Naturwissenschaft,” *Deutsche Rundschau* 13 (1877): 214–50; idem, *Naturwissenschaft und bildende Kunst: Rede zur Feier des Leibnizschen Jahrestages in der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin am 3. Juli 1890* (Leipzig: Verlag von Weit & Comp., 1891), esp. 16–17.
40. Heuser, 1886 (see note 38), 74.
41. Semper (see note 17), 2: 250–52, 526–27.

42. Semper (see note 17), 2: 344–45.

43. Pierre Planat, “Promenades à l’Exposition universelle,” *La construction moderne* 4 (23 February 1889): 229–31, 242–44: “*Les gâteaux de Nanterre circulent au milieu de la jeunesse, que les parents amènent dès le bas âge, pour lui inculquer le sentiment des beautés réalistes de l’industrie moderne*” (pp. 229–30).

44. Albert Hofmann, “Die kunstgeschichtliche Stellung der Bauten für die Weltausstellung von 1889 in Paris,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 23, no. 90 (6 November 1889): 543–45, here 544. For the Dôme Central and the rest of the exhibition structures, see Louis Hautecoeur, *Histoire de l’architecture classique en France* (Paris: A. & J. Picard, 1943–1957), 7: 394–407. Several excellent, and rare, contemporary photographs of the interior were recently published in R. G. Wilson, “Challenge and Response: Americans and the Architecture of the 1889 Exposition,” in A. Blaugrund, ed., *Paris 1889: American Artists at the Universal Exposition* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in association with H. N. Abrams, 1989), 93–110. For reproductions of Dandin’s vivid color lithographs from contemporary popular coverage, see Musée Carnavalet, *L’illustration: Un siècle de la vie française*, exh. cat. (Paris: Musée Carnavalet, 1987), ill. 302–5.

45. Heinrich Hart, “Die realistische Bewegung: Ihr Ursprung, ihr Wesen, ihr Ziel,” *Kritisches Jahrbuch* 1 (1889): 40–56.

46. Most recently by Meredith Leslie Clausen, *Frantz Jourdain and the Samaritaine* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987), 79–95.

47. For Sédille’s portal, see M. Brincourt, “Exposition universelle de 1889: La céramique,” *La construction moderne* 4 (1888–1889): 409–12, 421–23, esp. 422; idem, “Les arts décoratifs à l’exposition universelle de 1889,” *Revue des arts décoratifs* 9 (1888–1889): 158–60, esp. 159; Edouard Gerspach, “La mosaïque décorative à l’exposition,” *Revue des arts décoratifs* 10 (1889–1890): 265–69.

48. Humphrey (see note 2), 18. Otto Wagner, *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (1889), in Graf (see note 12), 1: 73: “*Die Franzosen, welche in den letzten zwei Jahrhunderten unsere Meister in der Kunst waren, weisen uns auch jetzt wieder die richtigen Ziele... Ich finde dieses Durchdringen des Realismus nicht einmal bedauerlich... dieser Realismus in der Architektur auch recht sonderbare Blüten treiben kann... wie den Eiffelturm.*”

49. Paul Sédille, “L’architecture moderne à Vienne,” *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 2nd per., 30 (1884): 122–44, 460–67, 481–91. It was reprinted in *Bulletin mensuel de la société centrale des architectes*, 6th ser., 2 (1885): 196–222.

50. Sédille was certainly familiar with the Hofmuseen designs and claimed that Semper “wrote many interesting works, of which one, *Style*, has been translated into French” (Sédille, 1884 [see note 49], 131n). I am only aware of the translation of 1865 of Semper’s “Über die formelle Gesetzmäßigkeit des Schmuckes und dessen Bedeutung als Kunstsymbol” of 1856 by his col-

league at the Eidgenössisches Polytechnikum in Zurich, Paul Armand Challemeil-Lacour, for the *Revue des cours littéraires*. Sédille's fascination with architectural polychromy guaranteed his familiarity with Semper's theory; cf. his "Etude sur la renaissance de la polychromie monumentale en France," *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, n.s., 3 (1887): 5–16, with English translation, 17–25, esp. 21 (the French version of this essay was reprinted in *L'architecture* 1 [1888]: 13–16, 37–40, 97–99). An especially peculiar episode in the French reception of Semper was Louis Meslin's review of an utterly nonexistent book by Semper (*Gazette des beaux-arts*, 1st per., 3 [1859]: 117–23). Beyond creating out of whole cloth the fetching title *Vorlesungen über Architektur* (Lectures on architecture), Meslin even fabricated the book's date and location of publication (Dresden, 1859)! At any rate, Sédille, as staff member of the periodical, would have been familiar with Charles Blanc's "Grammaire des arts du dessin" and "Grammaire des arts décoratifs," which were serialized throughout the 1860s and early 1870s in the *Gazette*, and in the course of which positive mention was made of Semper's theory; cf. Charles Blanc, "Grammaire des arts du dessin . . .," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 1st per., 14 (1863): 405, and idem, "Grammaire des arts décoratifs . . .," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 2nd per., 4 (1870): 193–202. See also the warm reception given to Hans Semper's French distillation of his father's theory in Pierre Planat's "L'architecture moderne en Allemagne et en Autriche," *La construction moderne* 1 (1885–1886): 519–20. By the early 1890s and the opening of the Hofmuseen, Semper had clearly fallen from grace in France; cf. Louis Gonse, "Le nouveau palais des musées à Vienne," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 3rd per., 6 (1891): 392–403, esp. 395–96.

51. Charles du Bus, "Deux aspects de l'art urbain," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 4th per., 12 (1914): 368–90. For Sédille, cf. Robin D. Middleton, in *The Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, ed. Adolf K. Placzek (New York: Macmillan, 1982), 4: 20–21; Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1907), 30: 422. The best biographies of Sédille are Etienne Lucien, "La vie et les oeuvres de Paul Sédille," *L'architecture* 13 (1900): 305–8, 313–15; Charles Lucas, "Nécrologie: M. Paul Sédille," *La construction moderne* 15 (1900): 179–80; René François Armand Sully-Proudhomme, "Paul Sédille," *Revue de l'art ancien et moderne* 9 (1901): 77–84, 149–60. This was also released as a monograph entitled *Paul Sédille* (Paris: Librairie de l'art ancien et moderne, 1902).

52. Louis Gonse declared that "*Un des traits distinctifs de 1889 est la gaieté générale des aspects. La polychromie architecturale en est la caractéristique. . . . Je le répète, la note dominante de cet ensemble mouvementé et grandiose, c'est le coloris, un coloris ravissant, aquarellé de tons frais et délicats*" (One of the distinctive traits of 1889 is the general gaiety of the views. Architectural polychromy is characteristic of this. . . . I repeat, the dominant note of this lively and grandiose ensemble is coloration, a ravishing coloration in fresh, delicate tones), in his "Exposition universelle de 1889: Coup d'oeil avant l'ouverture," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 3rd per., 1 (1889): 353–58. Frantz Jourdain waxed more rhapsodic: "*La polychromie est étroitement liée à l'archi-*

*tecture, elle la complète, la détaille, l'explique, la caractérise... les stafs, les faïences, les laves émaillées, les briques teintées, les tuiles vernissées, les zincs laqués, les enduits colorés, les mosaïques chatoyantes, les verres flamboyants, les terres cuites de toutes natures, employés à profusion, jettent une étincelante poudre d'or sur ces palais féeriques, qui pétillent sous le soleil comme des vins de France et chantent le triomphe de la gaieté gauloise et du rationalisme sur une morose et antédiluvienne scolastique"* (Polychromy is closely linked to architecture: it completes, it details, it explains and characterizes architecture... the plaster ornament, the faïence, the enameled lava, tinted bricks, polished tiles, lacquered zinc, colored glasses, shimmering mosaics, flamboyant windows, terra-cotta of all types, used in abundance, these cast a scintillating gold powder over the iron palaces, which sparkle under the sun like the wines of France and sing the triumphs of French gaiety and rationalism to a morose and antediluvian scholasticism). The quotation is taken from his article "La décoration et le rationalisme architecturaux à l'exposition universelle," *Revue des arts décoratifs* 10 (1889): 33–38, here 36.

53. For contemporary French reviews, see Georges Lafenestre, "Les magasins du Printemps réédifiés par M. Paul Sédille," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 2nd per., 27 (1883): 239–53, and (still) the most comprehensive discussion, in *Encyclopédie d'architecture*, 3rd ser., 4 (1885): 1–35, pls. 860–61, 896–97, 899, 919, 927–28, 931, 941, 965, 981–82, 992, 997–98, 1004–6. A recent discussion of note is Bernard Marrey, *Les grands magasins des origines à 1939* (Paris: Librairie Picard, 1979), 97–109.

54. "Rapport présenté par la commission chargée d'examiner une proposition de M. Paul Sédille relative aux récompenses à décerner par la société centrale des architectes," *Bulletin mensuel de la société centrale des architectes* (1873): 72–76, esp. 74: "*L'architecture privée en est la prose, mais prose vivante, prose d'un réalisme puissant qui caractérise et retrace jour par jour la physionomie des individus et des générations qui passent.*"

55. Paul Sédille, "Rapport sur une brochure de M. Ruprich-Robert," *Bulletin mensuel de la société centrale des architectes*, 4th ser., 2 (1875): 43–44: "*Les tendances de notre Ecole doivent être en vue de l'Idéal contre le Réalisme. Le Réalisme est une manifestation d'en bas, l'Art est un rayonnement d'en haut.*"

56. On this debate, see Robin Middleton and David Watkin, *Neoclassical and Nineteenth Century Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1980), 367–75, esp. 372. On Viollet-le-Duc's realism, see John Summerson, "Viollet-le-Duc and the Rational Point of View," in idem, *Heavenly Mansions and Other Essays on Architecture* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), 135–58.

57. This was Bourgeois de Lagny's definition in "Salon de 1866," *Le moniteur des architectes*, n.s., 1 (1866): cols. 81–85, 97–102, 113–20, esp. 81–82: "*Le réalisme architectural (ou la construction avec l'absence d'art), n'a qu'un rôle très-secondaire à remplir dans le développement de l'art monumental; et cet art, quand il est digne de son nom, se compose des idéals*" (Architectural realism [or construction without art] has but a very secondary role to fill in the development of monumental art. This art, when worthy of its name, is composed of *ideals*).

58. "Toutes les réactions sont excessives: Après les gracieuses fantaisies du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, après les ambitions de l'époque suivante, après les fantaisies du romantisme, nous tombons dans l'excès contraire et nous voici devenus des réalistes, comme tant d'autres, nous complaisant à l'envi dans la recherche des procédés et dans l'accentuation exagérée des matériaux.... Mais, ce retour à la vérité, qui nous a été inspiré par l'étude mieux comprise des plus beaux monuments de toutes les époques, ce retour aux traditions, les plus essentielles de notre art, ne doit pas nous faire négliger son but: le Beau... La construction apparente ne doit donc être qu'un moyen et non le but," from Paul Sédille, "Récompenses à l'architecture privée," *Bulletin mensuel de la société centrale des architectes*, 6th ser., 2 (1885): 411–18, here 414–15. A portion of this lecture was published as: Paul Sédille, "Du rôle de la construction dans l'architecture," *Encyclopédie d'architecture*, 3rd ser., 4 (1885): 73–74. Cf. Hauteceur (see note 44), 413.

59. Paul Sédille, "L'architecture contemporaine et les industries d'art qui s'y rattachent," *Bulletin mensuel de la société centrale des architectes*, 6th ser., 2 (1885): 28–33, esp. 29.

60. Lucien Magne, "Union centrale des arts décoratifs: ix<sup>e</sup> exposition: Jury de l'invention, de la forme et du décor," *Encyclopédie d'architecture*, 3rd ser., 4 (1887–1888): 41–47, esp. 45: "Il faut que notre vieux bon sens français réagisse contre cette manie d'imitation qui charge notre siècle de toutes les dépouilles des siècles passés. L'archéologie doit nous apprendre non à faire des pastiches, mais à chercher dans les formes anciennes l'expression des besoins ou des idées des sociétés disparues, afin de satisfaire de même, par des oeuvres originales, aux idées et aux besoins de la société moderne."

61. Lucien Magne, *L'architecture française du siècle* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1889), 88, 102.

62. "Le pavillon des usines du Creusot," *Encyclopédie d'architecture*, 2nd ser., 8 (1879): 57–62, pls. 567–68, 578, 582, 602, 607. Cf. Louis Gonse's praise of Sédille's "emploi très-judicieux de la céramique comme élément de la décoration extérieure" (very judicious use of ceramic as an element of the exterior decoration), in "Coup d'oeil à vol d'oiseau sur l'exposition universelle," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 2nd per., 17 (1878): 481–92, esp. 489. See also Hauteceur's remarks on rationalism and classicism in Sédille's development (see note 44), 377, 413, 447.

63. Paul Sédille, 1887 (see note 50), 19. Several of Sédille's handsome polychromatic designs have recently been released in Dover's reprint of Pierre Chabat's *La brique et la terre cuite* (Paris: Morel, 1881) as *Victorian Brick and Terra-Cotta Architecture*, ed. Pierre Chabat (New York: Dover, 1989), esp. pls. 116, 124, 146–48.

64. "Villa de Boisrond près de Villeneuve-sur-Yonne." *Encyclopédie d'architecture*, 3rd ser., 3 (1884): 63–64, 93, pls. 945, 946, 951–52, 958, 964. Cf. Hauteceur (see note 44), 388–89.

65. "Villa rue Lafontaine 82, Auteuil," *Encyclopédie d'architecture*, 3rd ser., 1 (1882): 17–18, pls. 717, 723–24, 772–73, 790, 803.

66. Contag, "Der Neubau des 'Magasin au Printemps' in Paris," *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 20, no. 6 (20 January 1886): 33–34, and "Luftdruckgründung des Gebäudes des Magasin du Prin-

temps in Paris," *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 20, no. 59 (24 July 1886): 355-56.

67. Albert Hofmann, "Die französische Architektur der dritten Republik," *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 21 (1887): 1-2, 9-10, 26-27, 38-42, 101-2, 112-15, 126-27.

68. Sédille quoted in Hofmann (see note 67), 38, 127: "*Fortifié par la science moderne, il renouvelle les traditions du passé, en satisfaisant des besoins nouveaux... C'est par l'application sincère de procédés et d'éléments de constructions incessamment multipliés par la science, que notre art architecturale trouve l'occasion et le moyen de revivifier son inspiration. C'est ainsi en s'appliquant sans réserve à contenter des programmes nouveaux, en faisant appel à toutes les ressources de l'invention scientifique pour mettre en oeuvre sa pensée, que l'art architecturale dépouille peu à peu sa parure, plus conventionnelle que raisonnée, pour rejoindre sa beauté par la vérité des formes accusées et la logique de la décoration.*"

69. Humphrey (see note 2), 40, 67.

70. Reported by Charles Normand, "Congrès des architectes français, seizième session, année 1888," *Encyclopédie d'architecture*, 3rd ser., 4 (1887-1888): 73-80, esp. 79.

71. Sédille, 1884 (see note 49), 129.

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1. Drawing of an English parlor.  
From Robert Dohme, *Das englische Haus*  
(Braunschweig: Westermann, 1888), 59.  
Princeton, Princeton University Libraries.

Harry Francis Mallgrave

FROM REALISM TO *SACHLICHKEIT*:  
THE POLEMICS OF ARCHITECTURAL  
MODERNITY IN THE 1890S

*For the aesthete, art and its appreciation are an intellectual exercise, philosophical delight, consisting in tracing the beauty of the phenomenal world back to the idea and dissecting it into its conceptual kernels.*

– Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil*, 1860<sup>1</sup>

Semper's protestation notwithstanding, upheavals in architecture over the past three centuries have increasingly become analytical affairs, whereby the written word, provocative and at times inflated, often precedes and indeed preempts the artistic deed. The word, of course, has always been an integral part of the practice of architecture: first as a medium to expound its hermetic heritage, second as a means to promote the architect's past – or future – accomplishments. But more recently, in the past 150 years especially, the text has tended to be exploited for its revolutionary value, that is, for its lithe capacity to formulate a new agenda or promulgate the latest vision of the eternally new. Art has become more and more conceptual and the increasing reliance on this "dangerous supplement" that both fills in and at the same time fills up artistic activity has also given rise to a menacing hiatus that inevitably divides the ideal from the real, the conception from the creation.<sup>2</sup>

This essay will consider the polemics of architectural realism within the Austrian and German theory of the 1890s, in particular the conceptual sublimation of this concept in the last years of the decade into the modernist precept of *Sachlichkeit*. Given the numerous efforts that have been made in the last few years to decode the various aspects of the nineteenth-

century “phantasmagoria,” it should not be necessary to point out that traditional models of architectural modernity – which viewed the avant-garde experiments of the 1920s as the culmination of a tendency initiated by a few “pioneers” at the turn of the century – no longer have historical relevance. By considering the Germanic debate of the 1890s, I by no means wish to suggest that any sort of modernist “break” with a historicist ideology took place in this decade, nor will I attempt to connect what was concomitantly deemed the architectural “progress” of this period with related developments in the visual arts. The suggestion of a “break” has long lost its ideological appeal; and in the second case – the relationship of architectural realism to its artistic counterparts – some distance should be maintained, as this paper will argue.

Whereas the polemics concerning architectural realism did to some extent enter Austria and Germany via the still underappreciated *Nachleben* of the French artistic and literary debate, they were used to pursue somewhat different goals in their Germanic guise, particularly as the movement hit its stride by the late 1880s and 1890s. Moreover, the upheaval was promoted by a broadly based artistic front – a plea for change by the profession in general rather than avant-garde activity directed by a few talented “visionaries.” The temperate demeanor of German realism may in fact have fooled some historians seeking to assess its vigor. The attention that has been directed to the artistic novelties of Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, and the various Secessions in recent years has in most cases failed to discern that these movements were but manifestations of this more profound phenomenon – ephemeral offspring of realist tendencies that would culminate in the modernist polemics of the twentieth century.

Otto Wagner’s lengthy career is a particularly rewarding subject for study in this regard. From the liberal dream of the Ringstraße in the 1860s to the collapse of the Hapsburgs during World War I, it spanned the prickly contractions and physical breach of modernity. By virtue of those works situated between the Stadtbahn stations of the mid-1890s and the construction of his second villa in Hütteldorf (1912–1913), Wagner has been extolled as a pioneer of the Modern Movement; this has been accepted notwithstanding the fact that his unfulfilled patriotic designs during these years, as Renata Kassal-Mikula demonstrates in her essay in this volume, often marched in step with a very different – imperial and royal – drummer. His theory, as well, possessed its involutions. Against the profuse visual charm of his prac-

tice, his crusade for realism in the 1890s appeared particularly spare, radically at variance with his exuberant artistic instincts. Moreover, it is a theory that on closer scrutiny was not so far removed from what have in the past been described as “antimodern” tendencies.<sup>3</sup> In short the career and the theory are those of an architect schooled in the Baroque and historicist sensitivities of a Fischer von Erlach and Eduard van der Nüll but inflated with the possibilities and implications of the modern metropolis.<sup>4</sup>

Wagner’s evocation of realism throughout the decade of the 1890s was a constant of his theory. No doubt enthralled by the recent Universal Exposition of 1889 in Paris, he chose to recall realism’s French heritage in the Preface to *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u. ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Some projects, sketches, and executed buildings), even though he was heir to a long-standing German infatuation with the term. From the planning of the future metropolis to his definition of the architect, the polemics of realism dominated his architectural writings. In the competition report accompanying his master plan of 1893 for the city of Vienna, he noted that “our realism, our traffic, and modern technology imperiously demand the straight line,” that is, the straight traffic artery of Haussmann’s Paris, occasionally interrupted by monumental buildings, meaningful vistas, and public squares.<sup>5</sup> One year later, in his inaugural address to the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna, the term *realism* became the centerpiece of his revolutionary agenda.

Our living conditions and methods of construction must be fully and completely expressed if architecture is not to be reduced to a caricature. The realism of our time must pervade the developing work of art. It will not harm it, nor will any decline of art ensue as a consequence of it; rather it will breathe a new and pulsating life into forms, and in time conquer new fields that today are still devoid of art — for example, that of engineering.<sup>6</sup>

At the start of his chapter “Die Construction” in *Moderne Architektur*, 1896, Wagner reassured the reader that realism (the principle of utility) was indeed compatible with idealism (the principle of art). “Yet it is only to be supposed that utility and realism precede in order to prepare the deeds that art and idealism have to perform.”<sup>7</sup> Not only was realism sympathetic to and supportive of idealism, their happy union in the person of the architect could be “praised as the crowning glory of modern man.”<sup>8</sup>

The youthful appeal of Wagner's pedagogical and professional program of realism can be discerned in a two-page manifesto that appeared in the first issue of the Viennese journal *Der Architekt* in 1895 (fig. 2), entitled "Aus der Wagner-Schule" (From the Wagner school). Its author, the architect Max Fabiani, was then working in Wagner's office, and together with Joseph Olbrich and Josef Hoffmann he had participated in discussions of the Siebener Club, an informal coalition of artists that would form the nucleus of the Vienna Secession in 1897.<sup>9</sup> Fabiani hoisted the banner of realism and truth as the "battle cry" of the new art that was then taking shape. To be sure, he argued, there were points of contact and parallels between our cultural epoch and past ones, but what divided the past from the present were "the needs of modern life, our century's much expanded constructional knowledge, and the technology of wholly new materials."<sup>10</sup> In failing to address these novel and dissonant realities, architecture had lost its truth of form and its realist expression of materials and construction. Citing passages from Wagner's inaugural address to the Akademie der bildenden Künste, Fabiani reduced Wagner's realist agenda to a twofold striving: (1) to give form to the architectural idea in all of its salient constructional moments in such a way that the form will arise out of the limits of the tectonic task; (2) to give creative attention to practical demands. Fabiani's enthusiasm for Wagner's revolutionary program was so unequivocal that he even concluded his proclamation with an apology for the master's earlier historicist tendencies. Wagner's recent emulation of the "Empire style" of the first Napoleonic era, Fabiani explained, was but a temporary formula to stir public support and wean architecture away from the greater abuses of recent Baroque tendencies.

The tectonic basis of Fabiani's vision of realism harkens back to a prominent line in the Franco-Germanic debate that is discussed by J. Duncan Berry in his essay in this volume. It brings to mind not only the ethical urgency of Albert Hofmann's notion of *Objektivität* for modern European culture, induced by the audacious spans of the Galerie des Machines and the Eiffel Tower, but also Emile Zola's warning in *Le ventre de Paris* (The bowels of Paris), 1873, that "modern art, realism, naturalism, whatever you wish to call it" was fundamentally deleterious to the old art of Europe's past.<sup>11</sup> Expanding upon Victor Hugo's famous dictum "*ceci tuera cela*" (this will kill that), Zola's character points out, in a carriage ride through Paris, that the glittering glass-and-iron structures of Les Halles have vitiated the pitted

2. First page of Max Fabiani's manifesto on realism, "Aus der Wagner-Schule." From *Der Architekt* 1 (1895): 53. Santa Monica. The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.

Forum urbis, insula pacis.



Ansicht des Haupteinganges in die Halle. Architekt Josef Hoffmann.

## AUS DER WAGNER SCHULE

### Wagner-Schule.

Realismus, Wahrheit, war das Feldgeschrei; schärfere Naturbeobachtung, tiefere Erkenntnis ihrer Gesetze, schuf die Grundlage — einer heute im Erwachen begriffenen völlig neuen Kunst.

Dichter und Bildner, Maler und Musiker erkannten längst schon ihre neuen Ideale, fanden längst schon Fühlung mit dem Volke.

Die Kunst aber, die am tiefsten in das reale Lebensbedürfnis hineingreift, die uns auf Schritt und Tritt begleiten sollte, sucht heute noch vergeblich nach Verständnis und Volkstümlichkeit.

Die Architektur.

Als zu Beginn unseres Jahrhunderts die müden Formen der späten Barocke und Empirezeit nicht mehr genügten, griff rasch, und zwar überall, die Tendenz um sich, diese Formen durch Studien der Antike, Renaissance, kurz vergangener Kunstepochen — zu verjüngen.

Ein halbes Jahrhundert verging darüber.

Die Formenwelt ganzer Zeitalter (Stilrichtungen) wurde oft in wunderbarer Weise von Einzelnen beherrscht.

Es mag nothwendig gewesen sein.

Unterliegt es doch keinem Zweifel, dass zwischen unserer Culturepoche und mancher vergangenen viele Berührungspunkte und Parallele liegen; dass gar manches sich mit Vortheil herübernehmen lässt und verständlich sein muss.

Aber was dazwischen liegt, das sind die modernen Lebensbedürfnisse, die ganze höhere constructive Erkenntnis unseres Jahrhunderts, die Technologie ganz neuer Materialien.

Während der Studien und Stilexperimente eilte die Naturwissenschaft, das Können des Ingenieurs mit Riesenschritt voraus, wo früher das Zusammengehen selbstverständlich war, entstand eine Kluft, ein Abstand kaum zu überbrücken in der Zeit der Stilbefangenheit.

Der Architektur fehlte die Wahrheit der Form, der Realismus im Ausdruck des Materials und der Construction.

stone of Saint-Eustache to the point where the latter is but a tattered remnant of an archaic social order. What is more, the oracle written in Victor Baltard's utilitarian market is but "a timid revelation of the twentieth century."<sup>12</sup>

Zola's remarks, in turn, have their basis in the French literary and artistic debate on realism that came to fruition in the 1860s, a discussion that, as Robin Middleton and David Watkin have noted, even contained a brief architectural interlude.<sup>13</sup> The rationalist school of Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc seems to have been the object of the early scorn heaped upon "realist" architecture. The art critic Bourgeois de Lagny, writing for *Le moniteur des architectes* in 1866, sarcastically defined architectural realism as "construction with the absence of art."<sup>14</sup> César Daly, writing in the same year, faulted the rationalist school for attempting to transform the "architectural art" into an "industrial art" with its single-minded concern for science and utility.<sup>15</sup> The implications of this tendency — architecture's new start as "constructional engineering" — did not become fully evident until after 1900.<sup>16</sup>

Yet the prominence of this tectonic line of development in Fabiani's homage to realism also raises the first problematic aspect of Wagner's architectural oeuvre, namely, his attempt to reconcile his unrelenting polemic of realism with a practice that was largely historicist and symbolic in its principal motifs and arguably Semperian in its grounding in the theory of "dressing," or *Bekleidung*.

We might consider this problem first by turning to another essay that appeared in 1895, written by the influential director of the Berlin Kunstgewerbemuseum, Julius Lessing. He began by applauding many of the changes that had taken place in the applied arts over the past thirty years, in particular the rejuvenation of art brought about by the infusion of naturalistic motifs. Yet such advances, Lessing went on to argue, pulled up short of fully satisfying the needs of modern life. Whereas household utensils and the like might draw sustenance from shapes found in nature, their actual form should be determined by their appropriateness to purpose, material, and technology — alluding to the well-known Semperian triad. Lessing then posed two questions. "Is it conceivable," he asked, "that instead of a gradual development taking place from the historical tradition, these technical factors themselves will create completely new forms?" And "can we consider the recently invented, purely constructive form of a modern steel girder to be a creation similar to the Greek column, whose hallowed form has ruled

all periods of art up to today?"<sup>17</sup> He answered the latter question emphatically: certainly we can and we must. The modern steel girder was a product of structural calculation, like the Greek column or Gothic vault. Our new train stations and events such as the Universal Exposition in Paris of 1889 have made it apparent that iron construction has already succeeded to a fully independent artistic life. The beauty of a ship, which formerly resided in its intricate carving or gilding, is today seen in its purely functional lines. The same is true with modern vehicles. "Like it or not," he concluded,

our work has to be based on the soil of the practical life of our time; it has to create those forms that correspond to our needs, our technology, and our materials. If we fashion in this way a form of beauty in the manner of our scientific age, it will resemble neither the pious beauty of the Gothic nor the opulence of the Renaissance but will perhaps appear as the somewhat austere beauty of the late nineteenth century — and that is all anyone can ask of us.<sup>18</sup>

Written in the same year, Wagner's *Moderne Architektur* abounds with similar sentiments. Need, purpose, construction (later tempered with the measure of idealism) composed the primitive germs (*Urkeime*) of artistic life. Together they produced, as Wagner credited Semper for pointing out, "a kind of necessity" giving meaning to artistic creation.<sup>19</sup> Every architectural form arose out of construction and succeeded, with the architect's mediation, to artistic form. New purposes and new materials gave birth to new methods of construction, which in turn produced new forms. Thus "the architect always has to develop the art-form out of construction," even if this meant, as Wagner goes on to suggest, that he must also train himself to be an engineer!<sup>20</sup> Wagner preceded this statement with a criticism of Semper, who he felt lacked the courage to complete his theory in a consistent way and made do "with a symbolism of construction, instead of naming construction itself as the primitive cell of architecture."<sup>21</sup>

Semper, for his part, would have rejected such censure, even more this interpretation of his theory by both Lessing and Wagner (fig. 3). For the interpretation of the latter, he had even prepared a ready response, although it is difficult to decide if Semper would have assigned Wagner to that category of "materialists," who have "fettered the idea too much to the material . . . believing that the store of architectural forms is determined solely by the structural and material conditions," or to the category of "purists,



3. Portrait of Gottfried Semper, 1871.  
From Josef Bayer, "Gottfried Semper,"  
*Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 14 (1879):  
p. preceding 293.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.

schematists, and futurists,” who deny “some of the oldest traditions of architecture, which are fully consistent with the logic of building and with artistic creation in general and which have symbolic values that are older than history and cannot possibly be represented by something new.”<sup>22</sup> Indeed, even though Wagner’s *Moderne Architektur* was published three years after Alois Riegl’s famous introduction to *Stilfragen* (Questions of style), it sheds some light on why Riegl in 1893 felt it important (although later he did not) to distinguish between the symbolic underpinnings of Semper’s theory and its materialist interpretation by the latter-day “Semperians.”<sup>23</sup>

Yet Wagner’s polemic of realism in the 1890s, as Fabiani also noted, did not altogether collapse into such a hardheaded materialism. In addition to employing the idealism of art to temper realism, Wagner’s writings also gave emphasis to satisfying the practical needs of modern life, that is, the necessity to pursue “the simple, the practical, the – one might almost say – military approach” to design.<sup>24</sup> This approach pleaded for eliminating everything extravagant in the new urban style of living and for giving scrupulous attention to the attributes of convenience, comfort, health, and cleanliness. Indeed, the first-time reader of *Moderne Architektur* who is also cognizant of Wagner’s often luxurious architectural tapestries is surprised by the degree to which practicality constricts or squeezes out virtually all artistic concerns – beginning with the general pronouncement that modern creations “illustrate our own better, democratic, self-confident, ideal nature” and “thoroughly practical tendency”<sup>25</sup> and ending with the most meticulous list of practical suggestions for the layout of gardens, squares (and their paving patterns), traffic arteries, trains, and bridges; the cleaning of monuments and facades; and even prescriptions regarding the chamfer of streets and the control of bacteria in markets. Within the private domain of living quarters, Wagner again adhered to a relentless exaltation of practicality and comfort in the “greatest possible convenience and the greatest possible cleanliness”<sup>26</sup> and proffered innumerable suggestions as to how these goals might be achieved. All impractical, insufficiently hygienic, and uncomfortable furnishings were to be removed, furniture was to contain no sharp edges, and the occupant had to exercise the utmost restraint and care in the placement and hanging of pictures. If there is one artistic value to be salvaged in this litany of directives, it is that the appearance of a room had to harmonize with the new and informal “checkered breeches” of its inhabitants.<sup>27</sup>

Wagner's concern for practicality and comfort in this regard displays an affinity with a broader reform movement in architecture and the applied arts that attained maturity in the 1890s, although its roots go back at least three decades. Best known are the English Arts and Crafts reforms stemming from the teachings of John Ruskin and William Morris; less well known are the efforts of German and Austrian reformers to effect a fundamental change in public taste, which began with the advent of the "German Renaissance" style in the early 1870s.<sup>28</sup> Jacob Falke's installations of stylized rooms at the Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie in Vienna (founded in 1864 on the South Kensington model) was an early attempt to educate the public in the tasteful and practical appointment of a room. Public exhibitions, such as that held in Munich in 1876, further disseminated the gospel.

One of the first German books to deal exclusively with home furnishings was Georg Hirth's *Das deutsche Zimmer der Renaissance* (The German interior of the Renaissance), 1880. Hirth was a prominent Munich-based publisher of art books and a vigorous supporter of realism in German art. In 1892 he helped to finance the start of the Munich Secession, established to pursue the aims of realist art; four years later he did the same with *Jugend*, the journal that gave its name to the Jugendstil.<sup>29</sup> Both of these activities grew out of and embodied the ideals of realism. Hirth's efforts were further strengthened by two books that appeared in 1888 and sought to unify these new architectural tendencies – Cornelius Gurlitt's *Im Bürgerhaus* and Robert Dohme's *Das englische Haus*.

Gurlitt was one of the more interesting polymaths of his day. He had trained and practiced as an architect in the 1860s but in the next decade turned his attention to history (mainly the Baroque), eventually taking a position as an assistant curator at the Dresden Kunstgewerbemuseum. He was also a shrewd critic of contemporary developments and quite early called for an end to eclecticism.<sup>30</sup> His book of 1888 focused on the interior of the working-class dwelling and was directed to this new cultural niche. It was written during a stay in England although he did not go into the events taking place there. The term *Bürger* (related to the English word "burgher") in the title, together with its adjectival form *bürgerlich*, not only pertains to the middle class but also connotes the attributes of the plain, honest, simple, and unpretentious. The book itself was something of a primer on how to outfit the modern urban flat or dwelling. First and fore-

most there was the demand for artistic truth – truth in form and color, truth in an object’s material and means of fabrication, truth in satisfying its function, and truth in its ornamental content. In his historical analysis, Gurlitt credited the start of the German reform movement in the applied arts to the teachings of Semper and to the German Renaissance Movement of the 1870s. In the main body of his text he conducted a room-by-room, article-by-article description of the practically furnished dwelling and concluded with the plea that our art “be modern and *only* modern.”<sup>31</sup>

Dohme’s book had an even more dramatic impact. As Hermann Muthesius noted in the preface to his later work of the same title, Dohme was the first observer in Germany to present a clear and discerning report on English developments in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>32</sup> He was also responsible for bringing the German movement into line with its English counterpart. A custodian of art at the Prussian court of Friedrich III, Dohme began his work with a somewhat detailed historical sketch of the English dwelling in ancient and medieval times, tracing it down to the urgings of Augustus Welby Pugin and the Queen Anne Revival, led by Richard Norman Shaw. “The desirability of a house for the Englishman,” he notes, “resides neither in spaciousness and monumentality nor in wealth and luxury but in the harmony of the individual rooms, their skillful grouping –in short, in fulfilling that sum of demands that his practical sense and refined need of life have shown to be prerequisites for a comfortable existence” (fig. 1).<sup>33</sup> The English architect would happily give as much practical attention to the small and simple cottage as he would to the gentleman’s house, Dohme assured his readers. His study also contained an itemized survey of desirable domestic features, in which he gleaned several attributes of English interiors and exteriors that were to be emulated. These were the situation of the house; its various “aspects” and “prospects”; the need for privacy, light, and ventilation; and the emotional concerns for “cheerfulness,” “comfort,” “convenience,” and “fastidiousness” – the last four nouns he left in English in his German text. Dohme was also the first critic, to my knowledge, to suggest the functional simplicity and graceful lines of modern vehicles and ships as an appropriate analogy for domestic arrangements.

*Das englische Haus* appears to have been nothing short of a revelation to his countrymen. Additional studies on the domestic reforms of Morris, Shaw, M. H. Ballie Scott, and others proliferated in the first half of the 1890s, beginning with Peter Jessen’s articles for the *Kunstgewerbeblatt* in 1892.<sup>34</sup>

Walter Crane's designs were exhibited the following year in Berlin and again in 1895 in Vienna. His book of 1892, *The Claims of Decorative Art*, was translated into German in 1896. In the second half of the decade numerous journals, devoted at least in part to interior designs, were founded, among them *Pan* (1895), *Jugend* (1896), *Dekorative Kunst* (1897), *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* (1897), *Ver Sacrum* (1898), *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk* (1898), *Das Interior* (1900), and *Die Insel* (1900).

Since the appearance of Nikolaus Pevsner's trend-setting work of 1936, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, it has almost become axiomatic for English-speaking historians to draw a line from the German knowledge of English reforms in the 1890s, through the Art Nouveau movements of that decade, to the ideology of Modernism forming after the turn of the century. The problem with such a line is twofold. Not only does it ignore the realist foundation of these developments, it also overlooks another very important dimension of German discussion taking place in the 1890s – one that formed specifically in opposition to the Art Nouveau tendencies and one that connects much better with modernist ideology. As the second half of Wagner's argument suggests, knowledge of the English reforms in the German-speaking countries, combined with the momentum of German reforms already underway, helped to set up a second front to the realist debate that sought to update and translate the aging principles of realism into a modernist polemic. The two leaders of this new front, both widely read and discussed in their day, were Richard Streiter and Alfred Lichtwark.

Streiter was perhaps the most discerning and eloquent exponent of realism in the 1890s (fig. 4). He also forms an interesting counterpoint to Wagner, not only because he was an architect well versed in contemporary developments but also because in 1898 he published a highly comprehensive and discerning critique of Wagner's *Moderne Architektur* – a ninety-four page study entitled *Architektonische Zeitfragen* (Contemporary architectural questions). A native of Munich, Streiter worked between 1887 and 1893 in the Berlin office of Paul Wallot, the famed, but unfortunately now forgotten, architect of the German Reichstag. Streiter gave up practice in 1895 and returned to Munich for doctoral studies under Theodor Lipps, the popularizer of *Einfühlungstheorie* (the theory of empathy). One year later he published a dissertation on Carl Bötticher.<sup>35</sup> Streiter also published two essays in 1896 in which he first introduced the term *Sachlichkeit* in architectural parlance.<sup>36</sup>



4. Photograph of Richard Streiter.  
From *Richard Streiter: Ausgewählte Schriften zur Aesthetik und Kunst-Geschichte* (Munich: Delphin, 1913), frontispiece.  
New York, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Streiter's first essay was a review of German arts and crafts in light of recent English and American developments, and he found the German reform movement to be lacking. He traced the impetus to reform in Germany back to the Munich Exhibition of 1876, which he felt had severed the traditional cultural ties to France by promoting the German Renaissance style. Yet the stylistic masquerade that subsequently and chronologically borrowed its costumes from the sixteenth century down to the Biedermeier period, he argued, was intellectually and spiritually at evening's end. Modern life was too serious and replete with practical demands, he insisted. Germany was not to have a style it could claim as its own so long as Germans sat complacently on "stylish" or historically inspired pieces.

The tonic he proposed to invigorate Germany's artistic life and cure its propensity to equate decoration with art consisted of gleanings from the youthful English and American reform movements, chronicled for Streiter in two recent books: Dohme's study of the English dwelling and the two-volume American survey published by Appleton Press, *Artistic Houses: Being a Series of Interior Views of a Number of the Most Beautiful and Celebrated Homes in the United States*, 1883–1884. "We Germans cannot and should not imitate many characteristics of English and American dwellings," said Streiter, "because they are not suited to our circumstances, but we could learn much from them, above all and most generally to take better account of the demands for practicality, *Sachlichkeit*, comfort, and hygiene in our domestic furnishings."<sup>37</sup> The term *Sachlichkeit* in this instance implied the simple and straightforward solution of the problem, similar to Gurlitt's use of the term *bürgerlich*.

Streiter went on in his argument to mirror closely the polemics of Wagner's *Moderne Architektur*. Again feeling compelled to address the fear that a greater emphasis on *Sachlichkeit* would suppress the artistic element, Streiter responded that the sobriety of earlier *sachliche* tendencies, such as the late Neoclassical style of around 1800, arose from the desire to emulate "classical repose," whereas the more recent efforts of English and American architects demonstrated "that *Sachlichkeit*, practicality, and artistic perfection are not mutually exclusive."<sup>38</sup> In addition to the new emphasis on the practical and the *Sachliche*, the Germans could learn from abroad to take into account the technical demands of the machine for simple, smooth, and precise forms. A third mediating force in this new art was the naturalist movement in design, represented by Walter Crane and Hermann Obrist,

among others. “What we can do and should do is this,” Streiter concludes, “consider first and foremost present living conditions, locality, material and technology, functionality, and quality. Then most surely and most naturally something independent will develop out of the stylistic confusion that we ardently hope will be the style of our time.”<sup>39</sup>

In his second essay of 1896, which appeared in the journal *Pan*, Streiter brought together these concerns for a practical and *sachliche* architecture and affixed them to the inspirational gonfalon of *realism*. Interestingly, Streiter revealed that he arrived at this term almost by default. *Naturalism*, a word which in literary and artistic circles was often used synonymously with realism, he found wanting for architecture since this art was not an imitative one. Instead, he preferred the term *realism*, which he defined as “the most extensive consideration of the real conditions in the creation of a building and the most perfect fulfillment of the requirements of functionality, comfort, health – in a word, *Sachlichkeit*.”<sup>40</sup> Yet this was not all. Just as realism in poetry posited the connection of a poem’s character with its milieu, so realism in architecture must take into account the characteristics of the local building materials, the landscape, and the historical attributes of the region. Streiter’s example of someone who practiced realism in 1896 was the Bavarian architect Gabriel von Seidl, “the most sensitive and consistent representative of the Munich tendency toward unpretentious architecture and applied arts.”<sup>41</sup> Such a selection was certainly not illogical. Seidl had been active with Georg Hirth in the German reform movement as far back as the Munich Exhibition of 1876; his buildings were noted for the plainness of their facades, their constructional truth, and for their vernacular (as opposed to academic) motifs. His design for the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum (fig. 5), under construction in 1896 and somewhat fussier than typical for him with its German Renaissance detailing, has been described by Pevsner as “epoch-making in the field of museums of applied art... for here sculpture, some painting, and all the applied arts are exhibited together – incidentally chronologically, from style to style.”<sup>42</sup>

Streiter reiterated and expanded his discussion of realism in his most important publication, *Architektonische Zeitfragen* (Contemporary architectural questions), 1898, which carried the subtitle, “A collection and examination of different views with particular regard to Otto Wagner’s *Moderne Architektur*.” Nearly every issue raised in Wagner’s text was discussed at length by Streiter, and his analysis – at times incisive, at other times less



forthcoming — revealed the weight and range of theoretical concerns coalescing in the concurrent architectural debate. Streiter, for instance, drew a parallel between Wagner’s polemic and the German “stylistic experiments” of earlier in the century — those of Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Friedrich Gärtner, Leo von Klenze, Heinrich Hübsch, and Robert Wiegmann. He characterized this earlier period as locked in a kind of Hegelian struggle or “dialectic” in its effort to find a proper synthesis of classical and medieval principles.<sup>43</sup> The aesthetic theorists of the 1890s were also brought into the discussion, among them Heinrich Wölfflin, Adolf Göller, August Schmarsow, and Alois Riegl. Thus it is not surprising that Streiter’s review of Wagner’s book was itself the subject of a review in *Der Architekt*.<sup>44</sup>

Streiter began his analysis by upholding his earlier definition of realism as a truthful, practical, and *sachliche* compliance with the object’s purpose, and he traced its architectural roots back to the teachings of Jean-Louis Cordemoy and Marc-Antoine Laugier, later to Heinrich Hübsch, and then to the French literary and artistic debate of the 1860s. The last movement, in his opinion, was the first modern attempt to face up to the political, economic, and cultural implications of industrialization and address the “scientific tendency of the time,” the “real living conditions of man.”<sup>45</sup> What is also fascinating in Streiter’s analysis is his regard for realism as an older and more substantial rationalist alternative to incipient Art Nouveau tendencies. He went so far as to couple the appearance of “symbolism and mysticism” in painting and literature with the “mannerism and affectation,” “thoughtless profundity,” and “dilettantish arrogance” of the latest (presumably Jugendstil) phase of artistic development. Streiter described this new tendency as little more than a “reactionary event” of short duration, posing no serious threat to the more profound and epochal current of artistic realism.<sup>46</sup>

Although Streiter was in general agreement with the practical side of Wagner’s realist agenda and his “extremely progressive program,” he was not without a few important reservations. His basic complaint centered around Wagner’s attempt to develop the art-form exclusively out of the construction, or work-form, an attempt that Streiter felt went too far in seeking to make a virtue out of necessity. He termed such a formula “tectonic realism.” Rejecting at the same time Dohme’s suggestion that the designer draw inspiration from the austerity and elegance of modern vehicles and ships, Streiter argued, in essence, that Wagner’s “Achilles’ heel” was his adher-

5. Gabriel von Seidl, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich, 1894–1898. From Gabriel von Seidl, ed., *Der Neubau des Bayerischen Nationalmuseums in München* (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1902), pl. 2. Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.

ence to a program that was too utilitarian in its conception, one that relied too heavily on “straightforward *Sachlichkeit*” as an artistic principle. This is an enormously instructive criticism for 1898, and Streiter devoted over sixty pages to developing this issue on two levels.

First and most generally there was Wagner’s political and social naïveté, his enthusiasm for the democratic leveling of values in modern society, which effectively reduced art to a fashion. Wagner’s failing in this regard was his unfamiliarity with the developments of the English – not to mention the socialists Morris and Crane – who had battled these tendencies, Streiter insisted, with their emphasis on artistic individuality. The English had also shown that in the quest for functional, elegant forms and a modern style, one need not totally renounce the vernacular tradition. The basis of this remark was the second part of Streiter’s earlier definition of realism, which took account of the traditional characteristics of the local milieu – its materials, landscape, and historical conventions. He held up Richard Norman Shaw’s architecture as exemplary in this regard.

The second and more damaging level of Streiter’s criticism of tectonic realism was aimed at the aesthetic underpinnings of Wagner’s system. Streiter had concluded his dissertation on Bötticher’s theory two years earlier with the criticism that the latter’s conceptual framework had, in effect, been overtaken by more recent conceptual developments in psychological aesthetics. The same reproach was brought against Wagner’s theory, in particular his use of Bötticher’s conceptual duality of work-form (*Werkform*) and art-form (*Kunstform*). Not only did the new aesthetics, taking its starting point in the subjective theory of empathy, no longer support making such a distinction, but Wagner’s critical premise – his denunciation of Semper for clinging to a symbolism of construction – was itself based on a misreading of Semper. Streiter reminded the reader of Riegl’s distinction between Semper’s theory and the materialist excesses of the “Semperians” and aptly placed Wagner in the latter category. On the more daunting question of how new artistic forms were to develop out of construction – that is, how the new materials and new technologies in themselves could create a new style – Streiter was adamant in opposing Wagner’s formula, first citing Wölfflin’s belief in the primacy of the collective “sense of form” (*Formgefühl*) over technological forces and then citing Semper’s classification of iron as essentially a tectonic or “timber” motif, hence not new in its structural possibilities.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, he argued, all of the German efforts to produce a

new style simply out of iron, beginning with Bötticher's advocacy of the material in 1846 and continuing down to the histrionics of Georg Heuser in the 1880s, had resulted in failure.<sup>48</sup> Even Otto Wagner, Streiter argued, did not openly face up to the realities of iron in his designs but still clung to a symbolic dressing of the structure.

Yet Streiter's realism at this point actually turned on his vernacular sentiments. After brilliantly reducing the problem of creating a new style to understanding and implementing the theoretical implications of Wölfflin's "sense of form" and Schmarsow's "sense of space" (*Raumgefühl*), Streiter was unable to sustain the revolutionary thrust of his analysis. On the one hand, he sought to find a middle path by arguing that the new style would emerge not from the new materials and technology but rather from the effect that larger spans and spaces would have on the collective sense of form. On the other hand – again following Semper and Wölfflin – he dropped back and championed the important role that the applied arts, detailing, decoration, and local characteristics would play in this regard. Though he conceded the impending victory of the natural sciences over historical and antiquarian interests; though he acknowledged the "unbridgeable cleft" separating the old world from the Darwinian perspective of the new; though he posited realism as the healthy alternative to "an unreal, misleading, and untimely idealism," to the "false pathos and hollow bombast" of eclecticism, Streiter still searched for a connection with the forms and values of the past. Rearing back from the precipice of Wagner's chaste and sanitized image of the modern metropolis, he asked in dismay,

Should we not fear a frightful multiplication of those often outrageous sins that we have to some extent learned to control by judiciously accommodating the existing context, if Wagner's program for an academic, straight-line, leveling, homogeneous, modern, and metropolitan architecture, relying on only a few grand and superficial effects, would everywhere find acceptance and implementation?<sup>49</sup>

Streiter, of course, was not alone in his ambivalence in coming to terms with the new and unknown in this period of dramatic artistic upheaval, but his use of the cultural and vernacular tradition as a hedge against a transformation too functionalist or too *sachlich* in its possibilities in essence became a leitmotif of the new movement. He was soon joined in his efforts

by Alfred Lichtwark, the prominent critic and museum director.

Lichtwark had begun his scholarly career in 1884 as an assistant librarian at the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin, under the directorship of Julius Lessing. Two years later he returned to his native Hamburg to become director of the Kunsthalle, which he soon built into one of the leading art museums in Germany, notably with purchases of Realist and Impressionist paintings by Gustave Courbet, Edouard Manet, and Claude Monet. In the mid-1890s Lichtwark became one of the intellectual forces behind the journal *Pan*. In 1896 he prepared an article for *Pan* on realist architecture, which he held back from publication, the editor noted, so that Streiter's article with similar sentiments might appear. The following year Lichtwark did publish an article in *Pan* entitled "Realistische Architektur," although certainly in a modified form, as it was largely concerned with the recent opening of Alfred Messel's great cathedral to commerce in Berlin, the Wertheim Department Store (figs. 6, 7).

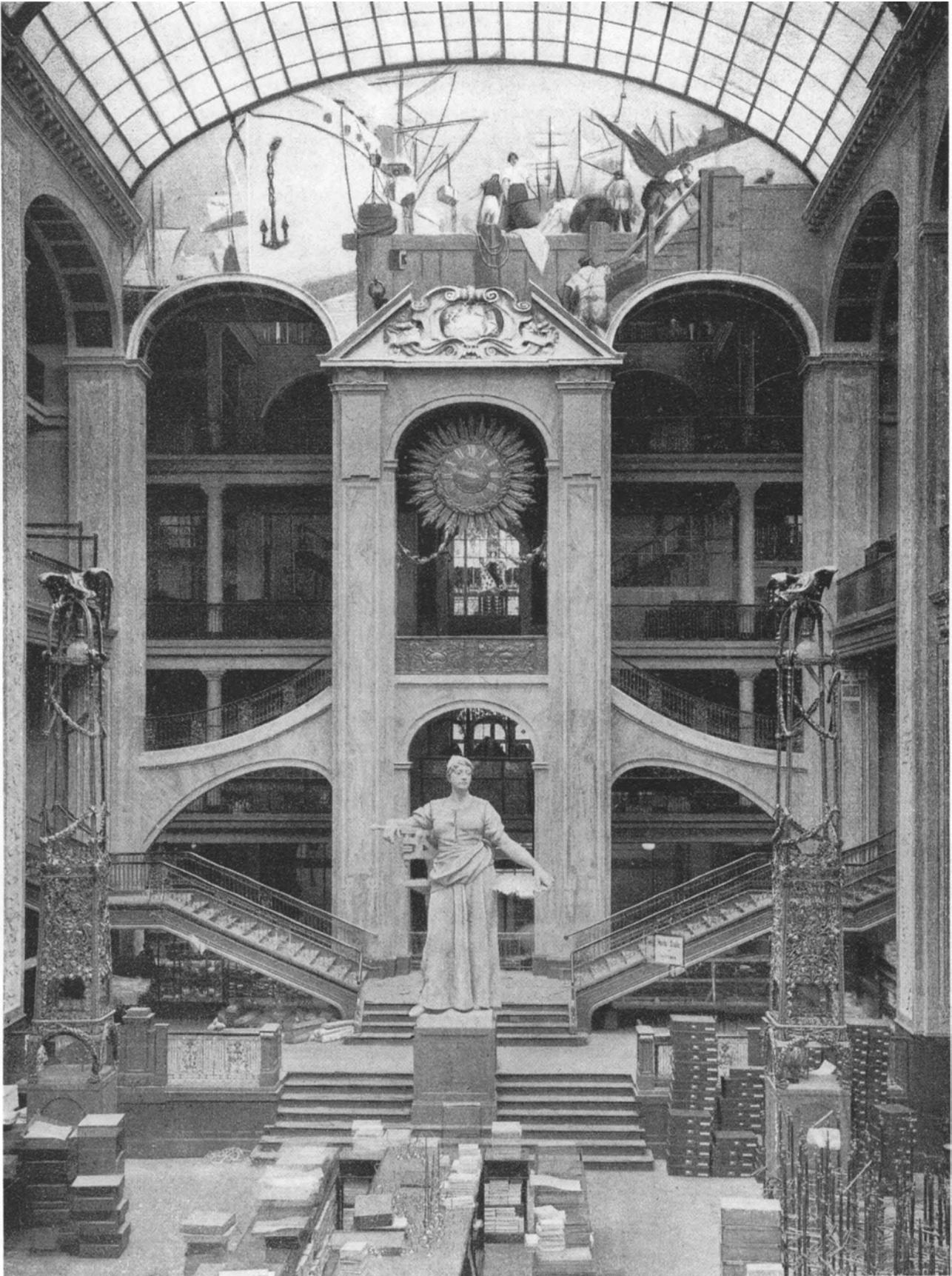
Lichtwark viewed Messel's work — its smooth gothicizing facade and the simple satisfaction of every need — as an event of major importance to German architecture, the arrival of the viewpoint of realism. "And no doubt even the layperson has had the feeling that a new architectural organism has arisen, whose serenity and strength expresses the intention to create a realist architecture, and when he has later considered it in relation to other buildings, he may for the first time become aware that architecture is not merely columns, beams, and ornament."<sup>50</sup> Lichtwark viewed architectural realism, which, as he pointed out, had a generation of development in painting, sculpture, and literature, as the modern departure from the twin scourges of "academicism" and "romanticism": the former with its basis in historical styles and emphasis on the regular ordering of the facade, the latter with its "painterly" preference for towers, gables, bay windows, mansards, and superfluous plastic decoration. Whereas academicism reversed the realist canon of designing from the inside out, romanticism failed to understand "that the painterly effect for which we consciously or unconsciously strive is not achieved by the romantic dissipation of masses into a noisy grouping of small, upward-striving forms, and not at all by plastic articulation, but simply by an emphasis on mass and color."<sup>51</sup> With its liberating effect and breath of creative spirit, Wertheim had opened many eyes; a new formula had been put forth, one not French, English, or American but specifically German in its conception.<sup>52</sup>

Over the next two years Lichtwark developed his theme of realism in various essays, which in 1899 were assembled in the book *Palastfenster und Flügeltür* (Palace windows and French doors). Central to his conception was the championing of *bürgerliche* architecture, which, as previously remarked, evokes the middle class, as well as the plain, the honest, and the unpretentious. The architect, Lichtwark argued, should concern himself less with the Pitti Palace and the Louvre and more with the needs and forms of the plain *bürgerliche* dwelling. “That he learn to love, feel, and understand the beauty of these forms of our architecture is more important for him and for German art than that he learn all about the Greek temple or the Florentine palace.”<sup>53</sup> Lichtwark called for a return to the virtues and local color of the vernacular tradition in housing. “Why have the English been able to keep alive and develop an indigenous way of building based on the needs of each new generation, and not we?”<sup>54</sup> Yet Lichtwark sought to emulate not the attributes of the English cottage, or what he deplored as the “*Studiostil*” (which would only produce a “new masquerade”), but the local and regional character of rural German architecture, conditioned by the climate, living habits, and landscape. Monumentality in architecture was not determined by the size of the structure or the sophistication of its detailing but rather by the character exhibited by native materials and building techniques, the atmosphere or feeling of “Germanness” that had evolved over generations. Above all, the exterior of a building should have simple masses and a strong sense of color (figuratively and literally): large copper or red tile roofs (to be preferred over the subdued tone of slate), plain brick walls, brightly painted shutters, flower boxes, and window frames.

Lichtwark also placed great importance on the interior of the dwelling and the solution of its practical and *sachliche* needs. Preeminent was the functional shape and illumination of the room, specifically the location and size of windows and doors. With the “tyranny of the facade” now surmounted, the window becomes “a living being among lifeless things” with the power to make a room appear large or small, comfortable or mean, artistic or banal. He favored much larger openings to admit as much light as possible; elimination of heavy draperies and bric-a-brac, which were hard to keep free of dust; and employment of fewer interior doors to facilitate the room layout. Above all, the room should have simple and comfortable furnishings. In this last regard, Lichtwark upheld, as a starting point for contemporary furniture design, the Biedermeier period over Jugendstil



6. Alfred Messel,  
Wertheim Department Store, Berlin, 1896.  
From *Berliner Architekturwelt* 1 (1899): fig. 7.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.
7. Alfred Messel,  
interior of the Wertheim Department Store,  
Berlin, 1896.  
From *Berliner Architekturwelt* 1 (1899): fig. 9.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.



tendencies (museum pieces), because the former imparted a sturdiness and simplicity of line.<sup>55</sup> That Lichtwark's realist credo eventually settled on the notion of the *Sachliche* is made manifest by the fact that in republishing the essay "Realistische Architektur" in 1899, he changed its title to "Sachliche Baukunst." His preference for the Germanic term *Baukunst* (literally, the art of building) over the term *Architektur* itself bears witness to another characteristic of the realist movement.

The efforts by Lichtwark and Streiter to incorporate the polemics of realism within the more stolid concept of a vernacular *Sachlichkeit* also point to the wide range of views that were then coming together to define the ethos of modern architecture. Other critics witnessing these events were certainly not unaware of the tendentious and protean nature of the debate. The architect and historian Fritz Schumacher, for instance, happily conceded in 1898 in his essay "Stil und Mode" (Style and fashion) that this "return to the nature of practical purpose, to the nature of the material, to the nature of the organic world of forms, and to the nature of the national character" constituted "the achievement of an epoch of *realist* architecture," but at the same time he saw realism (inclusive of the Art Nouveau tendencies of Henry van de Velde) as an attitude prone to produce fashion, rather than a style.<sup>56</sup> The last concept, he felt, promoted a consistency of form, whereas the "thousand oddities" emanating from the artistic circles of Morris, the showroom of Siegfried Bing, and their German counterparts could be characterized only by their individuality and changing forms. Indeed, he noted that this wide array of formal solutions – the artist's struggle to address formally and uniquely each problem on a case-by-case basis – might be the particular inheritance of this epoch of realism. He was opposed in this view by no less an individualist than Henry van de Velde, who in an essay in 1901 argued that "realism and naturalism," far from being simply the most recent dethronement of today's gods, were the very wellsprings for the new union of art and life, possessing the meaning for the artist of "finding one's way back to life."<sup>57</sup>

Yet the divergent departure points of the theories of Schumacher, Lichtwark, van de Velde, and Wagner – all of whom in some measure sought sustenance from the ethical fountainhead of realism – in themselves underscore a significant problem nagging any historical investigation of modernity. The ideological drift to the "right" that we have been observing – from Wagner's urbane tectonic realism to Streiter's attempted mediation of the

crafts and the zeitgeist to Lichtwark's vernacular realism – all but carries us over to the antimodern polemics of the 1890s, perhaps best represented in Julius Langbehn's *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Rembrandt as educator) of 1891. The latter work was not only the most widely read commentary on the arts of the 1890s but also the book that avowed itself ready to take on and destroy the realist heritage of Zola. The substance of Langbehn's weltanschauung, in the words of one recent critic, "was negative and nostalgic. He rejected contemporary culture, sneered at reason and feared science, and the temper of his criticism evinced a desire not so much for the reform as for the annihilation of modern society. This rejection of modernity, and of the rational-scientific tradition which he identified with it, was the pervasive element of the book."<sup>58</sup> Langbehn, in effect, represented the undercurrent to the "modern" tide of German society with his vision of the ennobling power of Germanic, and only Germanic, art. The multiple targets of his scorn were liberalism, positivism, materialism, progress, and, of course, realism – all ideals Wagner held sacred. Although Langbehn's determined effort to counter the cosmopolitan and metropolitan tendencies of modernity would find a sizable number of followers in the 1920s and 1930s (among them, the National Socialists), he must be viewed for our purposes from the perspective of the 1890s. He not only maintained a correspondence with Lichtwark on the need to sever German art from its cultural dependence on classicism and the Renaissance<sup>59</sup> but also, like Lichtwark, pleaded for a local and monumental art that reflected the simple and moral nature of the German spirit. "The old artists had style not because they sought it but because they themselves had personality. One always strives today to be 'stylistically correct,' yet one should strive to be 'imbued with style.'"<sup>60</sup>

If Langbehn represented one antimodern extreme in the realist debate of the 1890s, a more moderate position was forged by Hermann Muthesius, the true architectural heir to the realist discussions of Streiter, Lichtwark, and Wagner. Even though much attention has been devoted to Muthesius and his championing of English domestic ideals, this dimension of his argument was but one aspect of the larger ideological struggle taking place in the German-speaking countries between 1896 and 1902. In his highly influential essay of 1901, "Neues Ornament und neue Kunst" (New ornament and new art),<sup>61</sup> Muthesius not only codified the implicit hostility of the exponents of realism toward Jugendstil tendencies but also formulated much of the architectural program that would become assimilated into the Deutscher

Werkbund. His theory at this stage rested on three (now familiar) realist demands. The first was the strict concern for the practical aspects of modern life, a viewpoint whose “*sachliche* progress” had for too long been impeded by the obsession with “style making.” Second was a plea for the abstention from all ornamental and linear extravagance. “We live today in a time of *bürgerliche* ideals,” he noted, and therefore “we need a *bürgerliche* art, and it should be as simple, sensible, and unaffected as ourselves. How our own period of the Biedermeier has already prepared it!”<sup>62</sup> Third, full attention was to be given to the sanitary or health-serving aspects of our interiors, that is, the need for light and air, bodily comfort, care of the body, the elimination of dust, and the use of simple furniture.

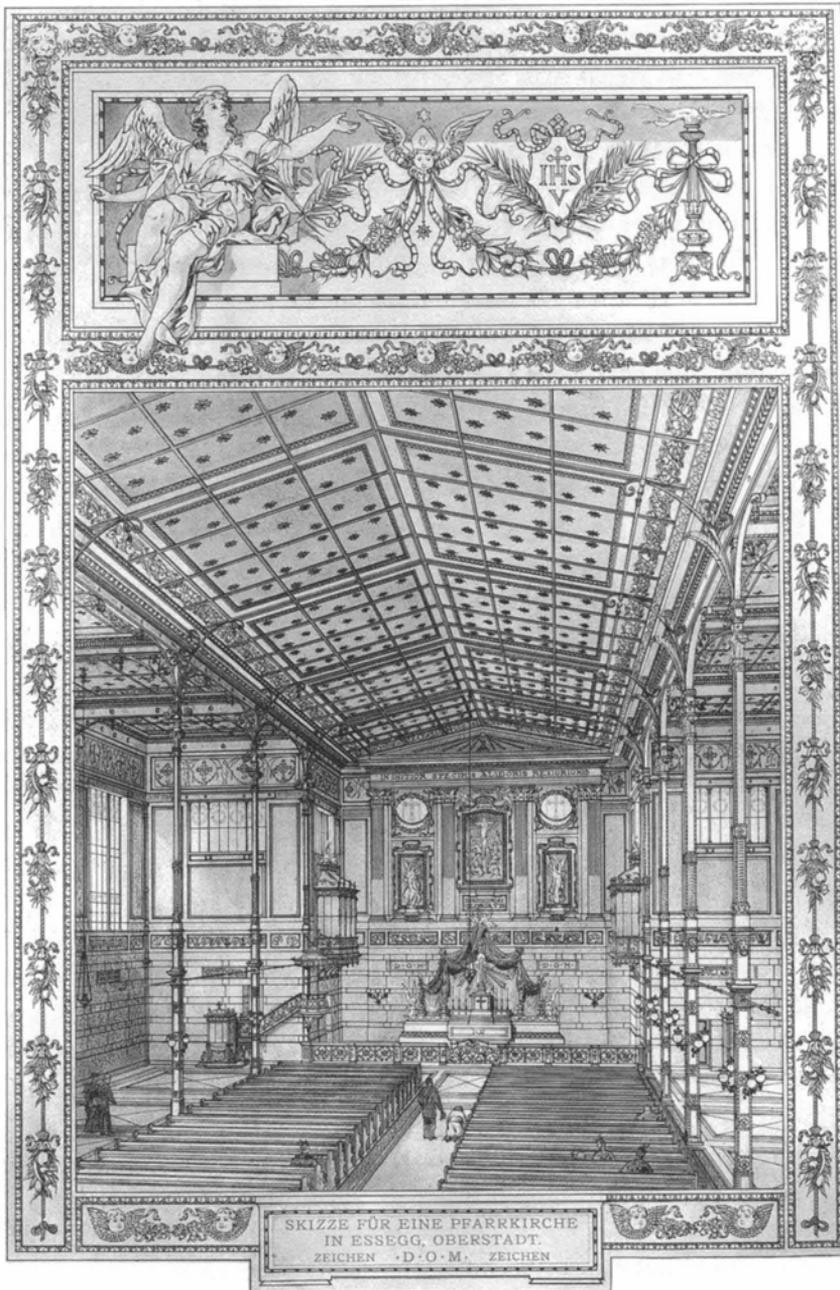
Muthesius expanded upon this list in 1902 with his manifesto *Stilarchitektur und Baukunst* (Style-architecture and the building-art), which in effect melded the vernacular realism of Lichtwark with the tectonic realism of Wagner. The inexorable lot of the new century was to bring to fruition the intellectual labors of the nineteenth century, that is, “to replace the classical ideal of beauty with a new ideal corresponding to the Nordic-Germanic spirit.”<sup>63</sup> In the title of the book he played on the unsavory association of architecture with *Stilarchitektur*, or period styles, and insisted that the use of the terms *style* and *architecture* be discontinued in favor of the older Germanic term *Baukunst*.<sup>64</sup> In addition to his plea for a return to the simplicity and naturalness of “our *bürgerliche* building-art,”<sup>65</sup> however, there was the complementary demand for a utilitarian or “strict, one might say, scientific *Sachlichkeit*”<sup>66</sup> to accommodate existing technologies and resolve the pressing social needs of the time. The realist agenda that had been evolving over three decades was now codified by Muthesius under the notion of *Sachlichkeit*, signifying the practical and straightforward solution to the task, taking into account the material and technical limitations. In essence, one very important script for the Modern Movement was now written and edited, even if Muthesius at heart was closer to Lichtwark’s realist vision than to Wagner’s.

But if Muthesius brings to a head the demands of three or four decades of the realist debate, how does his conflation of tendencies relate to Wagner’s theory? How, in turn, is the latter’s polemic affected by Muthesius’s consolidation? Wagner’s so-called tectonic realism and his emphasis on practical need certainly stood at the forefront of the realist movement, yet his academic standing and his championing of the straight line and symmetry

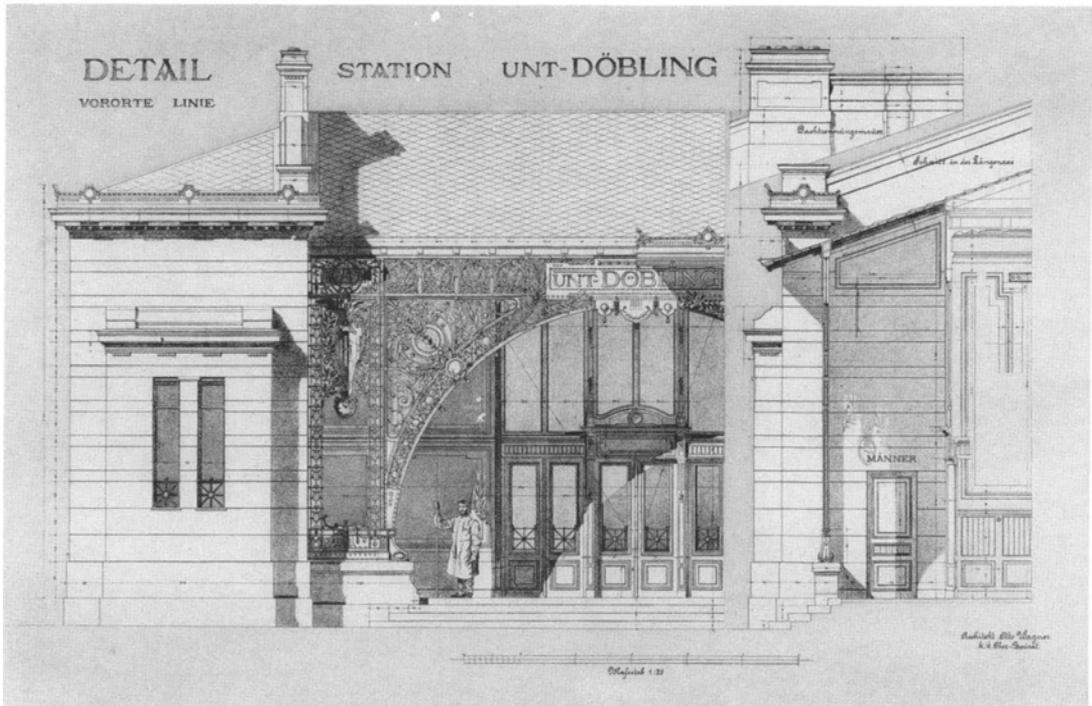
would be disparaged by most critics after 1900. Certainly more important for our study, however, is Wagner's relationship with the Vienna Secession and the German Jugendstil. Streiter, Lichtwark, and Muthesius were in agreement in their antagonism toward these recent tendencies. Streiter, as we saw earlier, belittled the Jugendstil as a short-lived diversion from the real task at hand. Lichtwark ventured to Darmstadt around 1900 to evaluate the results, and although he was impressed with the vitality of the new forms, he found the ornament and detailing "unsuccessful and tasteless."<sup>67</sup> Muthesius most effectively crystallized the opposition to the "*Decadenz und dem Fin-de-siècle*" by describing Art Nouveau as radically opposed to the "original, democratic tendency of the time."<sup>68</sup>

Wagner's position, however, was more complex. In 1899 he joined the Vienna Secession, and much of his work during the second half of the 1890s, done in collaboration with Joseph Olbrich, Josef Hoffmann, Max Fabiani, Jože Plečnik, Marcel Kammerer, and Otto Schönthal, certainly reflected the new formal tendencies. The foliated wrought iron capitals in Wagner's project of 1893 for the parish church at Esseg suggest his early familiarity with the work of Victor Horta, if not his French sources (fig. 8). This theme was carried through many of Wagner's Stadtbahn stations, such as the design for the foliated screen wall for the station at Unter-Döbling (executed according to a simplified design, fig. 9). Moreover, the Secession was certainly instrumental in his moving away from his so-called Empire phase (Napoleon I); in 1898 he replaced the paneled facade and floral vignettes at Linke Wienzeile 40 (fig. 10) with smooth, brilliantly polychrome majolica tiles (fig. 11). The question arises as to the extent to which he did control the design of these works or how far he was pushed in this regard by his talented coterie of draftsmen? To this youthful influence and its boost to his artistic capacity must be added the artistic ambition that forcefully propelled Wagner's career since the beginning of the 1880s. He was an architect determined to keep abreast of every development in his field and to remain at the forefront of new trends.

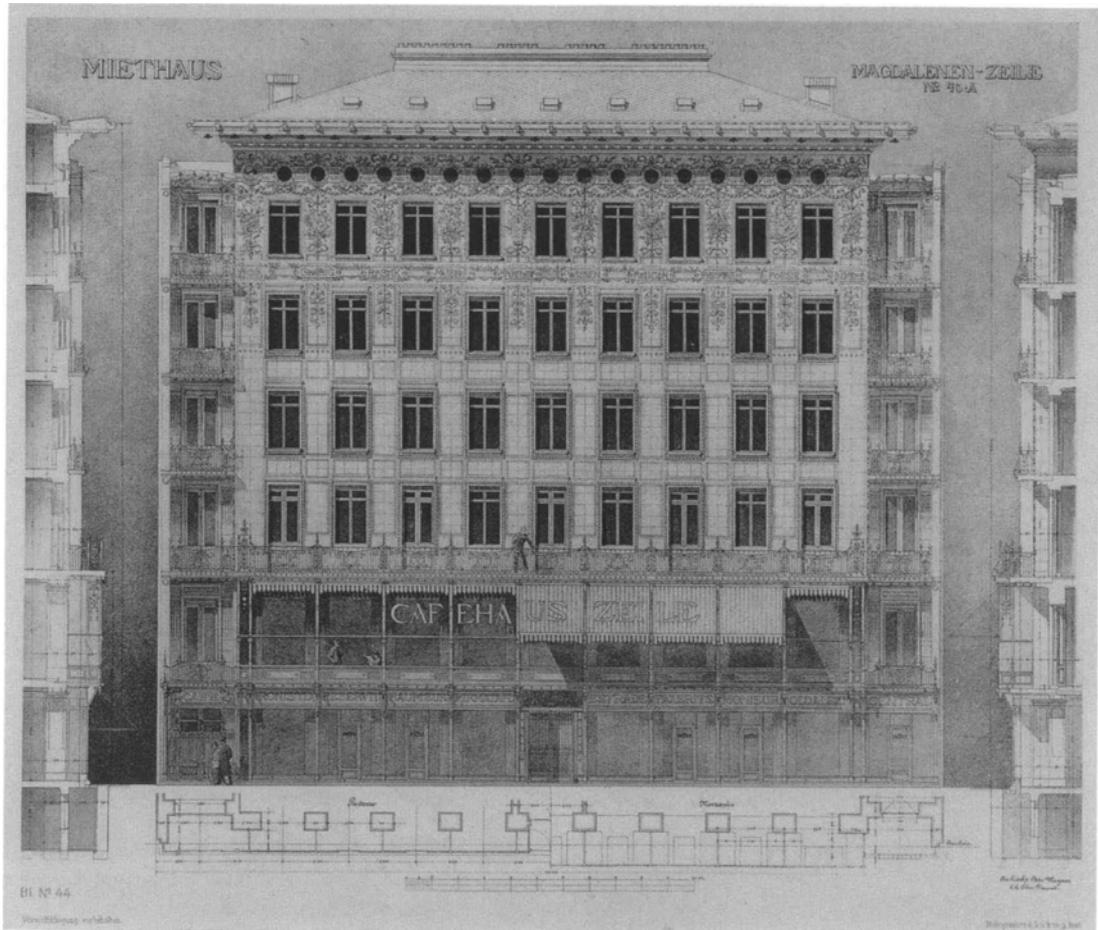
If Wagner in the late 1890s did not recognize or want to recognize the inconsistency of his polemic of tectonic realism with the symbolic and purely ornamental basis of many of his Secessionist and historicist designs, it is interesting that others did. Streiter, for instance, chided Wagner for insisting that artistic forms can only evolve out of the construction, while at the same time practicing a symbolic architecture that was not substan-



8. Otto Wagner,  
interior of Catholic parish church, Esseg,  
Slavonia, 1893.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

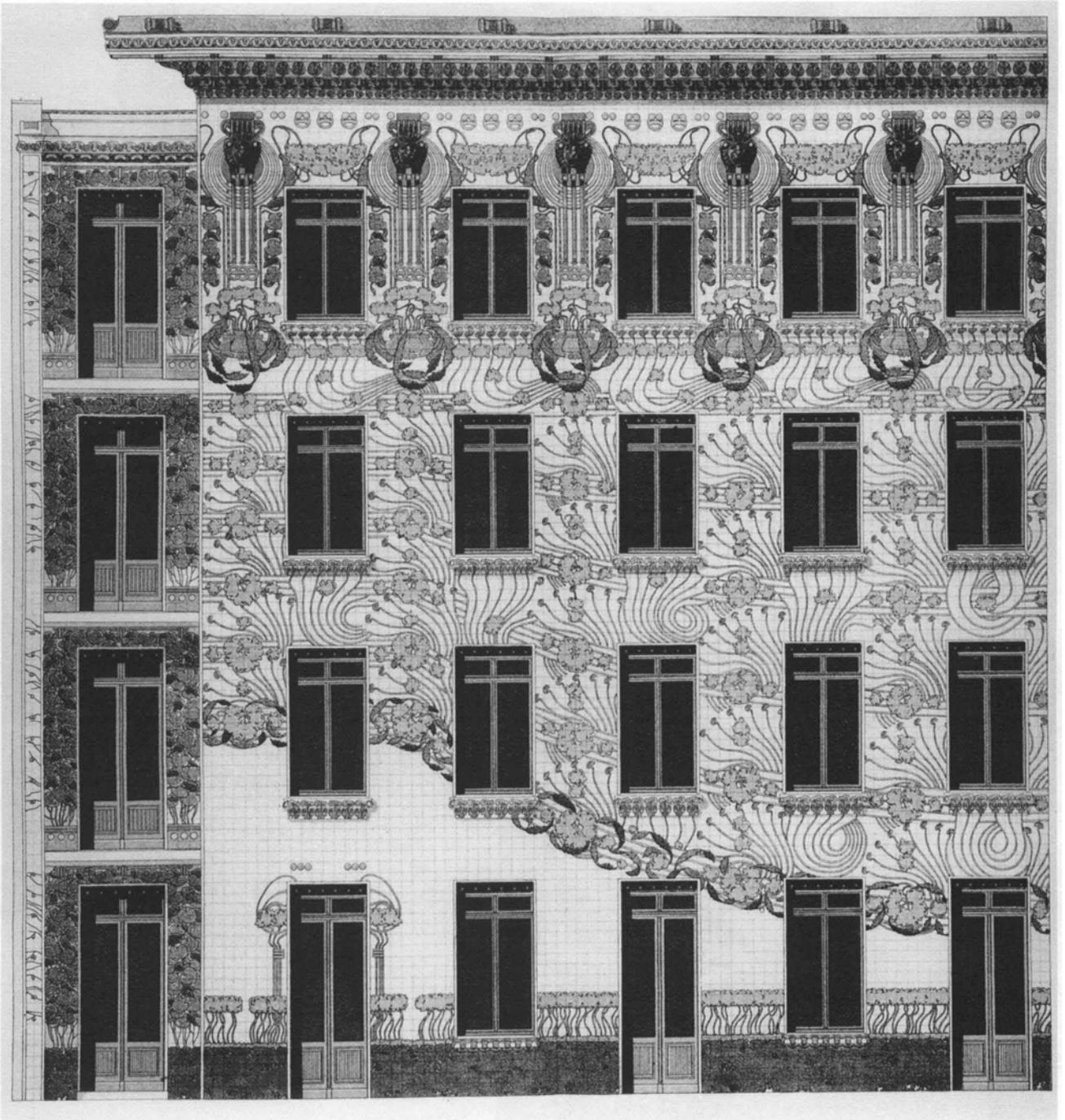


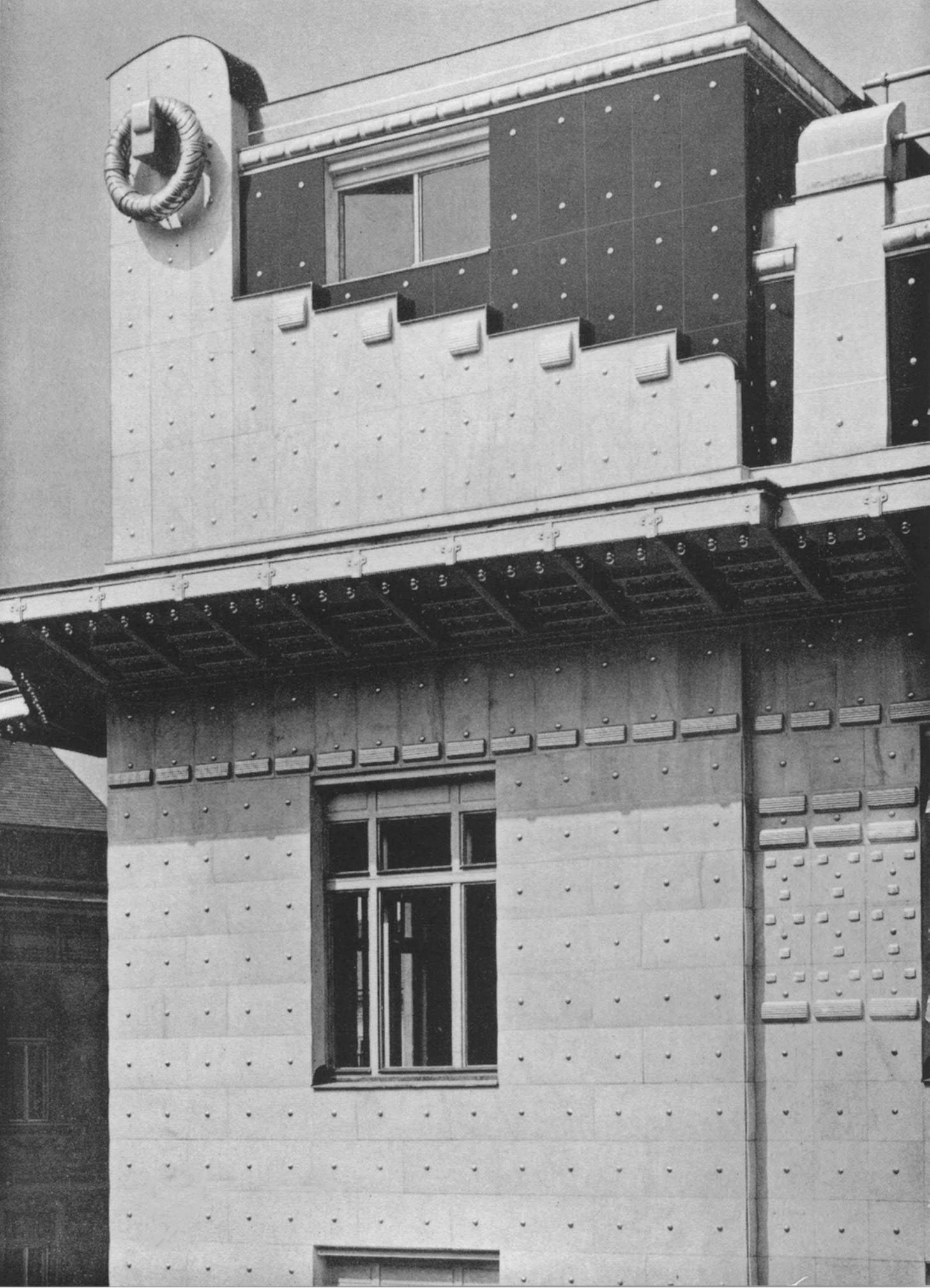
9. Otto Wagner,  
station at Unter-Döbling, Vienna Stadtbahn,  
1895 (simplified in execution).  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen, Projecte  
und ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Anton  
Schroll, 1897), 2: pl. 21.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



10. Otto Wagner,  
"Majolikahaus" (apartment house), Linke  
Wienzeile 40, first design, 1896.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen, Projecte  
und ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Anton  
Schroll, 1897), 2: pl. 44.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.
11. Otto Wagner,  
detail of "Majolikahaus" (apartment house),  
Linke Wienzeile 40, final design, 1898.  
From *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* (1900): pl. 10.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.

FROM REALISM TO *SACHLICHKEIT*





tially different from that of his colleagues. Streiter went on to comment that “it can even be asserted that a number of English, French, American, and German architects take far greater account of the principle – the architect always has to develop the art-form out of the construction – than Wagner does himself.”<sup>69</sup> Yet what is interesting is that criticism of Wagner in Vienna was aimed both at his Secessionist leanings (as Haiko has noted with regard to the Stadtmuseum) and his earlier realist polemics. Such criticism can be seen in two articles that appeared in the journal *Der Architekt* in 1900.

In the first of these articles, which reportedly summarized three discussions held by the local architects’ union of Vienna, the journal’s editor, Ferdinand von Feldegg, traced the premises of modern artistic sensibilities from their starting point in the eighteenth-century philosophy of Kant to their culmination in Nietzsche, whom he called “perhaps the most influential thinker of all times.”<sup>70</sup> The general tendency that Feldegg saw in Western thought was the move away from objectivity toward subjectivity; and since realism, in his view, always drew from natural or historical models, he aligned it with external or objective experience. Subjectivism, on the contrary, emanated from inner experience. From this perspective Feldegg took issue with two premises of architectural realism: first, with the materialist premise that architectural forms could be generated from the properties of materials or technologies and, second, with the utilitarian premise that architectural forms could be shaped by human needs. Feldegg countered these premises with what he termed a “psychological-aesthetic hypothesis,” whereby the creation of architectural form takes its start in the primordial instinct of adornment. This instinct was originally purely subjective, but with the development of styles it passed through several realist stages in the imitation of previous architectural models. Recently, with the advent of modernity, this instinct had undergone another transition from realism back to individualism, because of which forms were once again created from internal, or subjective, sources. To prevent his readers from overlooking the target of his critique, Feldegg cautioned them in a footnote not to be misled by an “extremely materialist book” that had appeared in the last few years and was written by a prominent local practitioner whose ill-conceived theory was radically inconsistent with the high level of his artistic practice.<sup>71</sup>

The second article was simply entitled “Realismus und Architektur.” Its author, Josef Prestel, unfortunately did not offer a sophistication of analy-

12. Otto Wagner, detail of Postsparkasse, Vienna, 1903–1912. From *Der Architekt* 12 (1906): 99. Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.

sis equivalent to that demonstrated by Feldegg. He inveighed against the modern-day naturalists who exceeded every natural limit of the material; he criticized the materialists for dreaming of a future “iron-stone style”; and he derided the realists or verists for wanting to devise “fresh artistic motifs and forms from dead constructional systems.”<sup>72</sup> He closed, however, with a somewhat simplistic paraphrase of a few well-worn Semperian principles and argued that architecture had only a few universal forms and aesthetic principles, one of which, following Schmarsow, was the development or creation of space.

It is quite possible, however, that by 1900 these criticisms had little relevance for Wagner, who seems already to have been passing beyond his experience with the Secession. In the third edition of *Moderne Architektur*, 1902, he deleted at least one reference to it.<sup>73</sup> More importantly, over the next decade his designs, while always retaining vestiges of Secessionist motifs, became simpler and more tectonic in their detailing. In the 1914 edition of his manifesto, he dropped the title *Moderne Architektur* in favor of *Die Baukunst unserer Zeit* (The building-art of our time) and specifically thanked Muthesius, who “has drawn attention to the error of the original title in his brilliant book *Baukunst, nicht Stilarchitektur*.”<sup>74</sup> It can be argued, in fact, that Wagner’s work fell more in line with the *sachliche* drift of Muthesius’s theory and that he became, in the words of one recent critic, “a better, more faithful realist.”<sup>75</sup>

Nevertheless, there was in Wagner’s architecture after 1900 – and this is one of the aspects of his artistic genius that renders his form making so alluring – a powerful but at the same time uneasy artistic tension between the abstract tectonic symbolism of his marble dressings, decorative tiles, and bolt heads and the traditionally inspired symbolism of pilaster strips, Semperian wreaths, and indeed his long-standing preference for figurative pieces (fig. 12). Such a tension also mirrors, on a more general level, the radical inconsonance of his realist polemic with his symbolist practice – even though much of this discontinuity arises from our own historical prejudices regarding modernity. I doubt, however, if Wagner, who always spoke of the artist as the final arbiter of these issues, would have acknowledged the existence of any such antinomy. As the self-annointed commanding general of Viennese Modernism with a penchant for the military metaphor, struggling to survive in the highly politicized and – one might say – brutal artistic climate of fin-de-siècle Vienna, he would perhaps have made an

egregious error to do so. Yet if he had been pressed against the bulwark and forced to choose between word and deed — between his polemic of realism and his artistic idealism — I suspect he would have found consolation, as Semper did before him, in these words from Goethe's *Faust*:

Gray, dear friend, is all theory;  
And green the golden tree of life.<sup>76</sup>

## NOTES

1. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann, trans., *Gottfried Semper: The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), 193. Gottfried Semper, "Prolegomena," in *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder praktische Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1860–1863), 1: xviii–xix: "*Ihm ist der Kunstgenuss Verstandesübung, philosophisches Ergötzen, bestehend in dem Zurücktragen des Schönen aus der Erscheinungswelt in die Idee, in dem Zergliedern desselben und dem Herauspräparieren des Begriffskerns aus ihm.*"

2. The phrase "dangerous supplement" refers to Jacques Derrida's commentary on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's use of the term; see Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1976), 141–45.

3. The notion of "antimodernity," as this paper will later argue, could use some clarification, a "destabilization" in the sense that J. Duncan Berry has argued for with respect to modernity.

4. Wagner studied under Eduard van der Nüll at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna between 1860 and 1863 and worked on the designs for the Vienna Opera House. Van der Nüll committed suicide in 1868 in response to the Opera House's unfavorable reception.

5. Otto Wagner, "Erläuterungs-Bericht zum Entwurfe für den General-Regulierungs-Plan über das gesammte Gemeindegebiet von Wien" (1892–1893; 2nd ed., 1894), in Otto Antonia Graf, *Otto Wagner: Das Werk des Architekten* (Vienna: Hermann Böhlau Nachf., 1985), 1: 94: "*Unser Realismus, unser Verkehr, die moderne Technik, sie begehren heute gebieterisch die gerade Linie.*" (Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.)

6. Otto Wagner, "Inaugural Address to the Academy of Fine Arts," in idem, *Modern Architecture: A Guidebook for His Students to This Field of Art*, ed. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1988), 160. Idem, "Antrittsrede an der Akademie der bildenden Künste" (1894) in Graf (see note 5), 1: 249: "*Unsere Lebensverhältnisse, unsere Konstruktionen müssen voll und ganz zum Ausdruck gebracht werden, soll die Architektur nicht zur Karikatur herabsinken. Der Realismus unserer Zeit muss das*

*werdende Kunstwerk durchdringen. Er wird ihm keinen Schaden zufügen, kein Niedergang der Kunst wird daraus hervorgehen: er wird vielmehr neues pulsirendes Leben den Formen einhauchen und sich mit der Zeit neue Gebiete, welche heute noch der Kunst entbehren, wie beispielsweise das Gebiet des Ingenieurwesens erobern."*

7. Wagner, 1988 (see note 6), 52. Idem, *Moderne Architektur* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1896): "Während es richtig ist, dass Utilität und Realismus vorangehen, um die Thaten vorzubereiten, welche die Kunst und der Idealismus auszuführen."

8. Wagner, 1988 (see note 6), 61.

9. On the Siebener Club, see Eduard F. Sekler, *Josef Hoffmann: The Architectural Work* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985), 15–17. See also H. Ankwicz-Kleehofen, "Die Anfänge der Wiener Secession." *Alte und moderne Kunst* 5 (June–July 1960), 6.

10. Max Fabiani, "Aus der Wagner-Schule," *Der Architekt* 1 (1895): 53: "Das sind die modernen Lebensbedürfnisse, die ganze höhere constructive Erkenntnis unseres Jahrhunderts, die Technologie ganz neuer Materialien."

11. Emile Zola, *Le ventre de Paris* (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1978), 338: "C'est l'art moderne, le réalisme, le naturalisme, comme vous voudrez l'appeler, qui a grandi en face de l'art ancien."

12. *Ibid.*, 339.

13. Robin Middleton and David Watkin, *Neoclassical and Nineteenth Century Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1980), 372.

14. Bourgeois de Lagny, "Salon de 1866," *Le moniteur des architectes*, n.s., 1 (1866): cols. 81–82.

15. César Daly, *Revue générale de l'architecture et des travaux publics* 24 (1866): 3–5.

16. Certainly one of the first texts exalting the new engineering mandate for architecture is Joseph August Lux's *Ingenieur-Ästhetik* (Munich: G. Lammers, 1910). The phrase "constructional engineering" refers to Walter Benjamin's reading of Sigfried Giedion; see Benjamin's "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," in idem, *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 161.

17. Julius Lessing, "Neue Wege," *Kunstgewerbeblatt*, 1895, 3: "Ist es nun denkbar, dass an Stelle historischer Überlieferung und allmählicher Weiterbildung diese technischen Faktoren durchaus neue Formen schaffen? Können wir die neu gefundene, rein konstruktive Form eines modernen eisernen Trägers als eine Schöpfung betrachten wie die griechische Säule, deren geheiligte Form bis heute alle Kunstperioden beherrscht?"

18. *Ibid.*, 5: "Bequem oder nicht: unsere Arbeit hat einzusetzen auf dem Boden des praktischen Lebens unserer Zeit, hat diejenigen Formen zu schaffen, welche unseren Bedürfnissen, unserer Technik, unserem Material entsprechen. Wenn wir uns auf diesem Wege zu einer Form der

*Schönheit im Sinne unseres naturwissenschaftlichen Zeitalters emporarbeiten, so wird sie nicht aussehen wie die fromme Schönheit der Gotik oder die üppige der Renaissance, aber sie wird aussehen wie die vielleicht etwas herbe Schönheit aus dem Schlusse des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, und das ist es was man von uns verlangen kann."*

19. Wagner, 1988 (see note 6), 91.

20. Wagner, 1988 (see note 6), 93. Wagner, 1896 (see note 7), 58: "*Der Architekt hat immer aus der Construction die Kunstform zu entwickeln."*

21. Wagner, 1988 (see note 6), 93. Idem, 1896 (see note 7), 58: "...mit einer Symbolik der Construction beholfen, statt die Construction selbst als die Urzelle der Baukunst zu bezeichnen."

22. Mallgrave and Herrmann, 1989 (see note 1), 190, 195. Semper (see note 1), 1: xiv-xv, xx: "...die Materiellen...die Idee zu sehr an den Stoff geschmiedet zu haben...es sei die arch. Formenwelt ausschliesslich aus stofflichen konstruktiven Bedingungen hervorgegangen... Die Puristen, Schematiker und Zukünftler...älteste Ueberlieferungen der Baukunst, welche durchaus der Logik des Bauens, allgemein der des Kunstschaffens, entsprechen, und die ihren symbolischen Wert haben, der älter als die Geschichte und durch Neues gar nicht ausdrückbar ist."

23. Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (Berlin: G. Siemens, 1893). Riegl, of course, did not adhere to this distinction in his attack on Semper's so-called dogma of materialist metaphysics in the introduction to *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* (Vienna: K. K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1901). A critical study of the reasons for Riegl's change of heart is long overdue.

24. Wagner, 1988 (see note 6), 85. Wagner, 1896 (see note 7), 46: "...das Einfache, Praktische, beinahe möchte man sagen Militärische unserer Anschauungsweise."

25. Wagner, 1988 (see note 6), 78, 103-15. Wagner, 1896 (see note 7), 97: "...alles modern geschaffene...es musz unser eigenes besseres, demokratisches, selbstbewusstes, ideales Wesen...sowie dem durchgehenden praktischen Zuge der Menschheit."

26. Wagner, 1988 (see note 6), 116. Wagner, 1896 (see note 7), 95: "*Bequemlichkeit und grösztmöglichste Reinlichkeit."*

27. Wagner, 1988 (see note 6), 118-22.

28. One excellent study of this reform movement is Stefan Muthesius's *Das englische Vorbild: Eine Studie zu den deutschen Reformbewegungen in Architektur, Wohnbau und Kunstgewerbe im späteren 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Prestel, 1974).

29. For a well-written account of Hirth and the founding goals of the Munich Secession, see Maria Makela, *The Munich Secession: Art and Artists in Turn-of-the-Century Munich* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1990), 58-67.

30. One of Gurlitt's more remarkable early writings was his review of Adolf Göller's *Die Entstehung der architektonischen Stilformen* ("Göllers ästhetische Lehre," *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 21, no. 101 [17 December 1887], 602-7), in which he suggested that not only architecture but

also painting and sculpture could have nonrepresentational abstract values.

31. Cornelius Gurlitt, *Im Bürgerhaus* (Dresden: Gilbers'sche Königl. Hof-Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1888), 229.

32. See Hermann Muthesius, *The English House* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 3. Dohme was not the first German writer to prepare a work under this title. This honor goes to Jacob Falke, for a series of essays that appeared in *Zur Cultur und Kunst*, 1878, 4–67.

33. Robert Dohme, *Das englische Haus: Eine kultur- und baugeschichtliche Skizze* (Braunschweig: G. Westermann, 1888), 28: “Nicht Größe und Monumentalität, nicht Reichtum und Luxus machen in den Augen des Engländers das Begehrenswerte eines Hauses, sondern die Harmonie der einzelnen Räume, ihre geschickte Gruppierung, kurz die Erfüllung jener Summe von Erfordernissen, die sein praktischer Sinn und verfeinertes Lebensbedürfnis ihm als Voraussetzungen eines behaglichen Daseins ergeben haben.”

34. Peter Jessen, “Der kunstgewerbliche Geschmack in England.” *Kunstgewerbeblatt*, n.s., 3 (June 1892): 93–103. Part two of the series continued in 1893.

35. Richard Streiter, *Karl Böttichers Tektonik der Hellenen als ästhetische und kunstgeschichtliche Theorie* (Hamburg: Leopold Voss, 1896). Streiter dedicated his work to Theodor Lipps.

36. Streiter's two essays from 1896 are the first instances that I have found for the use of this term.

37. Richard Streiter, “Das deutsche Kunstgewerbe und die englisch-amerikanische Bewegung,” in *Richard Streiter: Ausgewählte Schriften zur Aesthetik und Kunst-Geschichte* (Munich: Delphin, 1913), 11: “Wir Deutsche können und sollen viele Eigentümlichkeiten der englischen und amerikanischen Wohnungen nicht nachahmen, weil für sie unsere Verhältnisse nicht passen, aber wir können doch manches von dorthier lernen, vor allem das eine, Allgemeinste: die Forderungen der Zweckmässigkeit, der Sachlichkeit, der Bequemlichkeit, der Hygiene bei unserer Wohnungs-ausstattung weitgehender zu berücksichtigen als dies bisher zu geschehen pflegte.”

38. *Ibid.*, 12: “...daß Sachlichkeit, Zweckdienlichkeit und künstlerische Durchbildung sich nicht ausschliessen.”

39. Streiter (see note 37), 28: “Was wir tun können und sollen ist dies: die Berücksichtigung der jeweiligen Lebensbedingungen, der Oertlichkeit, des Materials und der Technik, der Zweckmässigkeit und Gediegenheit in erster Linie zu stellen. Dann wird sich am sichersten und gefündesten aus der Stilmischung etwas Selbständiges herausentwickeln, was wir als Stil unserer Zeit sehnlich erhoffen.”

40. Richard Streiter, “Aus München,” *Pan* 2, no. 3 (1896): 249: “Realismus in der Architektur, das ist die weitgehendste Berücksichtigung der realen Werdebedingungen eines Bauwerks, die möglichst vollkommene Erfüllung der Forderungen der Zweckmässigkeit, Bequemlichkeit, Gesundheitsförderlichkeit, mit einem Wort: die Sachlichkeit.”

41. *Ibid.*: “...der feinsinnigste und konsequenteste Vertreter Münchener Eigenart in bürger-

licher Baukunst und Kunstgewerbe.”

42. Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), 131.

43. Richard Streiter, *Architektonische Zeitfragen: Eine Sammlung und Sichtung verschiedener Anschauungen mit besonderer Beziehung auf Professor Otto Wagners Schrift Moderne Architektur*, in *Richard Streiter*, 1913 (see note 37), 57–62.

44. See the review by Ferdinand von Feldegg, “Architektonische Zeitfragen,” *Der Architekt* 4 (1898).

45. Richard Streiter, *Architektonische Zeitfragen*, in *Richard Streiter*, 1913 (see note 37), 74.

46. Richard Streiter, *Architektonische Zeitfragen*, in *Richard Streiter*, 1913 (see note 37), 79–80: “Symbolismus und Mystizismus... eine Unmasse von Manieriertheit und Affektiertheit, von gedankenlosem ‘Tiefsinn,’ von dilettantischer Anmaßung, mit möglichst wenig Können möglichst viel Genie vorzutäuschen... Nur eine Reaktionserscheinung von kurzer Dauer.”

47. Richard Streiter, *Architektonische Zeitfragen*, in *Richard Streiter*, 1913 (see note 37), 103–8.

48. The Cologne architect Georg Heuser was another remarkable figure in his day, producing numerous articles advocating the use of iron (and in particular the I-beam) in the 1880s and early 1890s for the *Deutsche Bauzeitung* and *Allgemeine Bauzeitung*. In addition to the article in this volume by J. Duncan Berry, see also Berry’s “The Legacy of Gottfried Semper: Studies in *Späthistorismus*” (Ph.D. diss., Brown Univ., 1989), 78–102.

49. Richard Streiter, *Architektonische Zeitfragen*, in *Richard Streiter*, 1913 (see note 37), 134: “Ist nicht zu fürchten, daß diese oft himmelschreienden Sünden, die man neuerdings durch pietätvolles Anschmiegen an das Bestehende, einigermaßen zu verhüten gelernt hat, in erschrecklicher Weise wieder vermehrt würden, wenn Wagners Programm einer akademisch-geradlinigen, nivellierenden und uniformierenden, nur auf große äusserliche Effekte abzielenden modernen Großstadtarchitektur überall zur Annahme und Durchführung gelangte?”

50. Alfred Lichtwark, “Realistische Architektur,” in Wolf Mannhardt, ed., *Alfred Lichtwark: Eine Auswahl seiner Schriften* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1917), 259: “Und sicher hat auch der Laie das Gefühl gehabt, daß ein neuer Bauorganismus entstanden ist, in dem sich ruhig und fest der Wille ausspricht, ein streng sachliches unakademisches Bauwerk zu schaffen, und es mag ihm, wenn er nachher andere Bauten betrachtet hat, zum erstenmal eine Ahnung davon aufgegangen sein, daß Architektur nicht bloß und nicht in erster Linie Säule, Gebälk und Ornament ist.” See also *Pan* 4 (1897): 230.

51. Alfred Lichtwark, “Realistische Architektur,” in Mannhardt (see note 50), 271: “... daß die malerische Wirkung, die man bewußt und unbewußt anstrebt, nicht durch die romantische Verzettelung der Masse in lauter kleine hochstrebende Formen erreicht wird, überhaupt nicht durch plastische Gliederung, sondern gerade durch Betonung der Masse und durch Farbe.” See also *Pan* 4 (1897): 233–34.

52. Lichtwark was not the only critic to refer to Messel's work as realistic. Walter Curt Behrendt devoted an entire chapter to "Die Schule des Naturalismus," in *Alfred Messel* (Berlin: Cassirer, 1911).

53. Alfred Lichtwark, *Palastfenster und Flügeltür* (1899), in Mannhardt (see note 50), 228–29: "Daß er die Schönheit dieser Grundformen unserer Baukunst verstehen, fühlen und lieben lernt, ist wichtiger für ihn und für die deutsche Kunst, als daß er über den griechischen Tempel oder den Florentiner Palast Bescheid weiß."

54. Alfred Lichtwark, *Palastfenster und Flügeltür* (1899) in Mannhardt (see note 50), 243: "Warum können die Engländer eine heimische Bauweise am Leben erhalten und weiterentwickeln nach den Bedürfnissen jedes neuen Geschlechtes, und warum können wir es nicht?" See also "Bürgerliche Baukunst," *Pan* 3 (1897): 169.

55. Alfred Lichtwark, "Das Zimmer des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts" (1896), in Mannhardt (see note 50), 336.

56. Fritz Schumacher, "Stil und Mode" (1898), in idem. *Im Kampfe um die Kunst: Beiträge zu architektonischen Zeitfragen*, 2nd ed. (Strasbourg: J. H. E. Heitz, 1902), 29: "Zurückgehen zur Natur des praktischen Zwecks, zur Natur des Materials, zur Natur der organischen Formenwelt, zur Natur der volkstümlichen Eigenart. Das könnte man dann... als die Erreichung einer Epoche realistischer Architektur bezeichnen."

57. Henry van de Velde, *Die Renaissance im modernen Kunstgewerbe* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1901), 42–43.

58. Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), 118.

59. *Ibid.*, 118–19 n.

60. Julius Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher, von einem Deutschen* (Leipzig: Hirschfeld, 1891), 36: "Die alten Künstler hatten Stil, weil sie ihn nicht suchten und weil sie selbst Persönlichkeit hatten. Man strebt heute stets danach 'stilgerichtet' zu sein; man sollte vielmehr danach streben 'stilvoll' zu sein."

61. Hermann Muthesius, "Neues Ornament und neue Kunst," *Dekorative Kunst* 4, no. 9 (June 1901): 349–66.

62. *Ibid.*, 363–64: "Wie leben heute in einer Zeit bürgerlicher Ideale... Wir brauchen eine bürgerliche Kunst und sie sei schlicht, vernünftig und ungekünstelt wie wir selbst. Wie schön hatte sie unsere Biedermeierzeit vorbereitet!"

63. Hermann Muthesius, *Stilarchitektur und Baukunst: Wandlungen der Architektur im XIX Jahrhundert und ihr heutiger Standpunkt* (Mülheim-Ruhr: K. Schimmelpfeng, 1902), 65: "...den Ersatz des klassischen Schönheitsideals durch ein neues, dem nordisch-germanischen Geiste entsprechendes."

64. *Ibid.*, 54.

65. Muthesius (see note 63), 62.
66. Muthesius (see note 63), 50.
67. See Hans Präffcke. *Der Kunstbegriff Alfred Lichtwarks* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1986), 302–3.
68. Hermann Muthesius, “Englische Architektur: M. H. Ballie Scott,” *Dekorative Kunst* 3 (1900): 5.
69. Richard Streiter, *Architektonische Zeitfragen*, in *Richard Streiter* (see note 37), 104–5: “Ja es kann vielmehr behauptet werden, daß eine Reihe englischer, französischer, amerikanischer und deutscher Architekten dem Satz: ‘Der Architekt hat immer aus der Konstruktion die Kunstform zu entwickeln,’ weit mehr Rechnung trägt, als Wagner selbst.”
70. Ferdinand von Feldegg, “Über Grundlagen modernen Empfindens,” *Der Architekt* 4 (1900): 11.
71. *Ibid.*, 11–13.
72. Josef Prestel, “Realismus und Architektur,” *Der Architekt* 4 (1900): 31–32.
73. Wagner, 1988 (see note 6), 102 n. 107.
74. Wagner, 1988 (see note 6), 142. Otto Wagner, *Die Baukunst unserer Zeit* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1914), 4: “Hermann Mut[h]esius hat mich durch sein geistreiches Buch Baukunst, nicht Stilarchitektur auf den ursprünglich fehlerhaften Titel aufmerksam gemacht.” Wagner’s incorrect title of Muthesius’s book reveals the principal message it held for Wagner.
75. Berry, 1989 (see note 48), 296.
76. “Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie, / und grün des Lebens goldner Baum” (lines 2038–39).



1. Le Corbusier,  
the Parthenon viewed from the Propylaea,  
travel sketch of the Acropolis in Athens, 1911.  
From *Voyage d'Orient*, carnet 3, 115  
(Greece, 1911).  
Paris, Fondation Le Corbusier. © FLC.

Stanford Anderson

*SACHLICHKEIT* AND MODERNITY,  
OR REALIST ARCHITECTURE

In 1798 Goethe wrote an introduction to the new journal *Propyläen*, which begins as follows:

A young man who feels attracted to nature and art expects, by striving vigorously, to gain immediate entrance to the inner sanctum. As an adult he discovers that after a long and arduous pilgrimage he is still in the vestibule.

This consideration prompted the selection of the title for our periodical. The place where we will...[linger] with our friends [according to our custom] can merely be a stairway, a gate, an entrance, an antechamber, an area between the inside and the outside, between the sacred and the profane.<sup>1</sup>

Though anachronistic, I find it appropriate to accompany this quotation from Goethe with the view the young Le Corbusier gained from the Propylaea, the "vestibule" of the Acropolis in Athens (fig. 1). In his text Goethe specifically associated the Athenian site with his selection of the title *Propyläen*, immediately adding, "except that one should not deem us arrogant, as though we thought to represent here [in the new journal] such a work of art and magnificence."<sup>2</sup>

To paraphrase Goethe, neither nature nor art, neither science nor artifice will reveal ultimate truths. People of experience and wisdom respect this limit, recognizing that we can at most make for ourselves an in-between place, neither transcendent nor common, where we can, according to our custom, linger with our friends.

Goethe's essay, itself a program for *Propyläen*, was reprinted in its entirety a century later in the September 1900 issue of *Die Insel* (The island),

a new literary and artistic journal in Munich.<sup>3</sup> The republication of Goethe's introduction reinforced the unusual programmatic statement that the editors of *Die Insel* had presented in their first issue, which appeared in October 1899.

In giving our journal the name *Die Insel*, we wish to indicate how little we are inclined to join in the now widespread shouts of triumph over the glorious results of one or another modern artistic movement and, rather, how much we are aware of the momentous internal and external difficulties that stand in the way of a much-to-be-desired development of our artistic life.<sup>4</sup>

The Munich-based editors of *Die Insel* were Alfred Walter Heymel, Rudolf Alexander Schröder, and Otto Julius Bierbaum. Among the journal's contributors were Richard Dehmel, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Paul Scheerbart, Franz Blei, and Julius Meier-Graefe. The editors of *Die Insel* had ample ambitious artistic programs from which to distance themselves in 1899. To give examples taken solely from the realms of art and architecture: Henry van de Velde, recently propagandized by Siegfried Bing's Parisian shop, L'Art Nouveau, was invading Germany (fig. 2), and the Vienna Secession and its journal, *Ver Sacrum*, were at the peak of their energies. Furthermore, Ernst Ludwig, grand duke of Hessen, had just summoned the members of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony (*Künstler-Kolonie*), commissioning them to build a lofty community of artists that would be a "document of German art." The prince and his artists would not rest with what is available to us in the "area between the inside and the outside." In an image of the opening ceremony of the Darmstadt colony (fig. 3), we see the priest of the dispensation, according to Peter Behrens, delivering the crystal, a symbol of life as art — a goal that was to be made manifest in the Artists' Colony itself. The editors of *Die Insel* might well anticipate that in attempting too much, programs such as these would fail to contribute to the making of that in-between room where we might, according to our custom and without magnificence, "linger with our friends."

These observations can be supported in a manner that is both more general and more prosaic. In *Culture and Society* Raymond Williams argues that it is only in the nineteenth century that the term *culture* emerged as an abstraction and an absolute. In the nineteenth century, he writes,



2. Henry van de Velde,  
lounge, Decorative Arts Exhibition,  
Dresden, 1897.  
Photo: Courtesy Marburg/Art Resource,  
New York.



3. Opening ceremony of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony, conceived and organized by Georg Fuchs and Peter Behrens, 1901. From Alexander Koch, ed., *Grossherzog Ernst Ludwig und die Ausstellung der Künstler-Kolonie in Darmstadt von Mai bis Oktober 1901* (Darmstadt: A. Koch, 1901), 61. Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.

the recognition of a separate body of moral and intellectual activities, and the offering of a court of human appeal, which comprise the early meanings of the word [culture], are joined, and in themselves changed, by the growing assertion of a whole way of life, not only as a scale of integrity, but as a mode of interpreting all our common experience, and, in this new interpretation, changing it....[Culture] means now a whole way of life.<sup>5</sup>

Williams also discusses John Ruskin, one of the significant contributors to this escalation of the concept of culture. He points out that in Ruskin's view,

both sides [art and man]...are comprised in an allegiance to the same single term, Beauty; and the idea of Beauty (which in [Ruskin's] writing is virtually interchangeable with Truth) rests fundamentally on belief in a universal, divinely appointed order. The art criticism and the social criticism, that is to say, are inherently and essentially related, not because one follows from the other, but because both are *applications*, in particular directions, of a fundamental conviction.

The purpose of art, according to Ruskin, is to reveal aspects of universal "Beauty" or "Truth." The artist is one who, in Carlyle's words, "reads the open secret of the universe."<sup>6</sup>

Given such a construction, the artist must penetrate beyond Goethe's vestibule and furthermore has the responsibility to bring the message of his Truth to – even to impose that Truth upon – society. Truth, Beauty, and society are taken to be reciprocal indexes of one another and reveal our relation to the divinely appointed order. There is a necessary moral goodness of the artist, for he must foresee and realize the oneness of Truth and Beauty with society.

The secular goals of William Morris's life were certainly other than those of Ruskin, but this binding of ultimate values, of Truth and Beauty with art and life, is something shared by the two men. Indeed, the failure of Morris's political ambitions is plausibly tied to the maintenance of this absolutist notion of culture.

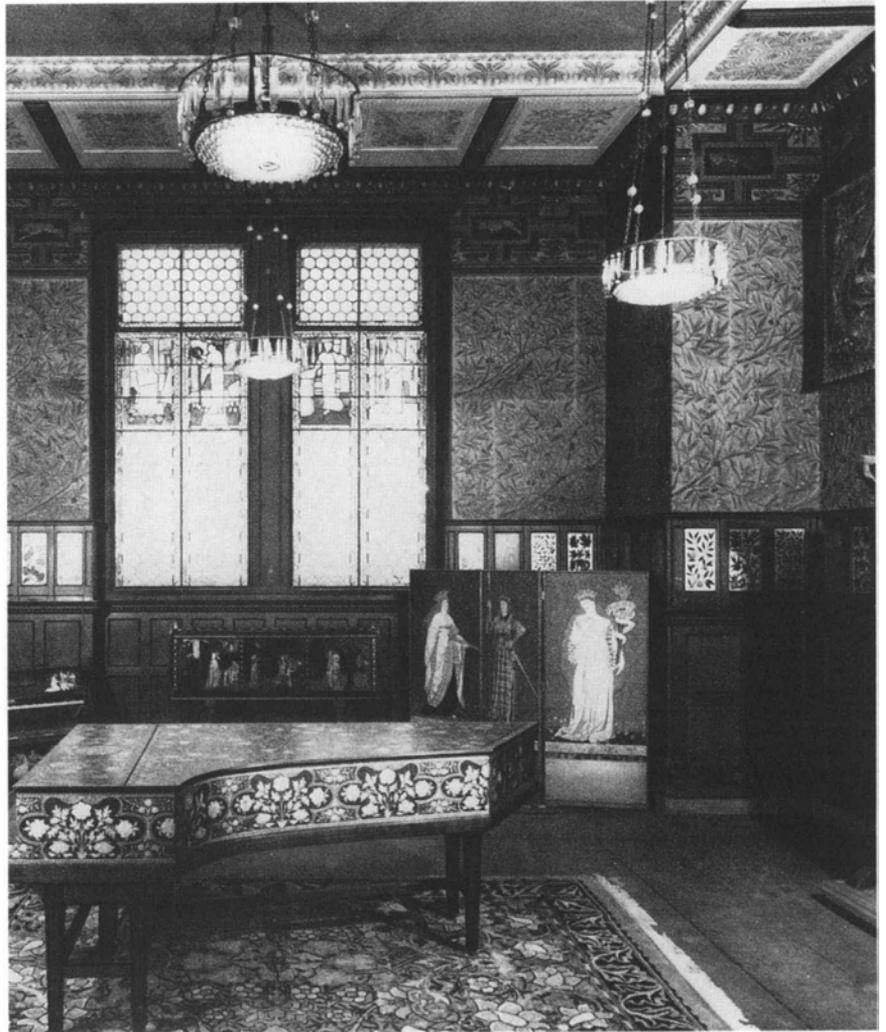
By the turn of the century, even those who admired Morris's life and/or his work were keenly aware of the destructive internal inconsistencies of his cultural and political position – beautifully, poignantly, but strongly evident in a work such as the Green Dining Room, originally in the Palace

of Saint James in London (fig. 4). Yet the desire to salvage an organic culture within, or opposed to, modern civilization retained its hold — nowhere more strongly than in Germany.<sup>7</sup>

One way of attempting a resolution of the inconsistencies that had defeated Morris would be to maintain the absolutist notion of culture but to wed it once again to a consonant absolutist social and political vision. This was the program of Peter Behrens at the Darmstadt Artists' Colony; consistent with the premise of the entire colony, although perhaps in a more exaggerated fashion, he sought to reveal a secularized but ultimate Truth and Beauty for the control of modern life. This ambition has already been remarked with regard to the opening ceremony of the Artists' Colony, and it saturates the whole of Behrens's Darmstadt production. He developed theoretical and architectural plans for an ideal theater that should have been the ceremonial culmination of the life of the Artists' Colony — and thus a model for the role of theater in any German community.<sup>8</sup> Behrens's own house at the colony was conceptually positioned in that envisioned community, and its music room was a microcosm of his ideal theater. The music room was the only salon in the house — its opulent, dark materials and relentless crystal symbolism demanding hieratic works of art even in the domestic setting (figs. 5, 6).

In the European architectural scene of 1900, the thought and work of Morris were widely known and, for the most part, respected. Yet it was also widely recognized — and felt most acutely by those who admired Morris most — that his social and cultural program had failed. Abandoning Morris's political principles, could a new cultural program be constructed, as Darmstadt attempted, from the top down (with the maintenance of the absolutist notion of culture and a reversion to an older, less democratic social order) or, as the proponents of an organic German "people's culture," or *völkische Kultur*, would have it, from the bottom up (with a view of a unified culture of the people)?<sup>9</sup>

Alternatively, could one, Goethe-like, recognize limits, opting for a world of our contrivance that, through artifice, is more than common but also careful in its avoidance of both the hubris of the artist and the totalizing of authority in a willed rootedness of the people? Such was the vision of the livable, in-between space endorsed in the beginnings of *Die Insel*; our projection of this metaphorical space into the tangible world of architecture need not rely only on the generality of the argument and our imaginative



4. William Morris,  
Green Dining Room, originally in the  
Palace of Saint James, 1866.  
London, Board of Trustees of the Victoria  
& Albert Museum.





5. Peter Behrens,  
Peter Behrens's house, Darmstadt Artists'  
Colony, 1900-1901.  
From Alexander Koch, *Grossherzog Ernst  
Ludwig und die Ausstellung der Künstler-  
Kolonie in Darmstadt von Mai bis Oktober  
1901* (Darmstadt: A. Koch, 1901), 330.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.
6. Peter Behrens,  
music room, Peter Behrens's house,  
Darmstadt Artists' Colony, 1900-1901.  
From Alexander Koch, *Grossherzog Ernst  
Ludwig und die Ausstellung der Künstler-  
Kolonie in Darmstadt von Mai bis Oktober  
1901* (Darmstadt: A. Koch, 1901), 364.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the  
History of Art and the Humanities.

construction. At the same time that the grand duke of Hessen's artists assembled in their colony in Darmstadt, *Die Insel* was founded, and the Munich office of that journal was established. That office was a small part of the rental suite of one of the editors, Alfred Walter Heymel. New interiors for the entire suite were designed by another of the editors, the poet Rudolf Alexander Schröder, and were realized with the collaboration of the graphic artist Heinrich Vogeler-Worpswede and the architects Martin Dülfer and Paul Ludwig Troost (figs. 7–9).<sup>10</sup>

As the 1901 exhibition of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony, titled *Ein Dokument Deutscher Kunst* (A document of German art), ran its course, adverse criticism mounted not only against the Darmstadt experiment but also against the numerous innovations now grouped under such names as Jugendstil, Sezessionstil, and Art Nouveau. By this time the founders of *Die Insel* had built, lived, and worked in the Heymel apartment for two years. In April 1901 Julius Meier-Graefe, a contributor to *Die Insel* and the Paris-based coeditor of *Dekorative Kunst*, the offices of which were located in Munich, published Schröder's Heymel interior in the latter journal. Commenting on the living-vestibule (*Vorhalle*) of the apartment (see fig. 7), Meier-Graefe remarked:

The hall is also very beautiful, a very large room with walls covered in mirrors, lightly enlivened by the precise mathematical divisions of the wall surfaces. A remarkably worthy character is achieved through nothing more than this array of mirrors, the large sofas with their diminutive tables, and the great fireplace. Evenings, when the logs burning in the fireplace give the only light, the space is gemütlich; one leans back in the chairs around the fire and forgets time and place – an ideal space in which to dream!<sup>11</sup>

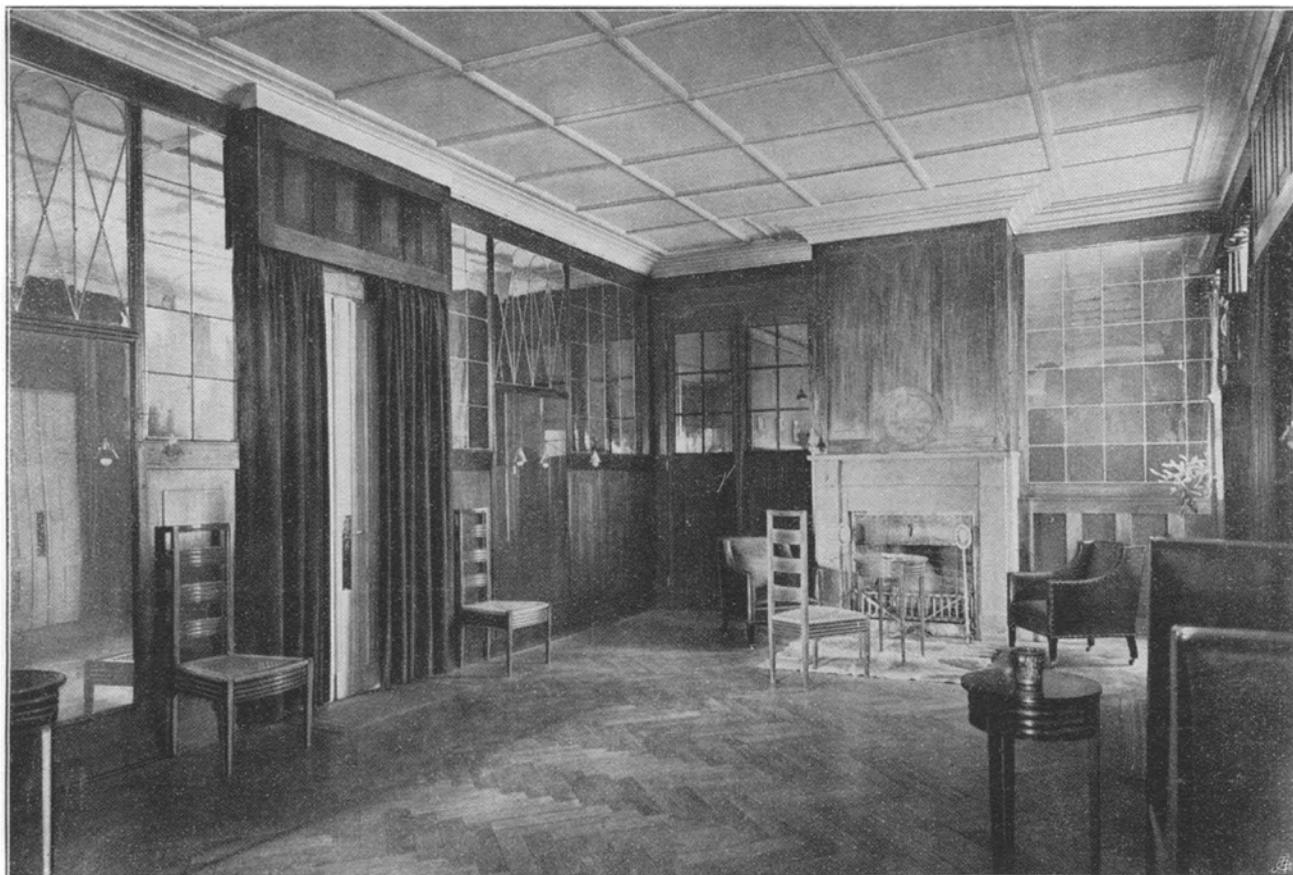
Goethe might feel himself to be among friends in this hall, a *Vorhalle* not to an inner sanctum but to what Meier-Graefe termed the “simply and practically furnished” office of *Die Insel* and to a more lavish salon for evening affairs. Meier-Graefe gave his essay the title “Ein modernes Milieu.” Apologizing for the use of two foreign words in a title of only three words (only the indefinite article was innocent), Meier-Graefe argued that nothing else would convey his interpretation of this interior. The word *milieu* properly implied that this must be a place within which one might truly dwell, but Meier-Graefe discovered something more: the need for the mod-

ern milieu to be enlivened by *modern* life, just as the good, old sitting room (*Wohnstube*) had been by an earlier form of life – thus the achievement of *atmosphere*.<sup>12</sup> A small insight into the modern life of the Heymel salon, not single-mindedly Neoclassical and certainly devoid of Behrens's ceremony, may be gained from the admittedly satirical vignette rendered by one of the participants in such soirees, Thomas Theodor Heine (fig. 10). The marginalized aesthetic figure in a Biedermeier coat, holding a lily, is Vogeler-Worpswede, while the threateningly rambunctious dancer liberating a friend of Heymel's is the painter Alfred Kubin.<sup>13</sup> About this set of interiors, Meier-Graefe concluded:

Throughout, the same principle of good taste and common sense. This is the sustained impression, and it bursts with cultural significance. Here notice is given that it does not require such infinitely deep artifice or so much of the Modernism-at-any-price [*A tout prix-Modernismus*] to create a suitable milieu, as the prestige of most of the leading artists of our movement would have us believe. All of them without exception could learn much from this simple solution, and above all the best of modern principles: that one cannot use too little art in order to be an artist. The movement apparently and hopefully will follow Schröder's path.... The Viennese already begin; notably Loos makes furniture without ornament in Vienna and is not without influence.<sup>14</sup>

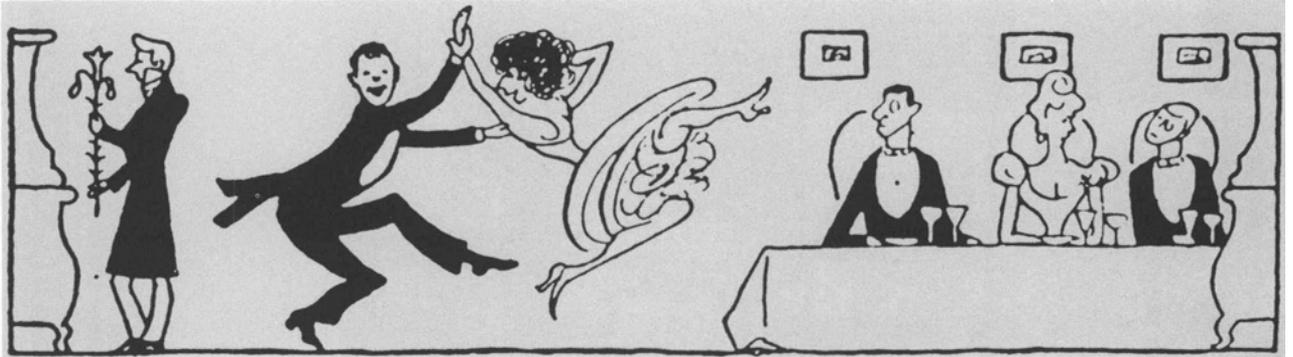
With decreasing conviction, Meier-Graefe extended his list of similarly motivated designers to "Moser and Hoffmann in their latest works, Eckmann in his best, seemingly even van de Velde. So, too, the better architects of Germany and England, where such an approach is already a tradition."<sup>15</sup> If Meier-Graefe reveals a certain ambivalent dutifulness in his inclusion of van de Velde in this list, one may recall that he had only recently been a protagonist of van de Velde and may very well have been sitting at his own elaborate desk of van de Velde's design (fig. 11) as he penned these words favoring a new simplicity.

The English tradition to which Meier-Graefe referred had long been recognized in the German literature, beginning with Robert Dohme's *Das englische Haus* (The English house) of 1888.<sup>16</sup> American production was seen to be related and, in the late nineteenth century, might even have appeared more exemplary than English works. Some of the notable contributors to these descriptive and theoretical appreciations of Anglo-American archi-



7. Rudolf Alexander Schröder with Martin Dülfer and Paul Ludwig Troost, vestibule, Heymel apartment, Munich, 1899–1901.  
From *Dekorative Kunst* 4, no. 7 (April 1901), 249.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.
8. Rudolf Alexander Schröder with Martin Dülfer and Paul Ludwig Troost, office of *Die Insel*, Heymel apartment, Munich, 1899–1901.  
From *Dekorative Kunst* 4, no. 7 (April 1901), 256.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.
9. Rudolf Alexander Schröder with Martin Dülfer and Paul Ludwig Troost, bedroom, Heymel apartment, Munich, 1899–1901.  
From *Dekorative Kunst* 4, no. 7 (April 1901), 275.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.





10. Thomas Theodor Heine,  
satirical vignette of a soiree at the  
Heymel apartment, Munich.  
From Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum,  
*Gedächtnisausstellung Thomas Theodor  
Heine, 1867-1948*, exh. cat. (Braunschweig,  
Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, 1949), 11.



11. Henry van de Velde,  
desk designed for Julius Meier-Graefe,  
Paris, 1898.  
Brussels, Archives Henry van de Velde,  
Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1er, FS X/886©

tecture and crafts were Julius Lessing (as early as the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876), Peter Jessen, and Alfred Lichtwark (in the first number of the Berlin journal *Pan* and elsewhere).<sup>17</sup> From the time of his visit to the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, Wilhelm Bode gave authoritative voice to the lessons of America and England.

American art has all the virtues of youth: it is fresh and naive; it arises from practical needs and is yet simultaneously marked by fantasy and ideals; it possesses endurance and confidence, all traits that assure it a rapid progress. Art in America is a healthy plant that is not artificially bred or forced but rather is exclusively the outgrowth of necessity. It is sustained by a highly developed craft work and is borne by a distinctive national life, whose idealistic demands it is called upon to fulfill.<sup>18</sup>

The texts of both Bode and Meier-Graefe suggest the traits of this desired direction: generation of form from necessity, practicality, simplicity, artlessness, evident mathematical formal systems, and the avoidance of ornament while preserving something of fantasy or atmosphere. This is not architectural functionalism but a playing out of architectural invention for a social purpose within – and with respect for – the constraints of the material world. They give this program no name.

A few months after Meier-Graefe's article praising the Heymel apartment, Hermann Muthesius, then the principal German authority on the English Arts and Crafts Movement (and with it, the so-called free architecture), enthusiastically endorsed the Schröder interior in the pages of *Dekorative Kunst*, describing it as a model for the development of German architecture and interiors. Muthesius wrote, "It was a great pleasure to read Meier-Graefe... and there to see the completely new interiors that breathe a spirit previously unknown to us."<sup>19</sup> These interiors "appear to realize virtually all the ideals of a genuine new art; in their simple comfort and unornamented amplitude... they represent a true reinvigoration."<sup>20</sup> Muthesius, not surprisingly, recognized precedents in English interiors. He also ended his article ringingly by endorsing Meier-Graefe's assessment that all here was "good taste and common sense" – a claim that would seemingly constitute a rather vague program if it were not itself integral to the world of Anglo-American models. Muthesius offered as a rationale the "purely practical... which is much easier to realize than would appear from the various

proponents of our new art. . . . In architecture,” Muthesius continued, “‘style-making’ has long blocked the sources of *sachliche* progress. . . . If one would show this style- and architecture-making the door, then one would experience wonders of *sachliche* progress.”<sup>21</sup> Thus, without yet assigning a label to this movement, Muthesius identified the principle that he associated with these interiors – that they were *sachliche*.

Harry Mallgrave has pointed to Richard Streiter’s text of 1896, which reads as a theoretical text for Meier-Graefe and Muthesius.

*Realism* in architecture is the comprehensive consideration of the real constituents of a building, the most complete fulfillment of the demands of need, convenience, and of that which is conducive to health – in a word: *die Sachlichkeit*. But this is not yet all. Just as the realism of poetry considers it one of its central tasks to delineate the character in relation to his milieu, so the parallel program in architecture sees as the most desirable goal of artistic truth the development of the character of a built work *not* solely out of a determination of needs [*Zweckbestimmung*] but also from the milieu, from the qualities of available materials, and from the environmentally and historically conditioned atmosphere of the place [*Stimmung der Örtlichkeit*].<sup>22</sup>

Note that these authors, advocating simplicity and interpreting works that appeared straightforward, especially in comparison with contemporary design – whether of the historicizing or the Art Nouveau movements – relied on such concepts as the generation of form from need, health considerations, materials, and construction. They advocated artlessness and elimination of ornament. They were also in possession of concepts that would suffice for all such advocacy: functionalism and *Zweckmäßigkeit*, or the direct satisfaction of need, for example. Correspondingly, they could often appreciate engineering works of a “pure” *Sachlichkeit*. Yet they asked for something more: something that was not the ideal hovering over the real but rather the interplay of invention, or convention, with the material world in facilitating our ability to linger with our friends in a creatively evolving cultural setting – Streiter’s character and milieu, Meier-Graefe’s milieu and atmosphere.

On the realist front it is true that Muthesius in his *Stilarchitektur und Baukunst* (Style-architecture and the building-art) of 1902 recognized a “pure” *Sachlichkeit* in the machines, vehicles, instruments, iron bridges, and

glass halls of the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup> Muthesius's advocacy, however, was not for this "pure" *Sachlichkeit* but for a *sachliche Kunst*, as seen in the English domestic architecture that he so respected. When he commended "the currently escalating desire to characterize the special attributes of a building, the intended quality of a room, *architecturally*" (emphasis mine), Muthesius was consistent with Streiter's realism and with what we observe in Meier-Graefe's and Muthesius's own endorsement of Schröder's interiors.<sup>24</sup>

We can now draw some conclusions from this material. It was commonplace to recognize the engineering achievements of the nineteenth century, from tools or instruments to the great bridges and railroad sheds. Whether the critics saw these works as exemplary achievements or, resignedly, as the representative objects of a materialist epoch, they could agree that such works and the processes that produced them were marked by rationality, functionalism, and *Zweckmäßigkeit*. Muthesius subsumed such qualities under the term "pure" *Sachlichkeit*. Other authors, at least in speaking of architecture, gave the term *Sachlichkeit* further extension, incorporating within the needs to be satisfied the experiential demands of atmosphere or milieu and recognizing that an arbitrariness of formal invention was not eliminated even if one recognized the constraints within which it operated. Muthesius was, after all, in accord with this move when he distinguished between "pure" *Sachlichkeit* and a *sachliche* (let me now say *realist*) art and architecture.<sup>25</sup>

*Sachlichkeit* is, then, a convenient umbrella term that invokes simplicity, a rational and straightforward attention to needs as well as to materials and processes. In the realm of art and architecture, at least at the turn of the century, the range of needs was extended, however, and in such a way that none of these authors would expect a calculus of their realist architecture. A realist architecture imposed certain desiderata and constraints, but it still required conventions and/or inventions that were not to be incorporated by a mechanical processing of a unique stipulation of needs.<sup>26</sup>

Let us return for a moment to Goethe's *Vorhalle* or, more realistically, the vestibule of *Die Insel* (see fig. 7). We take up our place in the vestibule because the beyond, the ultimate inner sanctum, if it exists, is not available to us; and yet we aspire to, and have achieved, levels of human association and thought that distance us from nature, that is, from a mere animal existence, or from a world limited to calculation. This *Vorhalle* is a metaphor for the conditions of our life and thought. We have no access to ultimate truth.

On the other hand, an intellectual confinement to a mechanics of nature may well do an injustice to nature; it certainly will fail to embrace our human association and the problematic but crucial grounds of our knowing. Reason is imperative but reason guided by our affections. *Sachliche Kunst*, a realist architecture, unlike “pure” *Sachlichkeit*, is an interactionist realism – a theoretical position descending from inquiries into the sources of knowledge conducted in England and Germany around 1800. Whether by received custom or by our challenges to received conventions, we frame the conditions of our knowing and our existence. Accepting with Clifford Geertz the view of Max Weber: we spin the webs of our own understanding.<sup>27</sup> Denying any certainty to this web, to this framework, relishing its hypothetical character, we can entertain its metaphysical propositions as much as its material implications.

A realist architecture, I suggest, finds its place in Goethe’s *Vorhalle*. It mistrusts the universalist claims exemplified at the Darmstadt Artists’ Colony, by means of which Art and the great artist shall magnanimously give the Forms that will then dictate to life. It rejects a necessary, organic relation of cultural production to blood and soil. It respects but subsumes the “pure” *Sachlichkeit* of the calculation of mechanical needs. It establishes a condition of knowing and association that cannot maintain its balance without speculative innovation, but this, too, will ordinarily appear within a framework that is the fruit of earlier speculations. Within a realist architecture there is an impetus to understand and to use our received condition as much as to criticize and change it.

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At this juncture, I would like to make a brief excursus to view this argument from a slightly different vantage point. It is common – also precisely with respect to my own starting point in Goethe – to contrast realism with idealism. It was in the pages of *Propyläen* that Goethe criticized the realism of Berlin art in his own time and advocated classicism. The sculptor Johann Gottfried von Schadow answered with a defense of realism. Françoise Forster-Hahn has constructed the defense of this realism as a continuing tradition in German art through which a disrespect for, and criticism of, social conventions is exercised.<sup>28</sup> Her argument for this critical dimension of realism in literature and painting is convincing. If, however, the artistic or architectural exercise is a projective rather than strictly critical one, the

simple polarity of realism and idealism seems neither adequate nor historically justified. Goethe's metaphor of the vestibule is constructed in order to avoid idealism while a speculative, conventionalized, and thus partially detached, grasp of the world is attempted. It is this ground between idealism and realism that can be identified with the concept of a *sachliche Kunst*, a realist art and architecture.

Thus far, I have not made mention of various positions or works that may well be missed if I am to address *Sachlichkeit* in a general manner. I wish to comment on certain works of Peter Behrens and Otto Wagner, but I propose to approach these architects after examining what I would term the symbolic exploitation of *Sachlichkeit*.

In the arts the term *Sachlichkeit* has two points of historical prominence. As we have seen, it appears in the late nineteenth century in a concern for an architectural realism, an architecture rooted in problems of function, commodity, health, and production but not bounded by a narrow functionalism. The concept reaches some prominence around 1900 when it is employed by a number of theorists, often in relation to particular, exemplary works in architecture and the crafts. With the theorists we have considered thus far, the satisfaction of need is extended to experiential demands for what was variously termed milieu, atmosphere, or character.

The term recurs in the 1920s as *Neue Sachlichkeit*. It is then dominantly related to the visual arts, and the programmatic name has at least two connotations. These are artists who return to an artistic realism, to the representation of objects, in a manner that could only gain its force in opposition to the early twentieth-century achievements of nonobjective painting. *Neue Sachlichkeit* is thus opposed to artistic Modernism in a way that we need not associate with the *Sachlichkeit* of the turn of the century. The mimetic vision of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* operates with a cold eye and a constrained hand that would reveal the perceived intellectual and spiritual condition of modern civilization. As we have seen before, the perception of this cool, scientific world could coincide with different value judgments of it. In his account of *Neue Sachlichkeit* Fritz Schmalenbach spoke of a "deliberately cultivated unsentimentality."<sup>29</sup> How different from the sentiment, one might even say the romanticism, of the concern to achieve a modern atmosphere and character that was part of the *Sachlichkeit* of circa 1900!

Yet we can find the roots of this unsentimental *Neue Sachlichkeit* in the nineteenth century as well. The distinction lies, I will argue, between

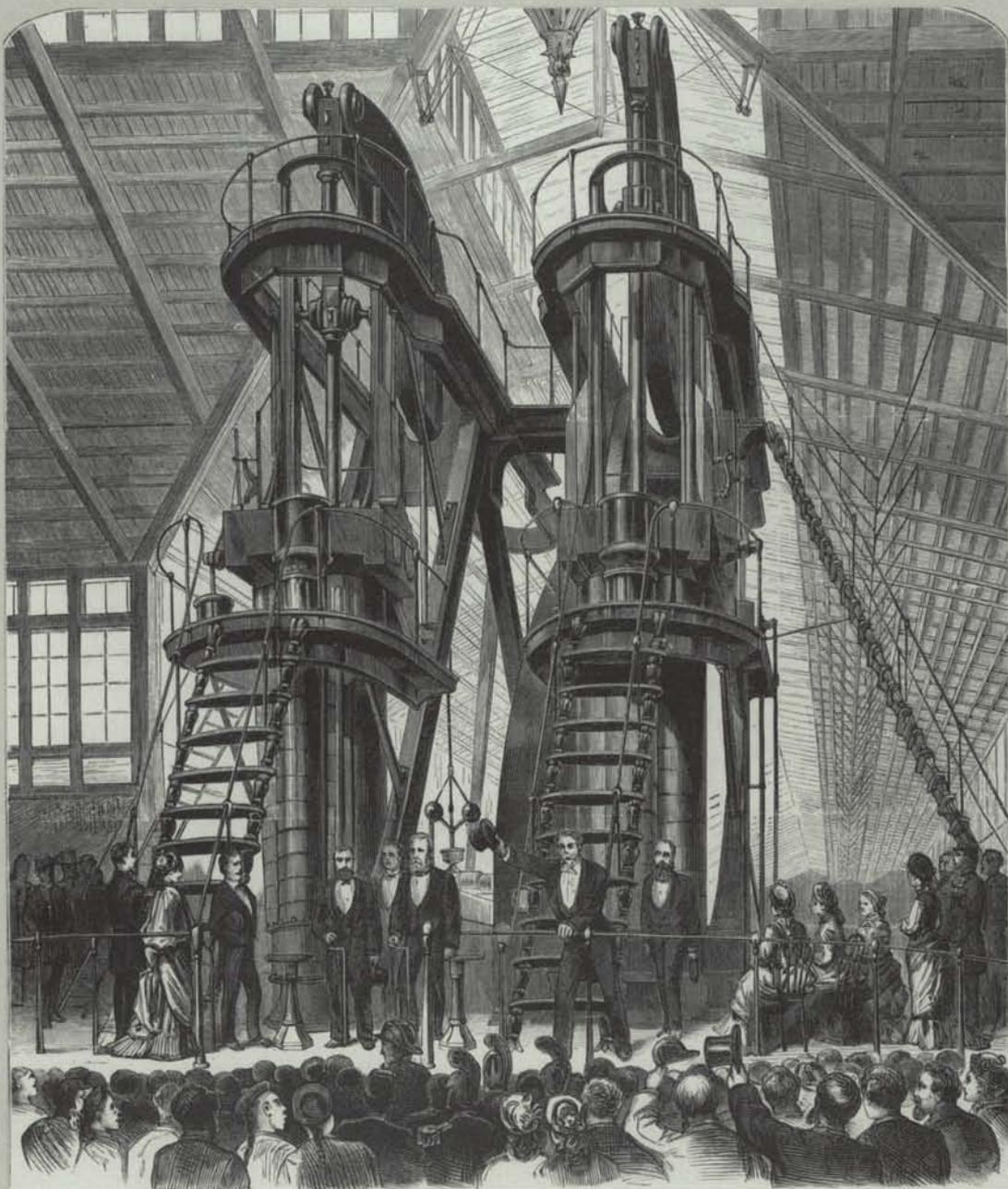
*Sachlichkeit* as a program of architectural realism in the manner of, for example, Adolf Loos and the exploitation of *Sachlichkeit* as a mode of symbolic representation, as with Peter Behrens.

We may begin by returning to Muthesius's distinction between a *sachliche Kunst* and a "pure" *Sachlichkeit*. Muthesius spoke admiringly of great engineering works (fig. 12) that might be adequately analyzed under the narrow interpretation of "pure" *Sachlichkeit*, but the distinction he drew also implied the limits of that more functionalist mentality. Others might share that sense of limit yet see in it a necessary characteristic of modernity and thus embrace it for its centrality and inevitability. Julius Lessing, the first director of the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin, a man who had been impressed by the simplicity of American products as early as the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, wrote of a deeper American lesson after the Chicago World's Fair of 1893.

Like it or not, our work has to be based on the soil of the practical life of our time; it has to create those forms that correspond to our needs, our technology, and our materials. If we fashion in this way a form of beauty in the manner of our scientific age, it will resemble neither the pious beauty of the Gothic nor the opulence of the Renaissance but will perhaps appear as the somewhat austere beauty of the late nineteenth century – and that is all anyone can ask of us.<sup>30</sup>

We are returned to that belief in the inevitability of the relation between Beauty, Truth, and some commanding authority, be it only the *zeitgeist*. With Lessing, this equation is apparently self-fulfilling in the sober resolution of practical problems.

With Peter Behrens, the agency of the great artist is once again required. Behrens also claimed to recognize the intrinsic match of a "pure" *Sachlichkeit*, of a technically reckoned world, with the historic condition of modern society. He observed this more pessimistically than Lessing. It was a world of calculation, devoid of sentiments that were central to earlier stages of human destiny, and thus Behrens accepted this world only resignedly. Yet there was still a creative role for the great artist, for it was he who not only intuited this historical condition but had to discover the forms that would convey, as great art is presumed always to have done, the historic forces that control our destiny. For Behrens it was as true in his time as



12. "President Grant and the Emperor of Brazil starting the great Corliss Engine," Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, 1876. From *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Register of the Centennial Exposition 1876* (New York: Frank Leslie, 1876), 79. Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.

ever that culture and civilization, art and technique, were distinct. Again, for Behrens, art or beauty would not arrive unbidden, as Lessing suggested, through sound technical performance. On the contrary, the artist would realize the appropriate forms even if they had to be achieved against the dictates of rational technique or production. However, in a time such as the early twentieth century, said to be controlled by the historical forces of modern technique, the representative artistic forms might, perhaps had to, draw on the forms and materials of technology. Thus the iron, glass, and concrete of Behrens's turbine factory (fig. 13) — its scale and repetitive bays, its exposed pin joints — are all monumentalized in the temple form of this shrine of the sources of modern power, both literal and political, machines and factories as representatives of industry and state.

Behrens endorsed that form of historicism, or better, historical determinism, that looked back only to recognize an inevitable line of historical power, which, he proclaimed, it had always been the duty of art to embody and record. For Behrens art expressed the spirit of the time, which was, in turn, based in the then-operative authority. The spirit of modern times was found in the reduction of everything to the elemental realism of function, operating in the association of modern industry with the state. Lamentable as this may be, for Behrens the artist had no proper role but to find the artistic form to express this modern condition. Thus *Sachlichkeit*, or rather the deliberately cultivated unsentimentality that became the *Neue Sachlichkeit* is perceived as necessary. From such a point of view, the work need not be *sachlich*. Indeed, as a work of art, so conceived, it *could not* be *merely sachlich*. Rather, it was a matter of finding those forms that would reveal the unsentimental technocentrism of the modern condition. This unsentimentality, nevertheless, was driven by, and evoked, a pathos for the modern condition. When, in 1913, Adolf Behne analyzed alternative positions for the assimilation of industrial building in architecture, it was Behrens's sophisticated evocation of the perceived pathos of the modern condition that led Behne to see him as the arch *Pathetiker*.<sup>31</sup>

Harry Mallgrave's introduction to his translation of Otto Wagner's renowned lectures of the 1890s, titled *Modern Architecture*,<sup>32</sup> demonstrates the shifts in Wagner's position in the successive editions of that text — shifts that are separated from one another by only a few years. It would not be difficult to evidence related shifts in Wagner's architectural production and in his relation to architectural realism in those same years. Here I want to



13. Peter Behrens,  
AEG Turbine Factory, Berlin-Moabit, 1909.  
Frankfurt am Main, AEG Archiv, AEG  
Photo TV6324 1355.

risk only one potentially controversial observation: that the deservedly esteemed main banking hall of the Postsparkasse by Wagner (see pp. 136–37) anticipates the historicist, symbolic realism – the symbolic exploitation of *Sachlichkeit* – that I have already observed in Behrens. However, by a plausible choice of materials, detailing, and organization, Wagner does more than project this interior into a *symbolically* modern role. Our expectations of a banking hall – certainly the expectations of early twentieth-century Vienna – are defied, and yet in this case, we sense that this just might be the elemental fulfillment of the function of banking. This, too, is an unsentimental *Sachlichkeit*, but here there is a strength in its ambiguities: architectural realism exploited symbolically yet also an imaginative projection from a functional base.

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In my initial reconstruction of *Sachlichkeit* around 1900, architectural realists recognized and welcomed the fact that a work of architecture was more than the satisfaction of a set of technical requirements. A building could play an ambitious cultural role while also being *sachlich*. The artist/architect who labored under a self-imposed historical determinism – Behrens, for example – would, on the other hand, be concerned with the symbols of a *sachlich* condition; to actually *be sachlich* could only endanger the semantics of the work. We have, then, identified a third aspect of *Sachlichkeit*. To Muthesius’s distinction between a “pure” *Sachlichkeit* (the limited sense that might simply be allied with functionalism) and a *sachliche Kunst* or, simply, *Sachlichkeit* (as I have adduced it in Schröder, Muthesius, and Loos), we must add a third possibility: a representational pseudo-*Sachlichkeit* (as in Behrens). Of these, I would assess that the position associated with Loos and Muthesius is most resistant to criticism and will, indeed, still reward inquiry – which we may only initiate here.

The advocates of a realist architecture were particularly concerned with the dwelling. Frequently, the defining central characteristic of their admired examples was *Wohnlichkeit*, or livability. They found their most compelling precedents in the domestic architecture of late nineteenth-century England and America. Assuming the existence of a custom in Germany that was different from that of the English-speaking lands, the problem was not to transfer the Anglo-American accomplishment but to achieve its counterpart. The reconstruction of society and of architecture would proceed

from a new and adequate solution to the dwelling. In full awareness of the changes of modern times, but also according to our custom, the task was to shape a modern milieu, a place where we, as Goethe said, “*uns mit unsern Freunden gewöhnlich aufhalten werden*” (linger with our friends, according to our custom).

Schröder’s later work in the design of interiors was divergent from his Heymel apartment and the position associated with it.<sup>33</sup> Muthesius’s subsequent production continued, if with increasing conservatism, to participate in realist architecture (fig. 14).<sup>34</sup> Meier-Graefe, however, was prescient when, in seeking to extend the examples of this position, he pointed first, and with most conviction, to Adolf Loos. Loos’s subsequent work – we might take the Steiner house of 1910 as an example – is central to any body of realist architecture (fig. 15).

One of the strengths of realist architecture is to acknowledge that the creative process requires initial assumptions, at least some of which are provided by the cultural setting. This realist architecture is not concerned solely with what can be resolved by physical calculation but would also attend to how we can have a “modern milieu,” to quote Meier-Graefe for the last time. Or, as Heinrich Kulka paraphrased his teacher, Adolf Loos, “The primary problem should be to express the three-dimensional character of architecture clearly, in such a way that the inhabitants of a building should be able to live the cultural life of their generation.”<sup>35</sup>

That is an endorsement both of what is unique to the enterprise of architecture (“the three-dimensional character of architecture”) and also of its place in society (“the cultural life of their generation”) – a simultaneousness that I think I recognize in Loos’s work, both the Steiner house and the so-called Looshaus, for example. Those words attributed to Loos are also, perhaps, a more *sachlich* way of saying what Goethe had said.

The mention of Muthesius and Loos as contributors to a realist architecture also reveals that there are competing programs within that vision. Concerning, for example, the Deutscher Werkbund, a renowned organization having as one of its goals the cooperation of art and industry, the opposing advocacies of Muthesius and Loos present an important and challenging issue beyond the scope of this essay.<sup>36</sup> We may, however, rehearse some other differences. Despite his attention to English domestic architecture, Muthesius was concertedly nationalist, polemicizing a distinctly German artistic production. Loos was critical of the Viennese situation, honing his



14. Hermann Muthesius,  
study and music room, Freudenberg house,  
Berlin-Nikolassee, 1907-1908.  
Photo: Courtesy Lichtbildverlag Dr. Franz  
Stoedtner, 47521.



15. Adolf Loos,  
view from the garden, Steiner house,  
Vienna, 1910.  
© 1993 ARS, New York/VBK, Wien.  
Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina.

arguments with international awareness and advocating the acceptance of certain foreign innovations. Nonetheless, it is the architectural production of Muthesius that is more derivative than that of Loos. Muthesius's work consists predominantly of villas for the privileged, stressing individualist differentiation. Even Loos's larger houses would appear to be for people of somewhat lesser means than those of Muthesius, and while they provide for personal idiosyncrasy, that individuality is conscientiously contained within an envelope responsible to public decorum. Furthermore, Loos's production, extending as it does over a range of urban settings and uses, demonstrates a greater potential contribution of a realist architecture. In general, Loos's thought and production, being more consistent and more critical, as well as more innovative, would provide the preferred basis for a characterization and evaluation of a program of realist architecture.

Despite this appreciation of Loos, I would not like to end without recognizing certain dangers that this program of realist architecture may elide. While it is one of the strengths of such an architecture to concern itself with the cultural life of its generation, one is thereby also implicated in that cultural life. A *sachlich* search of this cultural life may incline one to take the status quo as a given. Certain forms or conventions may not be raised to consciousness. Others may be accepted or even "realistically" endorsed simply because they are there. Thus, the uncritical appreciation of anonymous or vernacular forms of a place or of the social as well as physical conventions of that place can emerge. Still more problematic, these concerns may be employed to support the nostalgic and finally coercive program of a rooted, totalizing culture. The definition and appreciation of regional differences can escalate into nationalism and, finally, to racism. Muthesius's formulations contained from the outset an evident nationalism employed to resist the French, to delimit even that which might be learned from much-studied English works, and to impel a chauvinist dimension within his program for the German arts. Still more emphatic commitments to the invention of a rooted German culture were briefly mentioned at the beginning of this essay, and indeed such efforts were part of a broad and sustained program in the architectural culture of Germany before and after 1900. The name of Paul Schultze-Naumburg may suffice to evidence the possible transition from an inquiry into local architectural culture to a racist program.<sup>37</sup> It is this problematic aspect of German architecture to which Francesco Dal Co gives valuable and concerted attention, rightly

noting the close ties between the appeals to rootedness and the ambitions for a true “culture of dwelling,” or *Wohnkultur*.<sup>38</sup> Yet, I think it is correct to note that the form of *Wohnkultur* that one may recognize in the advocacy of Meier-Graefe, in Loos, and in the best of Muthesius’s work is both critical and projective, not making an appeal to rootedness but rather to an interactive transformation of both architecture and social and cultural life. The internationalism of the polemicists noted in this essay can be documented in their own writings — works by two of those who were shortly to be associated with *Der Insel*, for example: Meier-Graefe in *Dekorative Kunst* of 1898 and Otto Julius Bierbaum in *Der bunte Vogel*, a publication of the same year.<sup>39</sup>

It is possible, I think, to identify where the faulted programs transgress the position advanced as *sachliche Kunst*, or realist architecture. In contrast to “pure” *Sachlichkeit*, I would argue, a strength of *sachliche Kunst* is its acceptance, but properly a critical acceptance, of a cultural setting as a necessary and enabling condition for its realist inquiry. This is the acceptance of a metaphysic, of certain speculations, of an arbitrariness at the very beginning of the inquiry. To avoid the slide from this critical acceptance of convention to an acceptance of the status quo, or still more problematically to positions of nationalism and racism, it is imperative that one not lose sight of the arbitrary basis of conventions — that they be weighed in the light of alternatives and innovations, be as much the focus of criticism as of exposition. Here is the crucial difference between the work of Loos and that of Schultze-Naumburg or, less dramatically, even between Loos and Muthesius.

As a conclusion, it is possible to give contemporary voice to these concerns for a realist architecture — in relation to industrial building rather than on the softer ground of *Wohnkultur*. In the essay “Romantiker, Pathetiker und Logiker im modernen Industriebau” (Proponents of the romantic, the pathetic, and the logical in modern industrial building), 1913, in which Adolf Behne analyzed Behrens as a *Pathetiker*, he similarly implied dismissal, however respectfully, of the romanticism he found in the approach exemplified by Richard Riemerschmid’s factory for the Deutsche Werkstätten at Hellerau. It is notable that Behne does not even entertain the possibility of a “pure” *Sachlichkeit* of engineered industrial buildings. Rather, the understated but nonetheless clear advocacy of his essay is for the “logical” position he finds in the industrial architecture of Hans Poelzig — whether the water tower at Posen or the Milch & Co. chemical plant at



16. Hans Poelzig,  
Milch & Co. chemical plant, Lubań, near  
present-day Poznań (Poland), 1912.  
Photo: Courtesy Lichtbildverlag Dr. Franz  
Stoedtner, 128 124.

Lubań (fig. 16). His own words are most eloquent in revealing the cause of *sachliche Kunst* and also in describing the factory. Following his discussion of the industrial architecture of Behrens and Riemerschmid, he wrote:

When one turns [after the consideration of Riemerschmid and Behrens] to the buildings of the Breslau architect Hans Poelzig, one experiences a feeling of liberation and clarification. We receive the impression of unconditional *Sachlichkeit* from the Posen water tower, whose staircase to the balcony is a showpiece of modern architecture, or from the chemical factories of Milch & Co. in Lubań. It is very remarkable how these architectural works are without any emotional ballast – indeed, at first glance they can scarcely be recognized as particularly “artistic” works! This is the best proof of their *Sachlichkeit*. Yet, if we study them a little longer, their aesthetic appeal becomes ever more intense, their form appears purer and stronger. Precisely because these works are so unintentional, so untrendy, because they have sprouted forth so naturally from within, the work expressed in the forms of these factories becomes so powerful. In contrast to the buildings of Riemerschmid and Behrens, Poelzig's works seem eminently natural. Poelzig does not think of romanticizing industry, and he does not imbue his buildings with pathos. He accepts them very simply, very naturally, and very matter-of-factly. For this reason, nothing appears in his creative process that could deflect or hinder the *sachlich-necessary* course. The architectural logic is not thwarted by feeling, the artistic logic consistently pursues its own path with no goal other than to give the best form and solution to the *sachliche* requirements of the factory owner! In this sense, we might describe Hans Poelzig as a logician of architecture.<sup>40</sup>

Behne concluded by recognizing Bruno Taut, especially for his *Monument des Eisens* (Monument of iron) in Leipzig, as the emerging figure in this logical/artistic/*sachliche* cause. To this catalog we might add not only the works of Loos but also Otto Wagner's Postsparkasse, which, in avoiding the ultimate reduction of *Sachlichkeit* to symbolism, could serve not only as an honored precedent but also as a continuing force for a modern *sachliche Kunst*.

## NOTES

1. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. John Gearey, trans. Ellen and Ernest von Nardoff (New York: Suhrkamp, 1986), 78; the brackets indicate slight departures from the translation cited. Idem, "Einleitung in die Propyläen," *Die Insel* 1 (September 1900), x: "Der Jungling, wenn Natur und Kunst ihn anziehen, glaubt mit einem lebhaften Streben bald in das innerste Heiligtum zu dringen; der Mann bemerkt, nach langem Umherwandeln, dass er sich noch immer in den Vorhöfen befinde.

*Eine solche Betrachtung hat unsern Titel veranlasst. Stufe, Thor, Eingang, Vorhalle, der Raum zwischen dem Innern und Äussern, zwischen dem Heiligen und Gemeinen kann nur die Stelle sein, auf der wir uns mit unsern Freunden gewöhnlich aufhalten werden."*

2. Goethe, 1986 (see note 1), 78.

3. The September 1900 issue of *Die Insel* was the last issue to appear during the first year of publication.

4. *Die Insel* 1, no. 1 (October 1899): 2: "Indem wir unseren Veröffentlichungen den Namen 'Die Insel' beilegen, wollten wir nur zu erkennen geben, wie wenig wir geneigt sind, in das jetzt so vielerorts übliche Triumphgeschrei über die glorreichen Resultate irgendwelcher moderner Kunstbestrebungen einzustimmen, und wie sehr wir uns der ungeheuren inneren und äusseren Schwierigkeiten bewusst sind, die sich einer wünschenswerten Entwicklung unseres Kunstlebens in den Weg stellen." (Unless otherwise indicated all translations are mine.)

5. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), 18.

6. *Ibid.*, 141–42.

7. This is the subject of the following discussion; but we may note here one of the signal works in the continuing concern to privilege culture and community in confrontation with civilization: Ferdinand Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag [R. Reiland], 1887). This has been translated by Charles P. Loomis under the title *Community and Society* (East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1957). This concern and its extension in architecture and crafts down to the Deutscher Werkbund is the subject of Francesco Dal Co, *Figures of Architecture and Thought: German Architecture Culture, 1880–1920* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990).

8. Peter Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst: Eine Betrachtung des Theaters als höchsten Kultursymbol* (Leipzig: Diederichs, 1900); idem, "Die 'Lebensmesse' von Richard Dehmel als festliches Spiel," *Rheinlande* 1, no. 4 (January 1901): 28–40; idem, "Über die Kunst auf der Bühne," *Frankfurter Zeitung* 54, no. 78 *Morgenblatt* (20 March 1910): 1–3 (the latter has been translated by Howard Fitzpatrick in *Perspecta* 26 [1990]: 135–42); Stanford Anderson, "The Theater as Peter Behrens' Highest Kultursymbol," *Perspecta* 26 (1990): 103–34.

9. This is a tradition owing much to the late nineteenth-century writings of Paul de Lagarde and Julius Langbehn, brilliantly studied in Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study*

in *the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1961). See also Dal Co (see note 7), esp. 211ff. The most sustained architectural production related to this quest for a rooted German culture is that of Heinrich Tessenow. See the writings by and about Tessenow included in Richard Burdett and Wilfried Wang, eds., *9H On Rigor* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

10. Gustav Pauli, "Rudolf Alexander Schröder," *Dekorative Kunst* 14, no. 9 (June 1911): 401–32; Ursula and Günter Heiderich, *1899–1931: Rudolf Alexander Schröder und die Wohnkunst* (Bremen: Hauschild, 1977), esp. 10ff; idem, *Rudolf Alexander Schröder: Wohnräume und Möbel*, exh. cat. (Bremen: Hauschild, 1978).

11. Julius Meier-Graefe, "Ein modernes Milieu," *Dekorative Kunst* 4, no. 7 (April 1901): 261: "*Sehr schön ist auch die Diele, ein sehr grosser Raum, der ganz in Spiegelscheiben tapeziert ist, deren feinlinige mathematische Teilung die Flächen kaum merkbar belebt. Hier herrscht dunkle, fast mystische Stille; nichts wie diese geteilten Spiegel, die grossen Sophas mit den winzigen Tischen davor, der enorme Kamin giebt einen ganz bestimmten würdigen Charakter. Abends wenn die Scheite im Kamin brennen und allein das Licht geben, wird es gemütlich, man rückt den Sessel um den Kamin und vergisst Ort und Zeit, ein Idealraum zum Träumen!*"

12. *Ibid.*, 249.

13. Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, *Gedaechtnisausstellung Thomas Theodor Heine: 1867–1948*, exh. cat. (Braunschweig: Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, 1949), 10–11.

14. Meier-Graefe (see note 11): 262–64: "*Es ist überall dasselbe Prinzip guten Geschmacks und gesunden Menschenverstandes. Dieses ist der bleibende Eindruck und er hat springende kulturelle Bedeutung. Hier wurde der Nachweis geliefert, dass es nicht so unendlich tiefer Künste und auch nicht so sehr des A tout prix-Modernismus bedarf, um ein anständiges Milieu zu schaffen, als das Prestige der meisten führenden Künstler unserer Bewegung glauben lassen möchte. Sie alle ohne Ausnahme können an dieser einfachen Lösung viel lernen, vor allem das beste der modernen Prinzipien, dass man nicht wenig genug Kunst anwenden kann, um Künstler zu sein. Die Bewegung wird wahrscheinlich und hoffentlich den Schröder'schen Weg gehen... Die Wiener fangen schon an, Loos macht ostentativ in Wien Möbel ohne jedes Ornament und bleibt nicht ohne Einfluss.*"

Hermann Muthesius, who, as we shall shortly see, was to endorse Meier-Graefe's appreciation of the Heymel apartment, also sustained the call for artistic production devoid of artfulness. In his *Kunstgewerbe und Architektur* (Jena: Diederichs, 1907), Muthesius programatically ends the chapter titled "Das Moderne in der Architektur" with the words of Hamlet's mother to Polonius: "More matter with less art."

Meier-Graefe's argument supports the conscious distinction of Schröder's Heymel apartment from the work of such recognized leaders as Behrens, Joseph Olbrich, and others. Behrens's friend the poet Richard Dehmel made the same distinction invidiously, supporting the seri-

ousness of Behrens's concern with "Kultur und Stil" as against that of the "Inselgigerl" (the Insel-dandies). Richard Dehmel. *Ausgewählte Briefe* (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1922), 1: no. 302 (2 February 1901, to Gustav Kuhl). Yet the third, and later dominant, editor of *Die Insel*, Otto Julius Bierbaum, formerly part of the *Pan* circle, was a friend of Behrens and specifically endorsed him as the artist to provide the appropriate setting for one of Bierbaum's own theater pieces. See Otto Julius Bierbaum, *Die vernarrte Prinzess, mit einer Vorrede über das musikalische Bühnenspiel* (1898; Munich: Langen, 1904), xxxv.

15. Meier-Graefe (see note 11), 264. The artists referenced are the Viennese Koloman Moser and Josef Hoffmann and the Munich artist Otto Eckmann. See, respectively, Werner Fenz, *Kolo Moser* (Salzburg: Residenz-Verlag, 1976); Eduard F. Sekler, *Josef Hoffmann: The Architectural Work* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985); Aemilius Fendler, *Otto Eckmann*, 1. Sonderheft *Berliner Architekturwelt* (Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1901).

16. Robert Dohme, *Das englische Haus: Eine kultur- und baugeschichtliche Skizze* (Braunschweig: G. Westermann, 1888). An extensive study of German attention to English, particularly domestic, architecture is Stefan Muthesius, *Das englische Vorbild: Eine Studie zu den deutschen Reformbewegungen in Architektur, Wohnbau und Kunstgewerbe im späteren 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Prestel, 1974).

17. Peter Jessen, "Der kunstgewerbliche Geschmack in England," *Kunstgewerbeblatt*, n.s., 3, no. 9 (June 1892): 93–103, and related articles in the numbers of this journal for October 1892 and January and February 1893. Julius Lessing, "Neue Wege," *Kunstgewerbeblatt*, n.s., 6, no. 1 (October 1894): 1–5. Alfred Lichtwark, "Zur Einführung," *Pan* 1 (1895–1896): 97–100.

18. Wilhelm Bode, *Kunst und Kunstgewerbe am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Cassirer, 1901), 37: "Die amerikanische Kunst hat alle Vorzüge der Jugend: sie ist frisch und naïv, sie entspringt aus dem praktischen Bedürfnisse und ist doch zugleich phantasievoll und ideal, sie ist voll Ausdauer und Zuversicht; alles Eigenschaften, die ihr einen raschen Fortschritt auf dem betretenen Wege sichern. Die Kunst ist in Amerika eine gesunde Pflanze, die nicht künstlich gezüchtet oder getrieben ist, sondern ausschliesslich aus dem Bedürfnis herausgewachsen ist. Sie beruht auf einem hoch entwickelten Handwerk und wird getragen von einem ausgesprochen nationalen Leben, dessen ideale Ansprüche sie zu befriedigen berufen ist."

19. Hermann Muthesius, "Neues Ornament und neue Kunst," *Dekorative Kunst* 4, no. 9 (June 1901): 350: "Eine grosse Freude war es, ... den Aufsatz von Meier-Graefe zu lesen, ... in dessen Begleitung eine Wohnungsausstattung vorgeführt wurde, die einen ganz neuen, bisher bei uns nicht gekannten Geist athmete."

20. *Ibid.*, 365–66: "... das fast alle die Ideale einer echten neuen Kunst zu verwirklichen scheint und in seiner schlichten Behaglichkeit und ornamentlosen Grösse eine wahre Erquickung bedeutet."

21. Muthesius (see note 19), 361–62: "... zunächst die rein praktischen. ... Sie sind weit einfacher zu erfüllen, als man aus den Ausklügelien, die verschiedenen Vertreter der neuen Kunst bei ihren

*Schöpfungen angewandt haben, schliessen könnte.... In der Architektur hat das 'Stilmachen' lange die Quellen sachlichen Fortschrittes verstopft.... Wollte man dieser Stil- und Architekturmacherei die Thüre weisen, so würde man Wunder an sachlichem Fortschritte erleben."*

Muthesius's disdain for this "Architekturmacherei" must be seen in light of his confrontation of an academic *Architektur* versus an authentic *Baukunst* – a distinction he was soon to give compelling exposition in his *Stilarchitektur und Baukunst: Wandlungen der Architektur im XIX. Jahrhundert und ihr heutiger Standpunkt* (Mülheim-Ruhr: K. Schimmelpfeng, 1902; reprint, Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1976). See Hermann Muthesius, *Style-Architecture and Building-Art*, trans. Stanford Anderson (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, forthcoming).

22. Richard Streiter, "Aus München," *Pan* 2, no. 3 (1896): 249; also in *Richard Streiter: Ausgewählte Schriften zur Aesthetik und Kunst-Geschichte* (Munich: Delphin, 1913), 30: "Realismus in der Architektur, das ist die weitgehendste Berücksichtigung der realen Werdebedingungen eines Bauwerks, die möglichst vollkommene Erfüllung der Forderungen der Zweckmässigkeit, Bequemlichkeit, Gesundheitsförderlichkeit, mit einem Wort... die Sachlichkeit. Aber das ist noch nicht alles. Wie der Realismus der Dichtung als eine seiner Hauptaufgaben es betrachtet, den Zusammenhang der Charaktere mit ihrem Milieu scharf ins Auge zu fassen, so sieht die verwandte Richtung in der Architektur ein vor allem erstrebenswertes Ziel künstlerischer Wahrhaftigkeit darin den Charakter eines Bauwerkes nicht aus seiner Zweckbestimmung allein, sondern auch aus dem Milieu, aus der Eigenart der jeweilig vorhandenen Baustoffe, aus der landschaftlich und geschichtlich bedingten Stimmung der Örtlichkeit heraus zu entwickeln."

23. Muthesius, 1902 (see note 21), 64.

24. Muthesius, 1902 (see note 21), 65–66: "... das jetzt auftretende Verlangen, die Sonderheit des Gebäudes, die Bestimmungsart des Raumes architektonisch zu charakterisieren."

25. With the term "realist art," I do not intend to subsume all other uses of that term from nineteenth-century French painting to socialist realism but rather to avail myself of an English term, here used with specific reference to the concept of *sachliche Kunst* discussed in this essay.

26. A similar interpretation of architecture may already be recognized in Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E. F. J. Payne (Indian Hills, Colo.: Falcon's Wing Press, 1958; reprint, New York: Dover, 1969), esp. 1: sec. 43. Schopenhauer's text was first published in 1819. The translation that I cite here is based upon the third edition of 1859.

27. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5.

28. Françoise Forster-Hahn, "Aspects of Berlin Realism: From the Prosaic to the Ugly," in Gabriel P. Weisberg, ed., *The European Realist Tradition* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1983), 124–44, pls. 4.1–4.27.

29. Fritz Schmalenbach, "The Term *Neue Sachlichkeit*," *Art Bulletin* 22 (September 1940): 161–65. Although written in 1936, Schmalenbach's essay was first published in *Art Bulletin*. It

appeared in German in *Kunsthistorische Studien* (Basel: Author, 1941), 22–32.

30. Lessing (see note 17), 5: “*Bequem oder nicht: unsere Arbeit hat einzusetzen auf dem Boden des praktischen Lebens unserer Zeit, hat diejenigen Formen zu schaffen, welche unseren Bedürfnissen, unserer Technik, unseren Material entsprechen. Wenn wir uns auf diesem Wege zu einer Form der Schönheit im Sinne unseres naturwissenschaftlichen Zeitalters emporarbeiten, so wird sie nicht aussehen wie die fromme Schönheit der Gotik oder die üppige der Renaissance, aber sie wird aussehen wie die vielleicht etwas herbe Schönheit aus dem Schlusse des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, und das ist es, was man von uns verlangen kann.*”

31. Adolf Behne, “Romantiker, Pathetiker und Logiker im modernen Industriebau,” *Preußische Jahrbücher* 154, no. 1 (October 1913): 171–74.

32. Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1988).

33. See note 10, above.

34. Julius Posener, “Muthesius as Architect,” *Lotus* 9 (February 1975): 104–15; Silvano Custozza, Maurizio Vogliazzo, and Julius Posener, *Muthesius* (Milan: Electa, 1981).

35. Heinrich Kulka, “Adolf Loos,” *Architects’ Yearbook* 9 (1960): 10.

36. Hermann Muthesius, “Wo stehen wir?” *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Werkbundes 1912* (Jena: Diederichs, 1912): 11–26 (address given at the annual meeting of the Deutscher Werkbund in Dresden, 1911); idem, *Die Werkbund-Arbeit der Zukunft und Aussprache darüber...* (Jena: Diederichs, 1914); Hans Joachim Hubrich, *Hermann Muthesius: Die Schriften zu Architektur, Kunstgewerbe, Industrie in der “Neuen Bewegung”* (Berlin: Mann, 1981). Adolf Loos, “Die Überflüssigen (Deutscher Werkbund),” in *Trotzdem 1900–1930* (1908; Innsbruck: Brenner, 1931; reprint, Vienna: G. Prachner, 1982), 71–73. On the Werkbund in general, see Joan Campbell, *The German Werkbund: The Politics of Reform in the Applied Arts* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978). See also Stanford Anderson, “Deutscher Werkbund – The 1914 Debate: Hermann Muthesius versus Henry van de Velde,” in Ben Farmer and Hentie Louw, eds., *Companion to Contemporary Architectural Thought* (London: Routledge, 1993), 462–67.

37. Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918–1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968), esp. 133ff.

38. Dal Co (see note 7), passim.

39. Julius Meier-Graefe and H. Bruckmann, *Dekorative Kunst* 2, no. 3 (October 1898): 1 (editorial supporting internationalism); Otto Julius Bierbaum, “National!” *Der bunte Vogel von 1899: Ein Kalenderbuch... mit Buchschmuck von Peter Behrens* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1898), 130–41.

40. Behne (see note 31), 174: “*Wendet man dann den Blick auf die Bauten des Breslauer Hans Poelzig, so erfährt man ein Gefühl der Befreiung und Klärung. Man erhält vom Posener Wasserturm, dessen Treppe zur Empore ein Glanzstück moderner Baukunst ist, oder von den*

*Chemischen Fabriken Milch & Co. in Lauban [sic] den Eindruck einer unbedingten Sachlichkeit. Es ist ganz merkwürdig, wie diese Architekturen ohne jeden Gefühlsballast sind, ja zunächst kaum eine besondere 'künstlerische' Arbeit erkennen lassen! Der beste Beweis für ihre Sachlichkeit! Aber bei längerer Betrachtung üben sie eine immer steigende ästhetische Anziehungskraft aus, erscheint ihre Form immer reiner und stärker. Gerade weil sie so absichtslos, so tendenzlos sind, weil sie von innen her ganz natürlich gewachsen sind, spricht sich in den Formen dieser Fabrikhäuser die Arbeit so überwältigend stark aus. Den Riemerschmidschen wie den Behrenschen Bauten gegenüber erscheinen die Arbeiten Poelzigs als eminent natürlich. Poelzig denkt nicht daran, die Industrie zu romantisieren, aber er nimmt sie auch nicht pathetisch, er nimmt sie ganz einfach, ganz natürlich, ganz selbstverständlich. Und deshalb tritt nichts in seinem Schaffensprozess ein, das den sachlich-notwendigen Verlauf umbiegen oder hemmen könnte. Die architektonische Logik wird von keinem Gefühlsmoment durchkreuzt, die künstlerische Logik geht konsequent ihren Weg, mit keinem anderen Ziel als dem, den von dem Fabrikherrn gestellten Anforderung sachlich die beste Form und Lösung zu geben! In diesem Sinne möchten wir Hans Poelzig als den Logiker bezeichnen."*

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1. Salomon Kleiner,  
 drawing after a wooden model of Josef  
 Emanuel Fischer von Erlach's Burgtheater as  
 seen from the Michaelerplatz, ca. 1725.  
 From Salomon Kleiner. *Wahrhafte und  
 genaue Abbildung...* (Augsburg: J. A. Pfeffel,  
 1725), 3: pl. 17.  
 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

Werner Oechslin

THE EVOLUTIONARY WAY TO  
MODERN ARCHITECTURE:  
THE PARADIGM OF *STILHÜLSE UND KERN*

The nocturnal sky shows glimmering nebulas among the brilliant miracle of stars – either old, extinct systems scattered throughout the universe or cosmic dust just being formed around a nucleus or a condition between destruction and regeneration.

This is a suitable analogy for similar phenomena on the horizon of art history: signs of the world of art passing into the formless and at the same time suggesting the phase of a new formation in the making. – Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil*, 1860<sup>1</sup>

In the end the creative building spirit of the period must work its way up from the root. That root appears to have been withering for a long time, but now the mysterious vital forces push up and the real, true, and essential building form of the period grows powerful limbs within the traditional masks and draperies of style. And if in the end it is completely organized and fully mature, then the so beautifully ornamented, historical *Stilhülsen* will peel away; they are shed forever and the new *Kern* appears bright and clear in the sunlight.

– Joseph Bayer, “Moderne Bautypen,” 1886<sup>2</sup>

In building itself lies the germ of every method of construction, whose development advances with the purpose. The creation of such work corresponds to the idea of pure utility. But it could not suffice; the sense of beauty dwelling within man called on art and made her the constant companion of building. Thus arose architecture!... The useful result of this way of looking at things is very simple. “The architect always has to develop the art-form out of construction.”

– Otto Wagner, *Moderne Architektur*, 1896<sup>3</sup>

A new age arrived – the Modern. Architecture became the building-art [*Baukunst*]. Otto Wagner brought it about. His word inspired it; it became deed and went out into the world. Wherever new architectural emotions may be felt, we will feel Wagner in our innermost depths. We should not forget this! He created the atmosphere in which the seeds to new future greatness could live and grow.

–Joseph August Lux, *Otto Wagner*, 1914<sup>4</sup>

The historiography of Modernism has time and again defined the topos of the complete break with tradition and history. Here, as in every “dawning of an era,” the “new” has been emphasized above all else, and differing and more subtle views have been repressed. Historiography has been modeled on the mechanisms of the avant-garde; mottos such as “art is dead, long live art” or the rejection of both history and the critic – as in the *Manifesto dei pittori futuristi* (Manifesto of Futurist painters) of 11 February 1910 – have overwhelmed, as it were, less radical explanations.<sup>5</sup> Yet authors have expressed themselves in very different ways concerning what the “new” actually was or wherein resided the corresponding “change of paradigm.” Depending on whether one saw the essential step toward Modernism in the overcoming of historicism, in the discovery of such new materials as glass and iron and related methods of construction, or programmatically in the replacement of architecture with a *Baukunst* (as the biographer Joseph August Lux claimed for Otto Wagner),<sup>6</sup> one accentuated different aspects of the problem. Today, it might be appropriate not merely to reassess such explanations but even to make the explanations themselves the subject of investigation, since the applicable arguments are also part of the architectural and historical conception of the period.<sup>7</sup>

Wagner’s own conception, as formulated in *Moderne Architektur* (later retitled *Die Baukunst unserer Zeit* [The building-art of our time]), conformed in many respects to traditional interpretations of the development of Modernism.<sup>8</sup> Beginning with the preface to the first edition of his text, dated October 1895, Wagner pleaded for “modern life” as the “sole departure point” and punctuated his appeal by shouting a “loud and encouraging ‘forward.’”<sup>9</sup> By 1898 he could acknowledge: “Scarcely three years have passed since that time, and more quickly than even I would have thought my words have proven true. Almost everywhere the Modern Movement has marched in victorious.”<sup>10</sup> Invoking the image of a phoenix rising from the ashes, he exclaimed, “And this victory – it is there!”<sup>11</sup>

Wagner's remarks certainly indicate that Modernism was realized in the 1890s.<sup>12</sup> Yet however much Wagner revealed himself to be not only a witness to but also a supporter of this movement, it is also true that from the perspective of modernist historiography his case was more often than not judged as atypical and was therefore neglected. In retrospect, this is completely understandable, considering the outward aspects of his career. His professional life encompassed the Ringstraße phenomenon and ended with the collapse of the Danube monarchy in 1918. Even though he appeared as a champion of "modern architecture" and had to defend himself against the resulting criticism, he was still integrated into the complex cultural situation that existed before World War I and was marked with its contradictions. His struggle for the new cause did not prevent him in later years from seeking recognition in the established beaux-arts circles.<sup>13</sup> On the occasion of the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1900, he represented Austria at the Congrès international des architectes as a member of the permanent committee.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, he listed his position in the official publication for the event as "architect of His Imperial and Royal Majesty the emperor of Austria, professor at the imperial and royal academy, correspondent of the Central Society of French Architects."<sup>15</sup> A glance at the projects of the *Wagnerschule* will suffice to show how similar they were to the ambitious competition projects of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris – notwithstanding the influence of the Vienna Secession.<sup>16</sup>

Thus one surely does Wagner an injustice by reducing him to a modernist viewpoint, as one does by overlooking his important contribution to the broader development. There are sufficient examples and explanations of both shortcomings. The historical description of Modernism was in large part carried out by the generation that focused on the events after 1918. The Museum of Modern Art exhibition of 1932 *The International Style*, whose significance for the "codification" of Modernism should not be underestimated, limited itself to the decade 1922–1932, although its authors discussed history and style beyond this narrow framework. With the art historian Sigfried Giedion, the events before 1910 were relegated to "preliminary stages": they were considered selectively from the perspective of later developments.<sup>17</sup> According to this criterion, much of the actual complexity of Wagner's position receded, while paradoxically, Giedion also spoke of "Wagner's isolation."<sup>18</sup> This allowed him to read later, more radical, conceptions of Modernism into the earlier phases of their origin and prepara-

tion. Nevertheless, Giedion's listing of Hendrik Petrus Berlage, Wagner, and above all Victor Horta as "precursors of contemporary architecture" recalled earlier appraisals and judgments, for instance, Adolf Behne's triad of Berlage, Alfred Messel, and Wagner in *Der moderne Zweckbau* (Modern functional building), 1926. Walter Gropius expanded the list of names in 1934.<sup>19</sup> Thus it is sufficiently demonstrated that despite all the different evaluations, Wagner's role and contribution to Modernism – that is, prior to a more exact formulation – was always secure.

But here is where the difficulties begin. If one wants, above all else, to trace Modernism – in the sense of Giedion and Nikolaus Pevsner, and therefore on the basis of English and French models – to the technical renewal of an architecture of iron and glass, then it is easy to furnish the appropriate passages in which Wagner emphasized the principle of construction.<sup>20</sup> Yet if one scrutinizes his position more closely, the complexity of this seemingly indisputable issue becomes apparent. Wagner's explanation of "construction" proceeded not from a technical definition of this concept but very generally from "the idea of pure utility"; this alone, however, was insufficient, and accordingly, "the sense of beauty dwelling within man called on art."<sup>21</sup> Wagner felt it imperative that the process should not be governed by the engineer's way of conceptualizing the problem – encouraged by the most recent developments – but rather by the eternal relation of construction and the art-form, that is, their close kinship with "logical thought."<sup>22</sup> In this respect, he argued in a way similar to Peter Behrens, who for his part pleaded in a most positive way for a technical renewal in order to overcome a materialist view.<sup>23</sup> But even in this regard further distinctions emerge in the argument. Whereas Behrens, following Alois Riegl, held Semper responsible for the vanquished "mechanistic conception of the nature of the work of art," Wagner did just the reverse – with a few reservations to be sure – by lauding Semper for being the first to recognize the relation of need, purpose, and construction. "And by that alone he [Semper] quite clearly indicated the path that we must take."<sup>24</sup>

Thus an all-too-exclusive derivation of Modernism from the consequences of industrialization can no longer be maintained. And it would be even more difficult to deduce a "break" with history from a consideration of Wagner's principle of construction. This glance at a few aspects of the problem already indicates that Wagner's path to Modernism was evolutionary and had very little to do with the idea of a revolution or a *tabula rasa*.<sup>25</sup>

With this, another dimension of the argument is suggested. Unlike the “avant-garde,” which since the 1920s has preferred to argue with images and rhetorical gestures, the generation fighting for the renewal of architecture in the period 1890–1914 very often put forth substantial arguments and sought foundations that could be implemented.<sup>26</sup> In the final analysis, the prescriptions of a Semper or a Carl Bötticher and their younger contemporaries (whether architects or art historians) were basically attainable and in the broadest sense might be seen together with concurrent architectural developments. In this respect the emphasis that Wagner initially placed on continuity is important in that it allowed him to describe the progress all the more precisely.

The example of his relation to Semper is typical. Whereas he attributed to Semper the honor of having shown the way, he also qualified Semper’s significance with the observation that he, “like Darwin,” lacked the courage “to complete his theories from above and below.”<sup>27</sup> This confirms in a reverse way that Wagner himself was conscious of ideas and models corresponding to tradition. Not only should the architect be skilled in every aspect of his profession, but he should also, according to another statement, “summon every means to recapture and maintain that position that belongs to him absolutely because of his ability and knowledge.”<sup>28</sup> Such a weighty judgment also corresponds to Wagner’s concluding assertion. “The magnificent progress of civilization will show us clearly what we should learn from the ancients, and what we should leave behind, and the correctly taken path will surely lead us to the goal of creating the new, the beautiful.”<sup>29</sup> And just as he could generalize in a historical sense the postulate of Modernism — “But the task of art, and therefore also of modern art, has remained what it has been in all times” — he could also appear as a defender of a genuine tradition. “With the impetus of the Modern Movement, tradition has been given its true value and lost its overemphasis; archaeology has been reduced to an auxiliary science of art, which, one hopes, it will always remain.”<sup>30</sup>

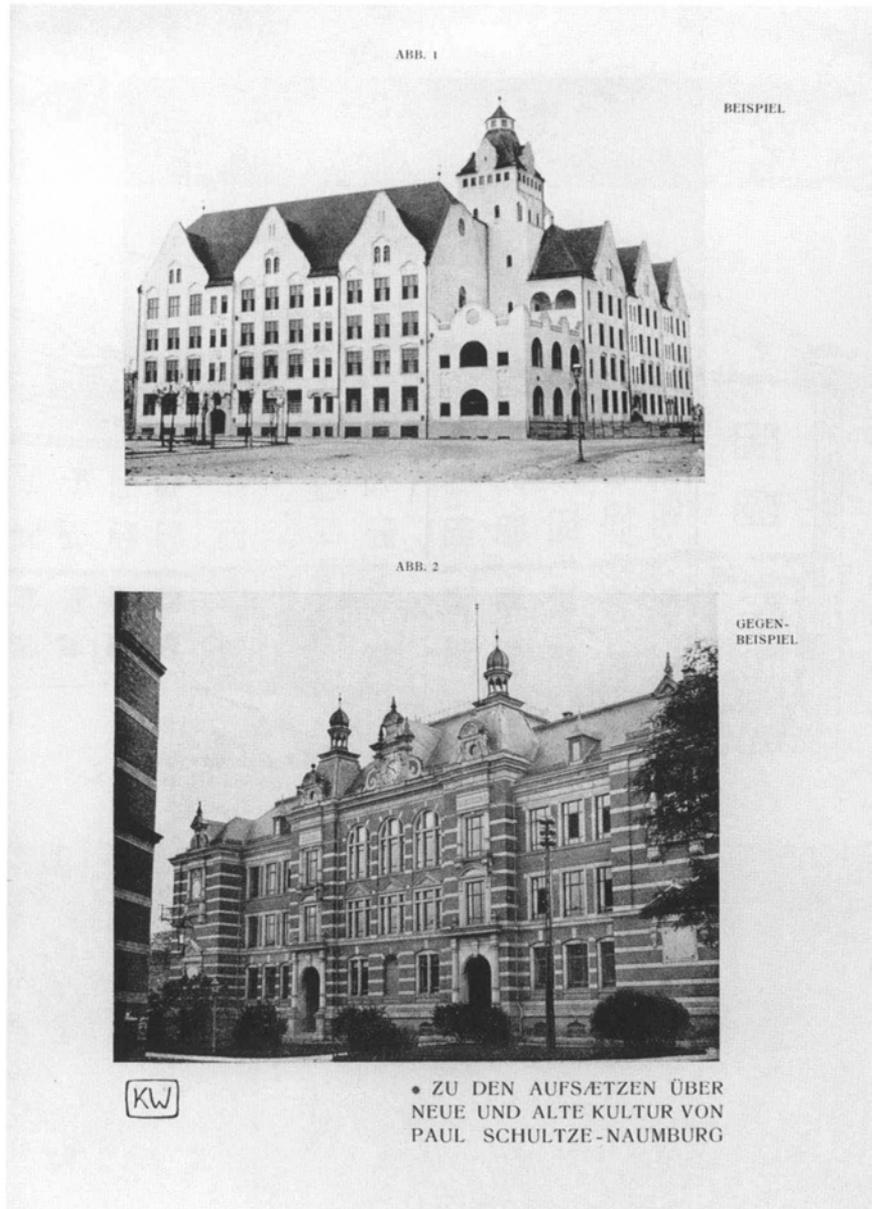
The premises of the following investigation are thus identified. They preclude us from viewing Wagner’s work simply under the guise of novelty and permit us to emphasize better the evolutionary nature of Modernism.<sup>31</sup> The metaphor of *Stilhülse und Kern* (the stylistic “hull,” or shell, and the inner “kernel,” or core) may initially suggest this meaning — even if we, in running ahead of the analysis of the relevant context, may employ it only

in the broadest sense – that Wagner’s architecture gradually detached itself from the Semperian lineage and “peeled off” the shell, setting free, so to speak, the *Kern* of a modern conception!<sup>32</sup>

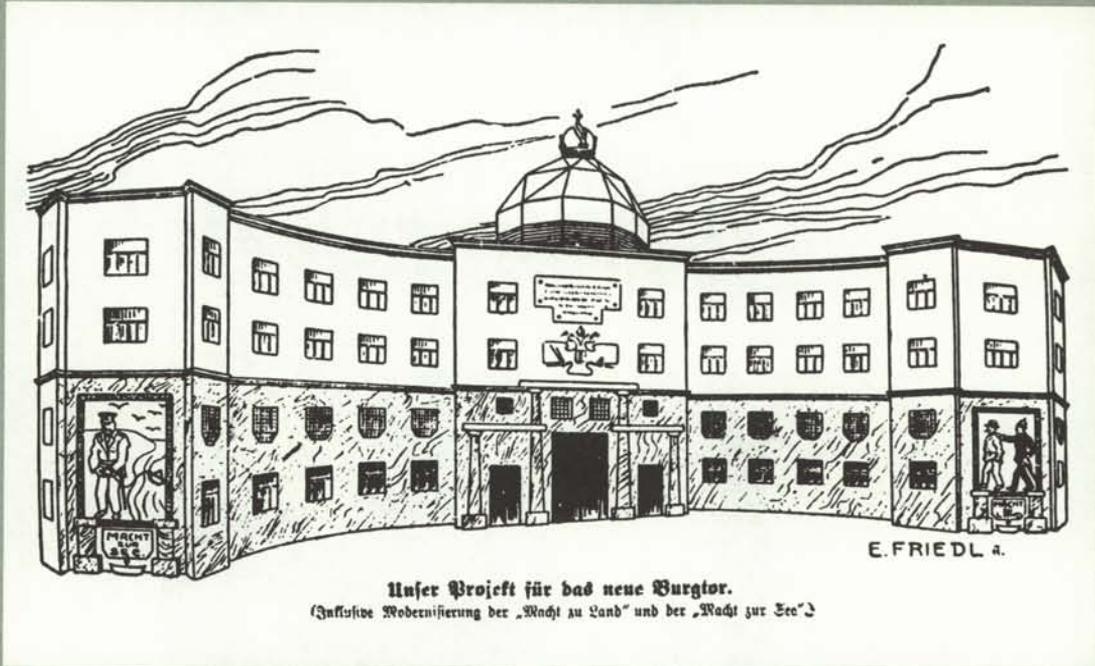
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The metaphor proposed for discussion distinguishes first of all between the interior kernel (*Kern*) and the exterior covering (*Hülle*) and presumes in its familiar usage a moral advantage and disadvantage: the *Kern* is good, the *Hülle* conceals and deceives.<sup>33</sup> For modern criticism, the metaphor and its critical assessment could easily be affixed to historicist decoration. Applying this image to architecture can be all the more justified since comparisons of architecture with clothing and fashion – not simply since Adolf Loos – have become popular. They conceal Semper’s more serious theory of “dressing,” or *Bekleidung*, which was certainly known to everyone in Vienna and which, in Riegl’s words, represented Semper’s “favorite theory.”<sup>34</sup> Finally, Wagner himself in his chapter on style had spoken of the correspondence of “man’s clothing in its form, color, and accessories” with “each period’s artistic viewpoints.”<sup>35</sup> Thus there is sufficient reason to track down the basis of this metaphor.

Looking back, it seems obvious that the idea of the *Kern* – freed of all decorative accessories and in keeping with the idea of the pure volume and the simple, readable “primary forms” (*formes primaires*) that were emphasized, for example, in Le Corbusier’s *Vers une architecture* (Toward an architecture) – defines the essence of the modern architectural approach to form. Le Corbusier’s argument concerning the grain silos was directed from the beginning against “*les styles*.”<sup>36</sup> And with that, the familiar contrast of well-chosen images has come to define historicism. Contrasting photographic images of good and bad architecture became an effective tool of modernist propaganda at an early date. Such photographs can already be seen in Paul Mebes’s book *Um 1800* (About 1800), 1908, where the solution for overcoming the crisis was sought in the classicist past. In the journal *Der Kunstwart* Paul Schultze-Naumburg in 1902 described a school building by Theodor Fischer as “monumental through the enclosed mass” and then contrasted it with a historicist example (fig. 2), which he negatively characterized as “a nothing, a pile of motifs with which nothing is said, with which nothing is achieved.”<sup>37</sup> That the use of the contrasting image could also assume a public character is shown in the famous polemics surrounding Loos’s build-



2. Contrasting images of a school by Theodor Fischer (top) and a historicist school building (bottom).  
From Paul Schultze-Naumburg, "Kulturarbeiten/Schulen," *Der Kunstwart* 16, no. 1 (October 1902): figs. 1, 2.  
Author's collection.



3. E. Friedl,  
caricature titled *Unser Projekt für das neue Burgtor* (Our project for the new Burgtor).  
From *Osterreichische Volks-Zeitung*  
(26 February 1911).  
Photo: Courtesy Löcker Verlag, Vienna.

ing on the Michaelerplatz. The recently reconstructed “Baroque” Burgtor (fig. 1) was provocatively presented in caricature as a naked, modernist form (fig. 3).<sup>38</sup> Even Max Dvorak, from time to time, followed such a purist viewpoint in his *Katechismus der Denkmalpflege* (Catechism of preservation of historical monuments), 1916, even if it was only a question of emphasizing the artistic advantage of removing the “disfiguration” of advertising signs from a Renaissance building (figs. 4, 5).<sup>39</sup> Although later, as with Bruno Taut or Adolf Behne, this rhetorical image became common practice, it is nevertheless astonishing that even built architecture had to follow such recipes. This is explicitly documented, for example, in A. Föhr’s renovation of the Deutsche Agrar- und Industriebank in Prague in the early 1920s, in which all historicist accessories were removed, reducing it to a *Kern* (figs. 6, 7).<sup>40</sup> This approach, in the end the accommodation to the modern concept of form, was at the time described as *Abstuckung* (literally, “de-stuccoing”). In many places such a recipe governed official city-planning measures. This possibility was incorporated into the newly drafted “renovation standards” for the Berlin district of Wedding in 1931.<sup>41</sup>

Different arguments are concealed behind this model of modern and historicist architecture. They extend from the Werkbund conviction of “form without ornament” to the more pressing discussion of function and “compliance with purpose.” Following this latter criterion, Taut equated the “ornamental outfitting” of architecture with the “role of a kind of handicraft.”<sup>42</sup> This gives some indication of the extent of the terrain encompassed by the metaphor *Stilhülse und Kern*.<sup>43</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that this image was on many occasions applied to the richly ornamented masses of Wagner’s architecture. In the remarks accompanying the debate, it can also be presumed that Wagner’s position at best only gradually – and with a varying assessment – approached the ideal of a “liberated *Kern*.” Modernism in the 1920s stressed the “not yet” of his buildings, appropriately supplemented with images. In his short essay “Otto Wagner zum siebzigsten Geburtstag” (To Otto Wagner on his seventieth birthday), Hermann Bahr twice emphasized that Wagner “began as an academic architect and in this period mastered every style.” He was “no innovator from out of the blue.” Bahr nevertheless maintained, “Otto Wagner is the counterpart to the Vienna Ringstraße,” which in the end was reduced to the common denominator of “giddiness, kitsch, and theater.” And so Bahr himself wished, once more struggling with the well-known



Abb. 15. Beispiel. — Altes Renaissancehaus in Budweis mit Reklameaufschriften verunstaltet, ein Beispiel der pietätlosesten Mißachtung eines alten Baues, der durch diese Verunzierung seine künstlerische Wirkung vollständig eingebüßt hat.

4. A Renaissance building before removal of advertising signs.  
From Max Dvorak, *Katechismus der Denkmalpflege*, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Julius Bard, 1918), fig. 15.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.
5. The same Renaissance building seen in fig. 4 after the removal of advertising signs.  
From Max Dvorak, *Katechismus der Denkmalpflege*, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Julius Bard, 1918), fig. 16.  
Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.

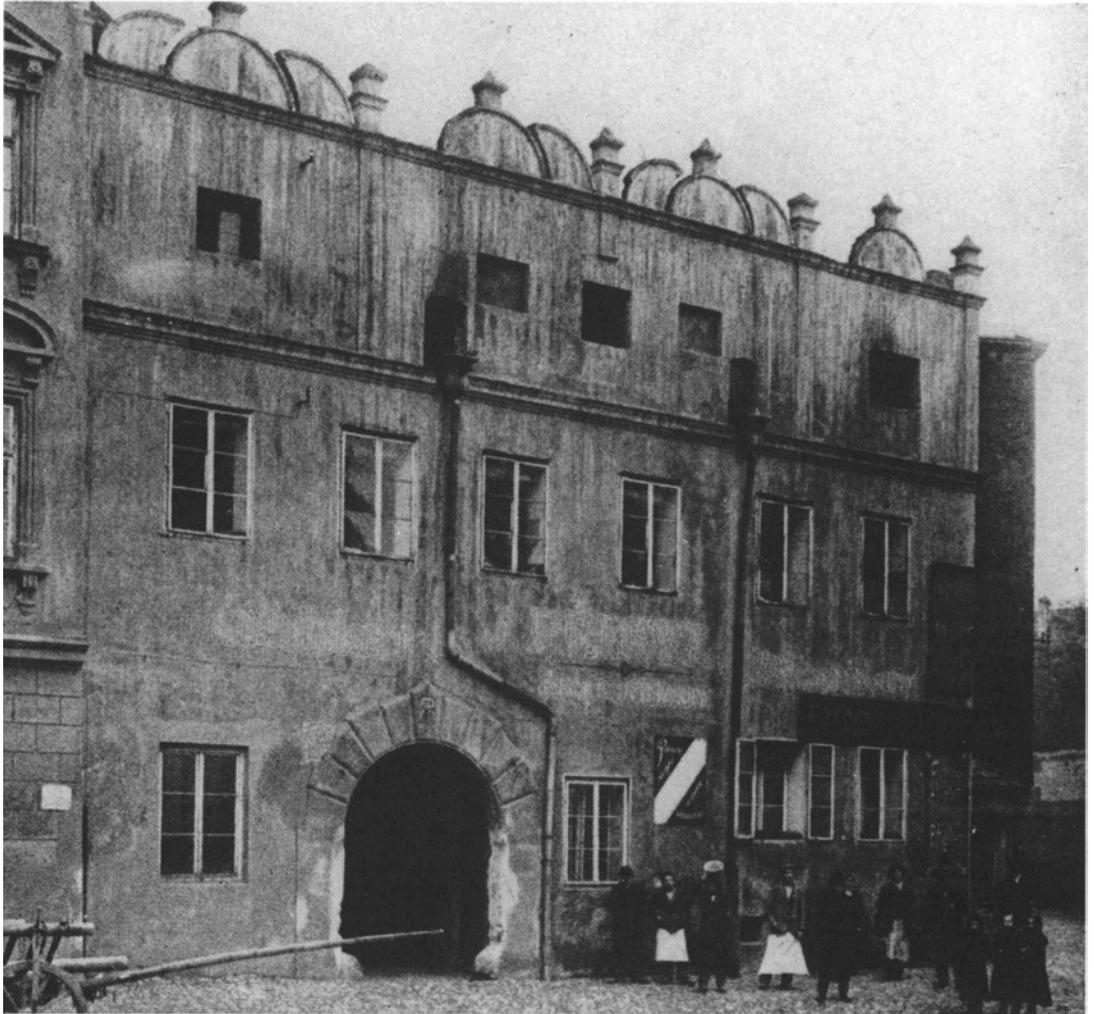


Abb. 16. Gegenbeispiel. — Dasselbe Haus nach der Beseitigung der Reklameaufschriften und des Auslagekastens.



6. The Deutsche Agrar- und Industriebank, Prague, before the renovation and "de-stuccoing" (*Abstuckung*), early 1920s. From A. Föhr, *Bauten und Entwürfe* (Prague: Privately printed, 1925). Author's collection.



7. The Deutsche Agrar- und Industriebank, Prague (see fig. 6), after the renovation and "de-stuccoing" (*Abstuckung*), early 1920s. From A. Föhr, *Bauten und Entwürfe* (Prague: Privately printed, 1925). Author's collection.

image, that we Viennese “will in the end recover the strength and courage to take off our masks and show ourselves as we are!”<sup>44</sup>

A few years earlier, in 1907, Josef Strzygowski voiced a similar judgment of Wagner, emphasizing both aspects of his career. He regarded him as “one of the most talented architects” and regretted “that he had received no monumental commissions to solve in the grandest style.” Yet as convinced as Strzygowski was of the functionality of Wagner’s plans, and however much he saw in him an architect who “was predisposed toward materials and technology,” he also referred to him as “an artist of disguise, that is, his buildings do not simply display their constructional materials but are covered in decorative panels.”<sup>45</sup> Thus by 1907 Wagner’s modernity was already seen as limited. “He builds the spatial frame and adorns the exterior walls with door and window openings conceived independently of the frame. His buildings ‘grow’ not in mass but in space, and the finished surfaces are ‘decorated’ in this way.”<sup>46</sup> Gustav Adolf Platz used a similar argument in 1927, again clearly recalling the metaphor of *Hülle und Kern*. “The clear form of the architectural body or the material construction proper appears too strongly overlaid with decorative accessories, which, despite their novelty, clearly show the lineage of the ‘late Baroque’ [*Zopf*] and ‘Empire.’” In contrast to Strzygowski, Platz at least pays tribute to Wagner for making the effort in his later works “to replace decoration...with genuine material effects.”<sup>47</sup>

Hans Tietze expressed himself on Wagner in an even more detailed and precise way. He also saw Wagner as “educated...in the historicizing architecture of the Ringstraße style,” but added, “by example and by contradiction.”<sup>48</sup> This contradiction was in the end assigned a “moral moment,” which can be seen in Wagner’s theory and which presents itself as Wagner’s “will toward purity” and as “a longing to purify his art and make it at once the receptacle of the needs of the time.” “This need,” Tietze continued, “means – in the language of architecture – to clarify the tectonic.”<sup>49</sup> Yet Tietze also saw – with the distance of someone writing in 1922 – not only the past of the Ringstraße, which Wagner overcame, but also the fact that he nevertheless remained rooted to this era. “The surrender to the wave of the Jugendstil appears to us today as Wagner’s greatest tie to his period; that which possessed the momentary virtue of modernity should therefore also show the shadow of the past.”<sup>50</sup> After the radical experience of a Loos, Wagner could occupy nothing other than this intermediate position, for which Tietze used

such words as “fashion of the day,” “frivolous,” and “individualistic decoration” that “did not emanate from the architectural *Kern*.” He further sought to clarify this characterization with the image of a downpour exposing, as it were, this Kern. “One might well imagine that if a natural occurrence were to wash away the inessential from Wagner’s buildings, it would not dismember them but would rather enhance their concentrated effect.”<sup>51</sup> We might also surmise that this model of an intermediate position, which modernity found special simply because of its “momentary virtue,” was particularly clear since Loos had become a focal point of the argument. When Karl Marilaun, also in 1922, described the tragic nature of Loos’s fate, he circumscribed his radical path by contrasting it with Josef Hoffmann and the Wiener Werkstätten, rather than with Wagner. He also generalized this statement. After the abolition of the *Makartbuket*, only two paths were possible: either recognizing (as Loos did) the purposeless beauty of everyday life or redecorating the “things that we under no circumstances can or want to do without, to put on lace collars once again, to dress functionality with ‘beauty.’”<sup>52</sup>

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The more or less labored metaphor of *Stilhülse und Kern* thus far seems to have described Wagner’s work only in a superficial way. Yet the deeper context of the argument can be discerned more easily when we take into account the important and lively tradition of theoretical discussion in Vienna. In so doing, we are not only concerned with the general renewal of “intellectual life,” which was propagated openly as early as 1890. Within this context, architecture was to assume the position of “axis of the fine arts,” analogous to philosophy holding the position “axis of all scientific thought.”<sup>53</sup> We are also concerned, however, with the specific “mutual dependence of formal development and intellectual events,” which was recognized as a central theme in Vienna and Viennese art history at this time. One individual who took part in this discussion and who later expanded upon it was Hans Tietze, who made the observations on Otto Wagner cited above.<sup>54</sup> Tietze, who espoused a “humanist art history” (*geisteswissenschaftliche Kunstgeschichte*) that is associated in particular with the name of Max Dvorak, began with the premise that the “humanist way of thinking” was not a rejection of the evolutionary conception of history but its necessary and logical continuation.<sup>55</sup> Constructed on the “legacy of the eighteenth century,” namely, “the

emancipation of the field of aesthetics," it attempted to grasp the particularities of art and discern legitimate trends.<sup>56</sup> Tietze described this process as one of extracting "the true form of relations" from the "discursive intellectual vision" by an "act of fixation."<sup>57</sup> What this synthesis yielded was the *Kunstwollen*, the "sum of all creative and occasional forces, insofar as they are worked out in art." Tietze associated this process with "the possibility of conceptually peeling away the artistic content from every kind of human activity."<sup>58</sup> It aims for the "spirit that stands behind the individual artistic events" and moreover postulates the "accord of the art historical and artistic orientation."<sup>59</sup>

As general and impersonal as this last-named relationship may be, it at least postulates a common denominator. This unity of art and theory is supported not only by the chronological parallel of events but also by the concrete references within the architectural discussion, for example, to Alois Riegl.<sup>60</sup> If one accepts this framework in the broadest sense, supplied with methodological considerations by Tietze, then the rich theoretical discussion of the *Hülle und Kern* undoubtedly acquires importance. Depending on the knowledge of relevant theories and models, such an analysis will also be — from the *Hülle* to the extracted *Kern* — more than a mere description of stylistic development and will thereby justify the judgments and evaluations expressed along with it. Since this metaphor ultimately derived from the theory of "dressing" (*Bekleidung*) of Bötticher and Semper, one should not underestimate this point of view.<sup>61</sup> We will in the end be convinced that comparable and accessible images and ideas were raised within the tradition of art and art theory.

In his lectures presented at the Leipzig Kunstgewerbemuseum in the first decade of this century and entitled "Künstlerische Bildung" (Artistic education), Ludwig Volkmann focused his discussion on the slogan "free of the column."<sup>62</sup> He countered the "curse of the column as a decorative piece" with the principle "that the essence of the architectonic work of art should be conceived from the inside out and not from the exterior *Hülle*."<sup>63</sup> Yet Volkmann also went further by placing this idea within the broader framework of art history. Beyond the characterization of architecture as the "most rigorous and abstract of the arts" and beyond the insight into the "natural limitations of plastic possibilities of the composition," he argued for the "unity of space" and the resulting limitation of form to several "principal views."<sup>64</sup> He demonstrated this with Adolf Hildebrand, indirectly with

Michelangelo (his dictum on the liberation of the figure trapped within the marble block – “from the *Hülle*”), and finally with the Vasari dictum: “Sculpture is an art that, while it takes away the superfluous from the given material, returns it to the corporeal form that is sketched in the idea of the artist.”<sup>65</sup>

After Hildebrand’s popular book of 1893, *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst* (The problem of form in the fine arts), it was considered important for architecture to express itself sculpturally.<sup>66</sup> The precept was now sanctioned by general artistic principles, although of course it had also been raised within the narrower tradition of architectural theory. There the image of “attached” decoration was well known, for example, in Francesco Milizia’s definition of adornment (*ornato*) as that “which is employed or put on the body of a house.”<sup>67</sup> With this distinction of the architectural body and decoration – up until the time of Marc-Antoine Laugier – it had also been possible to do without the orders and assign the desirable conditions of good proportions and greater elegance to the architectural body itself.<sup>68</sup>

Yet for Wagner and his era, Semper’s theory of “dressing,” or *Bekleidung*, was unquestionably the reference point, and it is by examining this theory that we can clarify the theoretical discussions and the use of the metaphor *Stilhülle und Kern*. As is well known, the first volume of Carl Bötticher’s *Die Tektonik der Hellenen* (The tectonic of the Hellenes), 1844, preceded Semper’s relevant statements in *Der Stil*, 1860–1863. Bötticher defined the complementary concepts of *Hülle und Kern* in numerous ways; he called the “reciprocal unity of concepts” the *Junktur*.<sup>69</sup> He spoke not only of the *Kern* and the *Hülle* dressing it but also of the “decorative characteristic” that was identical with the “ornamental *Hülle*.” The *Junktur* should serve, rather, to explain the relation between the complementary parts. From the “structurally unnecessary” decorative dressing of the *Kern*, he deduced that the “*Kern* of every structural member, when stripped of its decorative attributes...[was] in its naked corporeality fully capable of fulfilling all architectural functions.” From this he further inferred that “the purpose of the decorative *Hülle*” was to “present succinctly” the “spatially formative concept in the whole” given in the *Kern* – considered without the decorative *Hülle* – by “analogous symbols.” If the *Kern* were informed with a still more distinct “essence and concept” and if the decorative dressing were given the task of symbolizing it “without continuous interruption,” then one would know what values could be assigned to these distinctions

when the narrower theoretical framework was left behind.<sup>70</sup>

Semper quite clearly translated Bötticher's theory and definition of the tectonic into more graphic, conceptual terms: "The principle of dressing has greatly influenced style in architecture and in the other arts in all periods and in all nations."<sup>71</sup> With this definition and section heading, Semper introduced his relevant reflections in the first volume of *Der Stil*, before going on to treat in a very general way the "Masking of reality in the arts" and the "Principle of dressing in architecture."<sup>72</sup> This figurative framework of the "textile arts" ruled German thought until Leo Adler and Adolf Loos proposed a more understandable interpretation of the dressing for the metaphor of *Stilhülse und Kern*. Adler, in his *Vom Wesen der Baukunst* (About the nature of architecture) of 1926, sought a "conceptual clarification" of architecture by describing the *Hülle* as a "covering snugly fitting a body, a dress" — a process he explained by the setting up of a "spatial *Hülle*."<sup>73</sup> With regard to Loos, whose argument on fashion and clothing is well known, Ludwig Münz has already noted, "In his own way, he was able to understand the modernity of the demand of the great theorist Gottfried Semper better than any of the others."<sup>74</sup>

The dissemination of Semper's images and concepts was little affected by skepticism toward his theory. Riegl's criticism of his ideas, in particular of Semper's regard for the theory of *Bekleidung* "as the origin of all monumental architecture," was no doubt devastating.<sup>75</sup> Riegl closed his first chapter with the observation: "We must therefore draw back from the overemphasis that Semper's *Der Stil* placed on the textile art," although he also added, "nevertheless every page in which he discusses this theme is still worth reading, if not classic."<sup>76</sup> This clearly indicates that Semper's theory, notwithstanding all misgivings, was blessed with continued success, all the more if one avoided precise discussion and went along with the more general ideas and images. Riegl himself remarked on this when he — always in relation to the theory of *Bekleidung* — wrote that "it was only through his numerous followers that his theory came to be interpreted in a crude materialist sense."<sup>77</sup>

Another critic who, despite this limitation, continued to take aim at Semper (explicitly referring to Riegl) was Peter Behrens. On 8 October 1913 he was asked to fill in for a canceled lecture of August Schmarsow at the first Kongreß für Ästhetik und Kunstwissenschaft (Congress for aesthetics and the science of art) in Berlin. In his lecture, which dealt with the

relation of architecture and technology, Behrens directed harsh words against the error of Semper's theory, describing it – following Riegl's formulation – as “a dogma of materialistic metaphysics.”<sup>78</sup> In defending the distinction of art and technology as “by nature following two very different intellectual expressions,” Behrens (with Riegl) vehemently opposed what he deemed to be “Semper's mechanistic conception of the nature of the work of art.”<sup>79</sup> This, however, did not prevent him in another passage – referring to the Eiffel Tower and the impossibility today of experiencing it as a “beautiful monument” – from insisting, “Yet the task of architecture is and remains for all times not an unmasking but an enclosing and covering up of space.”<sup>80</sup> Thus he pleaded not only for a conception of architecture as “corporeal form” but also for the “compactness of form,” just as Bötticher had claimed for his Hellenic tectonic.<sup>81</sup>

How very differently, in fact, the Semperian legacy was viewed in 1913 is seen by the reaction to Behrens's lecture at the Berlin congress. Hans Cornelius, the first speaker at the roundtable, responded with “enthusiastic affirmation”; he felt particularly gratified at the accord “between an artist's view and theory” and then added, “If I should emphasize one point in particular, it would be that I hope the lapidary words that our great architect has used against the poverty of Semper's theory would not fail to have their effect on the theory and practice of our applied art and of our architecture.”<sup>82</sup> A little later, Fritz Höber, whose monograph on Behrens appeared in Munich that same year, stood up and responded, “The alternative of Semper or Riegl expressed here seems to me to have been conceived one-sidedly in order to make it accord with the experienced reality of art history and of architectural creation.”<sup>83</sup> Yet later Höber himself simplified the matter by characterizing the architecture of Behrens as “classical art,” whose dominant feature was the “form itself.”<sup>84</sup> Thus the transcended theoretical positions were confused for a long time and replaced by new “lapidary” formulas!

Insofar as Semper's legacy supported whatever one might want to understand by it, we can very generally expect a greater range of discussion than that concerning its reputation. Already in 1881 Rudolf Redtenbacher criticized the “partially new paths” of Heinrich Hübsch, Bötticher, and Semper.<sup>85</sup> He put forth his personal critique of Semper's theory of *Bekleidung*, which he faulted for “denying works of nature the right to be considered beautiful.”<sup>86</sup> Yet in the end the “spatial covering” remained for him, too, the “highest

task” of architecture, and he linked his idea of the “tectonic” with its essential task of “shaping form.”<sup>87</sup> He also connected the aesthetic effect with the “unity in itself,” or at least with the “unified multiplicity,” and devoted much attention to the “form in itself.”<sup>88</sup> Different ideas flow together here and are supplemented by new ones, for example from Gustav Fechner’s *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (Introduction to aesthetics), 1876.<sup>89</sup> Yet what still recalls Bötticher in 1883 now acquires new significance in retrospect, particularly in comparison with the contemporary observations of Joseph Bayer. Reflecting on “form in itself,” Redtenbacher concluded, “The more completely the qualities of the basic forms can be truly intuited, the more favorably they appear in an aesthetic sense.”<sup>90</sup> This formulation seems to anticipate Tietze’s clearer – and more drastic – description of Wagner’s architecture with the image of the natural occurrence washing away the inessential from the *Kern*. Yet in the end Redtenbacher’s observation depended on the image of Bötticher’s *Junktur*, even if no mention was made of decoration and he instead promoted machine design in reflecting on the tectonic.<sup>91</sup>

Joseph Bayer is another author, now largely forgotten, who questioned the architecture and aesthetics of this period (yet whose outward activity is largely overlooked because of the focus on his close contact with Johannes Brahms).<sup>92</sup> Occasionally described as the last authentic Hegelian, Bayer was compared with Friedrich Theodor von Vischer by his biographer Robert Stiasny, although Bayer could scarcely have dreamed of Vischer’s success and recognition.<sup>93</sup> Bayer taught at the Technische Hochschule in Vienna between 1871 and 1898 – often to half-empty benches, as his biographer noted.<sup>94</sup> Stiasny not only described Bayer as the “patriarch of critical literature in Vienna” and “the most faithful chronicler of new monumental Vienna,” he also touched upon the special role that Bayer had been assigned and his isolation, as it were, given the stigma of being labeled an “aesthetician.”<sup>95</sup> Notwithstanding his lack of outward success, Bayer’s ideas and models provide contemporary insight and are no less compelling. Bayer, an acknowledged Semperian and author of an essential essay on Semper, discussed the architectural situation of the 1880s in the broadest terms – from “Moderne Bautypen” (Modern building types) to the “Stilkrise unserer Zeit” (Style crises of our time).<sup>96</sup> Without in any way being intrusive, he was concerned in his writings with contemporary architectural trends. He viewed architecture as “the spiritual leader of artistic life,” yet he made the comment that “thinking architects have existed in all times... yet conscious

scientific reasoning and the virtue of historical impartiality are not their concern.”<sup>97</sup> He also viewed the architect, “because of his familiarity with the technical aspects of construction,” as the “most qualified architectural aesthete.”<sup>98</sup> Bayer similarly differentiated the matter at hand. Opposing the “formalism of the Herbartians and the ‘mathematization’ of beauty,” he remained open to questions of style and the “compositional laws of the fine arts”; yet he was also an aesthete for whom, as Stiassny noted, “fashion aesthetes [went] against the grain.”<sup>99</sup> Where the new lacked an internal “formal logic,” Bayer advised skepticism. “The alleged discovery of unique forms is actually a de-formation.” To this extent, a “flight outside of history” seemed impossible to him.<sup>100</sup>

If we follow Bayer’s own remarks more closely, we can recognize in this representative of “conscious scientific reasoning” a forward-looking character. Already by 1886 he could postulate “the *Kern* formation of a modern style.” Two writings from that year are particularly important in this regard. In “Stilkrise unserer Zeit” Bayer began with the “medley of stylistic forms” and the “alleged ‘new style’ of the present” and, accordingly, criticized the fact that Schinkel’s notion of “style in general” had too quickly evolved into a “style in particular... following certain religious-romantic and artistic-patriotic viewpoints.”<sup>101</sup> Historicist efforts to define style through stylistic detail were incompatible with his systematic reflections on style and formal development. “How utterly foolish it would be to demand that our architecture produce out of itself a new characteristic detail of form, what one is inclined in a textbook way to call ‘style.’ ”<sup>102</sup> Bayer then drew from this the logical conclusion that a new line of development could be found only by transcending “the array of garments for our buildings” and by finally putting away the evening dress whose seams “occasionally start to unravel.”

The foundation of a style is related — in a way comparable to Wagner’s later idea of creating the art-form out of the construction — to the “new building organism” and thus to the “new cut of clothing fitted to the forms.” Bayer stated this in a general way, “In the end, the new architectural problems will gradually and imperceptibly lead to new formal ideas; and even if the changed rhythm of the old forms is simply ordered according to a new architectonic principle of life, a victory is essentially already won.”<sup>103</sup> To illustrate this better, Bayer invoked the images of the *Hülle* and *Kern*. With regard to the — historicist — coexistence of “separate architectural creeds” he wrote, “Thus the natural friction of time has surely blunted their

once sharp, stylistically stubborn edges and corners, and when time's forces once again work in the same direction, they will sharpen new forms."<sup>104</sup> Bayer condensed his remarks into a prognosis.

I would even venture to maintain that the formation of the *Kern* of a modern style is already a fact, although one will certainly not discover its characteristic mark if one looks at the buildings of our time exclusively from the perspective of well-known historical or stylistic details. Then only what is different becomes apparent, not what is also alike. What is new, however, manifests itself in the total attitude one brings to the building design, evolving from the organization of the plan to the compositional tasks as such, characteristic of our age. Issues await a solution, but much has already found expression in an almost architecturally ingenious way by important and farsighted architects. Even if the chosen means of expression belong to the traditional store of forms – what is expressed by it is peculiar, but it is a new result.<sup>105</sup>

So as not to overestimate Bayer's prognosis, it is necessary to emphasize that the observed "*Kern* formation of the new style" remained specifically confined to the "overall attitude," the "new building organism," and the organization of the plan. Bayer discerned these changes despite the historicist facades before him. A glance at Wagner's contemporary works will help to avoid possible misunderstandings. In 1886 Wagner built his first villa on Hüttelbergstraße. Preceding this work he finished the ambitious designs for the Berlin Reichstag and the Budapest Parliament, both of which display – as did the Artibus project of 1880 (see fig. 11) – a confident facility with the historical tradition. Yet one could also well imagine that Bayer could have discerned without hesitation the "*Kern* formation of a modern style" in such a work as Wagner's Länderbank, begun in 1882, in which behind the historicist facade were concealed new construction methods and an undoubtedly novel reorganization of the plan with the "*Central-Anlage*."<sup>106</sup>

Bayer put forward similar ideas on modernity in the same year (1886) in an essay entitled "Moderne Bautypen."<sup>107</sup> Once again he began with the indispensable zeitgeist, according to which a style (again anticipating a later remark by Wagner) is "a specific way of thinking and a formative expression of art deriving from the innermost foundation and essence of the age, which can have only one prescribed, main direction."<sup>108</sup> Bayer then formulated the "formative force of style" along the lines he followed earlier. "In

the end the creative building spirit of the period must work its way up from the root." How this should happen is presented in the following images:

That root appeared to have been withering for a long time, but now the mysterious vital forces push up and the real, true, and essential building form of the period grows powerful limbs within the traditional masks and draperies of style. And if in the end it is completely organized and fully mature, the so beautifully ornamented, historical *Stilhülsen* will peel away; they are shed forever and the new *Kern* appears bright and clear in the sunlight.<sup>109</sup>

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This formulation of 1886 surely cannot be denied a certain visionary character, even if – following Bayer's own ideas – it is derived from "conscious scientific reasoning." It seems to anticipate what actually did occur (also visible in Wagner's architectural development) and what Tietze later described and renewed with greater emphasis. With the metaphor *Stilhülse und Kern*, all told, the development of architecture from historicism to Wagner's Modernism, and beyond to the more radical solutions undertaken by Loos, is presented as an evolutionary and logical process. As long as one understands it only as a model, there can scarcely be any objection. With this qualification, it may be noted that a full accord of theoretical discussion and actual architectural development for once did take place, as was then postulated time and again in the sense of Tietze's "mutual dependence of formal development and intellectual events."<sup>110</sup> This in itself is remarkable, even if its basis lacks precision and was disseminated with the theories of Bötticher and Semper. The metaphor here plays its mediating role in the widest sense of the term and thus becomes the actual link between the relatively autonomous spheres of architecture and theory.

With a view to Semper, Bayer had already described the joining of theory and practice as at the same time an odd "paradox" and a "plausible practical view of his theoretical discussions," in the sense of a "theory of artistic invention."<sup>111</sup> Conversely, what can be said with regard to architectural development strengthens the model in all cases. And this is useful, if only because it casts the view toward some particularities of architectural development.

In a very general way, the development of Wagner's architecture from his near-Semperian stance to buildings freed of historicist decoration can

easily be read in the sense of the metaphor under discussion. When one does this, some things become especially noticeable, among them, what Bayer suggested in his interpretation of the “*Kern* formation of a modern style,” evident in the “design of the plan” and in the “building organism.” This can be illustrated by an example in which the ever-growing importance of the great Baroque architects for the collective memory of Vienna is decisive. Fischer von Erlach plays a role here – not only in the later polemics surrounding the Looshaus but also in the positive assessment and characterization that he provided (figs. 8, 9).<sup>112</sup> For Hermann Bahr, Wagner was “Austria’s most Austrian architect since Fischer von Erlach.”<sup>113</sup> Tietze said, “Wagner’s art, like Fischer’s, has the healthy strength of a race.”<sup>114</sup> For Strzygowski, the domed Hofpavillon for the Stadtbahn near Schönbrunn recalled – despite its “completely modern” forms – “the age of Fischer von Erlach.”<sup>115</sup> And even Loos, in “Beantwortung einer Rundfrage” (Answer to a survey), 1907, described the Palais Liechtenstein as the most beautiful palace in Vienna, although indeed with polemical overtones, contrasting the “mean Viennese Baroque” with the “powerful language of Rome.”<sup>116</sup> Some of Wagner’s buildings can also be described as containing Fischer’s typologies *im Kerne* – only further developed. The Karlskirche’s central layout, between two triumphal columns and flanking buildings, can easily be discerned in the Artibus project of 1880 (figs. 10, 11). In the spirit of the lavish Prix-de-Rome tradition at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Wagner basically strove here to use the whole line of known typologies in their most luxurious form. The “sacred building” performs, like the Karlskirche, in its total instrumentation. If we compare it with Wagner’s project for the Berlin cathedral (1890–1891), we will notice how modern architecture becomes evident, so to speak, from the inside out – through the novel organization of the plan and the use of new materials and construction methods. The exterior is still fitted in a dress long rooted in tradition. If we also compare these two works with the House of Glory in Washington, 1907 (fig. 12), we see not only that the plan is fully rationalized but also that the historical *Hülle* has been discarded. What remains (corresponding to the later critique of Marilaun) is decorated with a “lace collar” and the decorative forms of the Secession.<sup>117</sup> Similarly modified and reduced, the building reflects the Karlskirche: a dome (limited to a drum), a facade with portico, lateral construction, and triumphal columns. Naturally, not all of Wagner’s ecclesiastical buildings can be forced into this scheme, and their development does

not run completely logically. Yet we can observe here that historicist positions were gradually transcended and a modern architecture in Wagner's sense was developed, in which the distinction between *Hülle* and *Kern* makes sense.

Wagner's work repeatedly had direct links to Fischer von Erlach. His first planning proposal for the Karlsplatz was put forward in 1892, a project that was, not coincidentally, entitled *Parallele*. In the accompanying text Wagner called the Karlskirche itself "the most beautiful building in Vienna."<sup>118</sup> During his later involvement with the Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum (see pp. 52–83), around 1900, when he could pursue his designs with richer variations, allusions to the Karlskirche and distinct indications of modern architecture remain poised in a refreshing condition of tension. In the museum's details one can also see how architectural innovations dependent on the interior organization and new methods of construction go hand in hand with reminiscences of the Baroque and Fischer's typologies (fig. 13), in particular in the front elevations. Although in this case external circumstances fundamentally influenced the process of design, one can still make out such general intentions.<sup>119</sup> One can hardly overlook the fact that Wagner accepted the challenge of the *genius loci* in order even better to lead the charge against the "phalanx of the traditionalists," by balancing artistic sensitivity with the view of "casting off all tradition."<sup>120</sup>

We can generally observe in Wagner's late work that although foreshortened, the "*Kern* formation of a modern style" thrives to such an extent that the *Hülle* is confined to a few decorative accessories. The design for the War Ministry, 1907–1908 (fig. 14), shows it particularly well: Wagner himself spoke of a "certain uniformity in the architectural design" and of a combination of "quiet surfaces" and "contrasting principal motifs." Even in the most ornate part of the edifice, decoration is restricted to a matter of a "few sculptural works and ornaments projecting from the building."<sup>121</sup> The central projection, designed in the form of a triumphal arch flanked with columns and composed together with the monument to Count Joseph Radetzky, appears only at first glance to be heavily decorated. On closer view it becomes clear that the strict lines of the architecture set up by the rhythm of windows and wall are scarcely destroyed. The decorative accessories are for their part largely separate from the system of architectural articulation and are placed instead in appropriate areas: in the spandrels and attic story crowning the totality.<sup>122</sup> As usual, shallow ornaments symbolically replace

## Die Männer vom Karlsplatz.



Fischer von Erlach: „Trösten Sie sich, mein lieber Wagner, ich habe die Karlskirche erbaut und das Wiener Stadtbild zu meiner Zeit auch so verschandelt wie Sie. In hundert Jahren gefällt's den Leuten dann ausgezeichnet.“

8. Caricature of Otto Wagner with Fischer von Erlach titled *Die Männer vom Karlsplatz* (The men of the Karlsplatz), to the left is the 1:1 model of the Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum that Wagner erected in January 1910 (see p. 60).

“Fischer von Erlach: ‘Cheer up, my dear Wagner, I built the Karlskirche, and in my time I ruined the image of the city of Vienna as much as you have. In a hundred years it will seem outstanding to people.’”

Vienna. Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek.

# Wien in der Karikatur.

XXXVI.

## Das Loos-Haus auf dem Michaelerplatz.

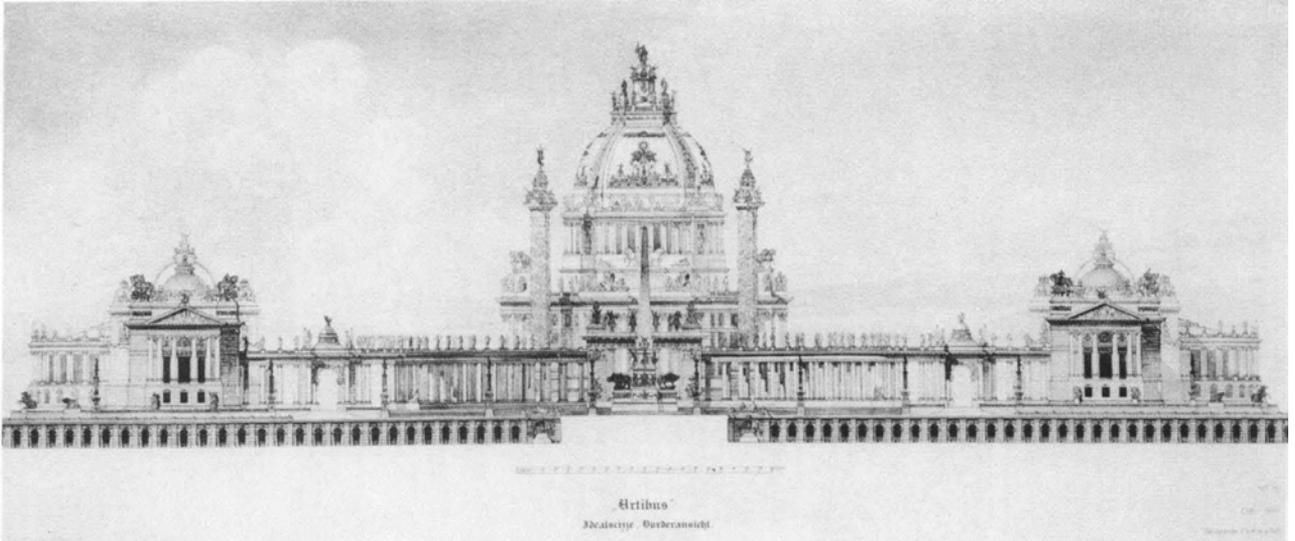


Der selige Fischer v. Erlach: Schade, daß ich diesen Stil nicht schon gekannt hab', dann hätte ich den schönen Platz nicht mit meiner dalkerten Ornamentik verhandelt!"

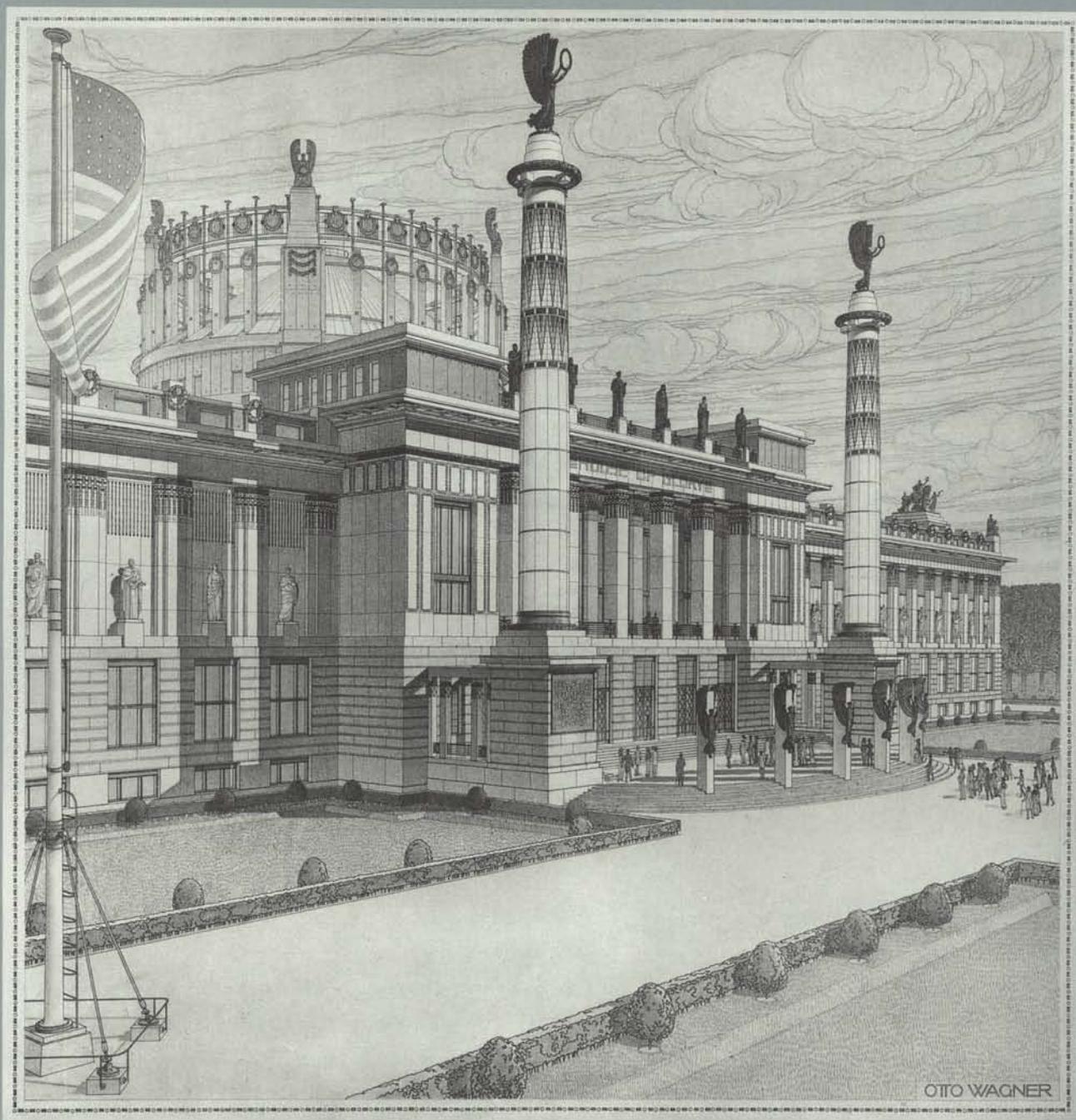
9. Caricature of Fischer von Erlach in front of the Looshaus titled *Das Loos-haus auf dem Michaelerplatz* (The Looshaus on the Michaelerplatz). "The late Fischer von Erlach: 'It's a pity that I did not know this style, for then I would not have ruined this beautiful square with my daft ornamentation.'" From *Der Morgen*, date unknown. Photo: Courtesy Löcker Verlag, Vienna.



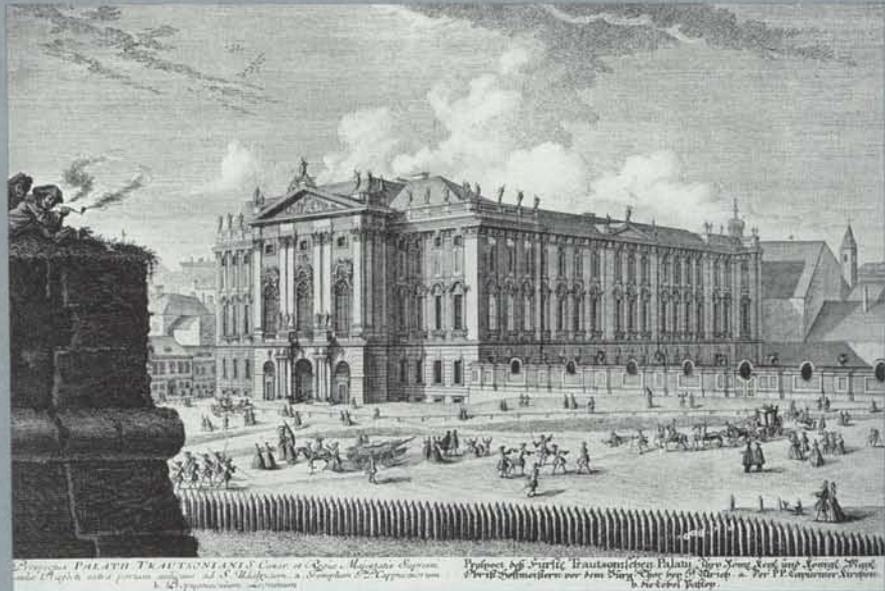
10. Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, Karlskirche.  
 From Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, *Entwurf einer historischen Architectur* (Leipzig, 1725), bk. 4, fig. 12.  
 Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.



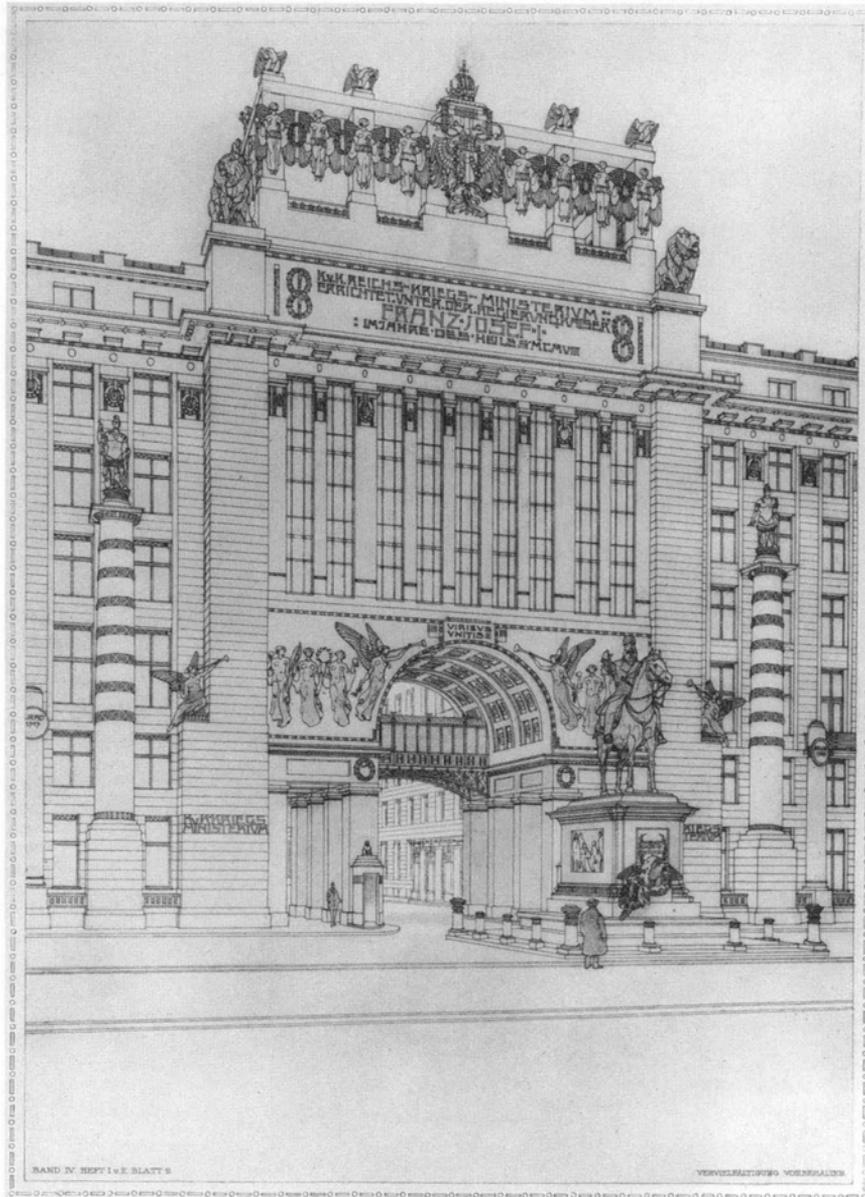
11. Otto Wagner,  
Artibus project, 1880.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Scizzen, Projecte u.  
ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Anton Schroll,  
1889), 1: pl. 15.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



12. Otto Wagner,  
House of Glory, 1907.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Scizzen, Projekte  
und ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Anton  
Schroll, 1922), 4: pl. 31.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.



19. Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach,  
Gartenpalais Trautson.  
From Salomon Kleiner, *Wahrhafte und  
genaue Abbildung...* (Augsburg: J. A. Pfeffel,  
1725), 2: pl. 21.  
Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.



14. Otto Wagner,  
War Ministry, 1907–1908.  
From Otto Wagner, *Einige Skizzen, Projekte  
und ausgeführte Bauwerke* (Vienna: Anton  
Schroll, 1922), 4: pl. 2.  
Vienna, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien.

the capitals, and the “hovering, gilded, connecting band” forms just the exception that proves, in the words of Wagner, that “this combination of motifs” stamps the building as the “official building of the War Ministry.”<sup>123</sup> The long-standing forms of collaboration among artists and artisans of this period correspond to the increased separation of the decoration, frequently expressed in the purposely specialized designs. If one searches for historical parallels, one will find a plethora of them in the Neoclassical period – as suggested by Paul Mebes in his book *Um 1800*. The festival structures in the Jardin des Tuileries, designed by Charles Percier and P.-F.-L. Fontaine for Napoleon’s wedding, likewise show the similarly clear separation of the architectural body and the richly applied decoration characteristic of that period.<sup>124</sup> Conversely, we can now understand the later criticism of Gustav Platz, who, as noted above, still saw in the Secessionist decorative patterns the “lineage of the ‘late Baroque’ [*Zopf*] and the ‘Empire.’”<sup>125</sup>

With all the restraint in his use of decorative form, we should not overlook the fact that Wagner actually arrived at not the naked building *Kern* but the modern, clear, paneled facade.<sup>126</sup> This brings to mind a further development of the theoretical discussion after 1890, represented in particular in the thought of August Schmarsow. His focus, partly in response to Adolf Hildebrand’s theses, was the relation of space and body, but also indirectly the wall defining the boundary plane.<sup>127</sup> Proceeding from sensory impressions, Schmarsow observed the movement of the eye that meets “the parallel planes of the wall that appears vertical to us.” He observed that “ornament and decoration remain always on the surface; they cover it with multiple decorations, applied externally and not penetrating extensively into the interior, in order to transform the existing wall into a new one.” Schmarsow, with regard to the desired “unified intuition,” inferred the “higher unity of space and body: the image.”<sup>128</sup> Thus the “applied” ornament remaining on Wagner’s buildings is supported, as it were, from a different point of view.

This observation leads back to Bötticher’s idea of the *Hülle und Kern*. When Wagner spoke of the “architectural development of the exterior” of the central pavilion of the War Ministry – of its “combined motifs” stamping the building with its purpose – that corresponded to the function of succinctly presenting to the eyes the “analogous symbols” that Bötticher attributed to the *Hülle*.<sup>129</sup> It is clear that Wagner in no way thought to dispense with these architectural functions, which were indigenous to the tra-

dition of classical theory. It is instructive in this regard to see that Wagner denoted distinct possibilities – for the definition of architectural character (*caractère*), for example – for which he had ample precedents. Jacques-François Blondel once referred to the “attributes of sculpture” that in the broadest sense had to take over the task of decoration, while on a later occasion he gave this task to the “beautiful disposition of the general masses.”<sup>130</sup> Just as we can see the expressive function of the details and the decoration pass – from Blondel to Etienne-Louis Boullée – to the architectural body itself, so we can also see Wagner’s position in relation to the fully developed Modernism (for example, to the primary forms [*formes primaires*] of Le Corbusier) as a valid aesthetic for architectural masses.

The models and theoretical references discussed here are not a substitute for a precise architectural and historical analysis of Wagner’s work. It is hoped, however, that this account may give some indication of the rich and complex set of conditions with which Modernism struggled at that time, before the network of arguments was altogether abandoned or laid aside under the banner of later radicalism. Given our present poverty in terms of the conceptual understanding of contemporary architecture, these intensive efforts concerning the “mutual dependence of formal development and intellectual events” must at least produce respect. The general framework of the discussion was in any case presented and desired at that time. In a London lecture of 1853, later titled “Design for a System of a Comparative Theory of Style,” Semper formulated the problem in a very general way. “Like works of nature, they [works of art] are linked by a few fundamental ideas, which have their simplest expression in certain primordial forms or types.”<sup>131</sup> Schmarsow added to it in 1915 in his essay “Peruginos erste Schaffensperiode” (Perugino’s first creative period), “Our evolutionary and historical way of thinking will always connect the comparison of phenomena preceding or succeeding one another in time with the understanding of present phenomena; the more numerous the threads that are woven together, the more convinced we become of the organic solidarity of the models.”<sup>132</sup>

## NOTES

1. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann, trans., *Gottfried Semper: The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), 182–214. Gottfried Semper, “Prolegomena,” in *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder praktische Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1860), 1: v: “Der nächtliche Himmel zeigt neben den glanzvollen Wundern der Gestirne mattschimmernde Nebelstellen – entweder alte, erstorbene, im All zerstobene Systeme, oder erst um einen Kern sich gestaltender Weltdunst, oder ein Zustand zwischen Zerstörung und Neugestaltung.

*Sie sind ein passendes Analogon für ähnliche Erscheinungen am Gesichtskreise der Kunstgeschichte, auf Zustände des Übergangs einer Kunstwelt in das Gestaltlose und gleichzeitig auf die Phase sich vorbereitender Neugestaltung einer solchen hinweisend.*”

2. Joseph Bayer, “Moderne Bautypen” (1886), in Robert Stiassny, ed., *Baustudien und Baubilder: Schriften zur Kunst* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1919), 280–81: “Endlich muß doch der bauschöpferische Geist der Epoche von der Wurzel herauf wirken. Jene Wurzel schien auf lange hinaus abgestorben; nun aber drängen die geheimen Lebenskräfte empor, und die eigentliche, wahre und wesentliche Baugestalt der Epoche wächst innerhalb der hergebrachten Stilmasken und Stildraperien mit mächtigen Gliedern heran. Und ist sie endlich ganz durchorganisiert und zur Schau ausgereift, dann springen gewiß die so schön ornamentierten historischen Stilhülsen ab, sie schälen sich für immer los und der neue Kern tritt blank und klar ans Sonnenlicht.”

3. Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1988), 91, 93. Idem, *Moderne Architektur* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1896), 65–70: “Im Bauen selbst liegt der Keim zu jeder Construction, deren Entwicklung mit dem Zwecke fortschreitet. Solches Schaffen entspricht dem Begriffe der reinen Utilität. Sie konnte nicht genügen; der der Menschheit innewohnende Schönheitssinn rief die Kunst herbei und machte sie zur steten Begleiterin des Bauens. So ward die Baukunst!... Das nutzbringende Resultat dieser Betrachtung ist ein sehr einfaches: ‘Der Architekt hat immer aus der Construction die Kunstform zu entwickeln.’”

4. Joseph August Lux, *Otto Wagner: Eine Monographie* (Munich: Delphin, 1914), 11: “Eine neue Zeit kam, die Moderne. Architektur wurde Baukunst. Otto Wagner hat sie herbeigeführt. Sein Wort zündete, es wurde Tat und ging in die Welt. Überall, wo neue baukünstlerische Regungen zu spüren waren, wird man im tiefsten Grunde Wagner spüren. Wollte man das nicht vergessen! Er schuf die Atmosphäre, in der die Keime neuer, künftiger Größe leben und wachsen konnten.”

5. The Futurist warning concerning the “dangerous” critic is one of the clearest indications of the refusal to debate that is still felt today. See Werner Oechslin, “A Cultural History of Modern Architecture, 1. The ‘Modern’: Historical Event Versus Demand,” *A + U: Architecture and Urbanism* 235 (April 1990): 50–64.

6. Lux (see note 4), 11.

7. Also very instructive with regard to our specific theme is the art-historical discussion of that period. The points of contact between modern architecture and art history have as yet received little study. The following remarks might make a contribution to this problem. See also Werner Oechslin, "Fragen zu Sigfried Giedions kunsthistorischen Prämissen," in Jos Bosman, Sokratis Georgiadis, et al., *Sigfried Giedion, 1888–1968: Der Entwurf einer modernen Tradition*, exh. cat. (Zurich: Ammann, 1989), 191–205.

8. The change in the title of Wagner's book from *Moderne Architektur* (1896, 1898, 1902) to *Die Baukunst unserer Zeit* (1914) may be understood as a change of paradigm in the sense of the above quotation by Lux. However, this example makes it clear that little more than mere symptomatic value can be attributed to such changes. In the preface to the fourth edition of his book (dated November 1913), Wagner explained the change of title by referring the reader to Hermann Muthesius's book *Stilarchitektur und Baukunst* (Style-architecture and the building-art), 1902. For the erroneous citation by Wagner, see Wagner, 1988 (see note 3), 142. Lux, on the other hand, selected "Von der Architektur zu Baukunst" (From architecture to the building-art) as the subtitle of the main chapter of his monograph on Wagner (see note 4), a chapter entitled "Reifezeit" (The mature period), p. 69. The same subtitle is erroneously added to the chapter "Kampfzeit" (Period of struggle), p. 61, but does not appear in the table of contents, p. 5.

9. Wagner, 1988 (see note 3), 60, 83. Idem, 1896 (see note 3), 8, 44: "*Ein Gedanke beseelt die ganze Schrift, nämlich der, daß die Basis der heute vorherrschenden Anschauungen über die Baukunst verschoben werden und die Erkenntniß durchgreifen muß, daß der einzige Ausgangspunkt unseres künstlerischen Schaffens nur das moderne Leben sein kann. Es ist hier am Platze, den modern schaffenden Architekten ein kräftiges ermunterndes 'Vorwärts' zuzurufen.*"

10. Wagner, 1988 (see note 3), 57. Idem, *Moderne Architektur*, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1898): "*Kaum drei Jahre sind seit jener Zeit verflossen, und schneller, als selbst ich es dachte, haben sich meine Wörter bewahrheitet; fast überall ist die 'Moderne' als Siegerin eingezogen.*" Naturally this "self-confirmation" belongs to that line of rhetoric that also serves, for example, Walter Gropius — in an intensified form — in the second edition of his standard work *Internationale Architektur* (Passau: Passavia, 1927), 9: "*Seit dem Erscheinen der ersten Auflage ist die moderne Baukunst der verschiedenen Kulturländer in überraschend schnellem Tempo der Entwicklungslinie dieses Buches gefolgt. Damals erst Geahntes ist heute festumrissene Wirklichkeit*" (Since the appearance of the first edition, the modern architecture of various civilized countries has followed the developmental line of this book with surprising rapidity. What then was only intimated is today a clearly defined reality).

11. Wagner, 1988 (see note 3), 58. Idem, 1896 (see note 3), 8: "*Und dieser Sieg, er ist da!*" The "victory" was also thematized several times in the course of Modernism (see, for example, Walter Curt Behrendt, *Der Sieg des neuen Baustils* [Stuttgart: Friederich Wedekind, 1927]). As

is well known, Gottfried Semper in the "Prolegomena" to *Der Stil* (see note 1), 1: 5, drew upon the image of a "mysterious, phoenixlike birth" to characterize the "crisis" of his own time.

12. With all due precaution against defining "epochal boundaries," one may maintain that in recent times, "around 1890" is finding greater acceptance than other models as the beginning of Modernism. For Austria in particular, see Günther Dankl, *Die Moderne in Österreich: Zur Genese und Bestimmung eines Begriffes in der österreichischen Kunst um 1900* (Vienna: Hermann Böhlau Nachf., 1986), 55–56.

13. After being appointed to Karl von Hasenauer's professorship at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna, Wagner availed himself, as is well known, of various official functions. He was a representative at the international congresses of architects in Brussels (1897), Paris (1900), and London (1906), and in 1908 he became president of the same event in Vienna. On that occasion he was awarded the *Jeton d'Or* from the *Société centrale des architectes français* (Central society of French architects), whose president at that time was Julien-Azais Guadet.

14. The German members of the *comité permanent* were the Berlin representatives K. Hinckeldeyn and Joseph Stübgen.

15. See *Exposition universelle internationale de 1900: Congrès international des architectes* (Paris: Impr. et Librairie Centrales des Chemins de Fer, Impr. Chaix, 1906), xix: "...architecte de S. M. I. et R. l'Empereur d'Autriche, professeur à l'Académie impériale et royale, correspondant de la Société centrale des architectes français."

16. That both Otto Antonia Graf (*Die vergessene Wagnerschule* [Vienna: Jugend und Volk, 1969]) and Marco Pozzetto (*La scuola di Wagner, 1894-1912* [Trieste: Comune di Trieste, 1979]; *Die Schule Otto Wagners 1894-1912* [Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1980]) were uninterested in such a question is no doubt related to the massive prejudice against the French Beaux-Arts. Even within the circle of the Beaux-Arts, there were, of course, intermediate positions, especially where it was a matter – analogous to Wagner's confessions – of assimilating and accommodating the possibilities of modern technology and construction.

17. See Sigfried Giedion, "The Nineties: Precursors of Contemporary Architecture," in *Space, Time, and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1941), 214–43; and in the same volume, the chapter "Otto Wagner and the Viennese School," 238–48.

18. *Ibid.*, 239: "We miss the significance of Wagner's work if we do not realize what it is to work in complete isolation." With this observation the situation in Vienna was contrasted with that in Brussels.

19. See Adolf Behne, *Der moderne Zweckbau* (Munich: Drei Masken, 1926), 12: "Fast genau gleichzeitig setzt sich in Holland, Deutschland und Österreich eine entscheidende Opposition durch, geknüpft an die Namen H. P. Berlage, Alfred Messel und Otto Wagner... Berlage (geb. 1856), Messel (geb. 1853) und Otto Wagner (geb. 1841) sind die erste Führergeneration in dem Kampfe um die

*Erneuerung der Baukunst*" (At almost exactly the same time a decisive opposition formed in Holland, Germany, and Austria, associated with the names of H. P. Berlage, Alfred Messel, and Otto Wagner... Berlage [born 1856], Messel [born 1853], and Otto Wagner [born 1841] were the first generation of leaders in the battle for the renewal of architecture). In the footnote, Louis Henry Sullivan was mentioned as belonging to the same generation, the "first modern American architect." Walter Gropius spoke of Wagner in connection with the Postsparkasse: "Today, it is almost impossible for us to imagine what a revolution such a step implied." Yet Gropius's list of the generation of founders did not include Wagner, although it did mention Loos, "I will begin with the precursors of the prewar era, and confine myself to contrasting the actual founders of the new architecture up to 1914: Berlage, Behrens, myself, Poelzig, Loos, Perret, Sullivan and St. Elia" (Walter Gropius, "The Formal and Technical Problems of Modern Architecture and Planning," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 41, no. 13 [19 May 1934]: 679–94; reprinted in idem, *Scope of Total Architecture* [New York: Collier Books, 1955], 60–63).

20. In this respect, Nikolaus Pevsner, in his article "L'architecture et les arts appliqués" (Architecture and the applied arts), published in the catalog of the exhibition organized by the European Council Exhibition, *Les sources du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle: Les arts en Europe de 1884 à 1914* (Paris: Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1960–1961), liii, upgraded Wagner's importance and quoted him: "*Il dit que 'seul ce qui est pratique peut être beau,' et qu'il faut être 'simple et laisser voir franchement la construction et les matériaux'*" (He said that "only that which is practical can be beautiful" and that it is necessary to be "simple and to let the construction and the materials be clearly seen").

21. Wagner, 1988 (see note 3), 91–99; Wagner, 1896 (see note 3), 65, 81.

22. The leading principle of this chapter runs as follows (Wagner, 1896 [see note 3], 70–71): "*Der Architect hat immer aus der Construction die Kunstform zu entwickeln.... Der nicht auf die werdende Kunstform, sondern nur auf die statische Berechnung und auf den Kostenpunkt Rücksicht nehmende Ingenieur spricht daher eine für die Menschheit unsympathische Sprache, während die Ausdrucksweise des Architekten, wenn er bei Schaffung der Kunstform nicht von der Construction ausgeht, unverständlich bleibt. Beides sind große Fehler.*" Wagner, 1988 (see note 3), 93–94: "The architect always has to develop the art-form out of construction.... The engineer who does not consider the nascent art-form but only the structural calculation and the expense will therefore speak a language unsympathetic to man, while on the other hand, the architect's mode of expression will remain unintelligible if in the creation of the art-form he does not start from construction. Both are great errors." The last formulation and its inherent "dialectic," notwithstanding its different emphasis, anticipate some of the famous definitions of the "Esthétique de l'ingénieur, architecture" in Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture*.

23. Compare the Wagner quotes in the last note with Behrens's formulation: "*Ein Leben*

*ohne den materiellen Nutzen der modernen Technik und ohne ihren rastlosen Fortschritt kann nicht mehr gedacht werden. Obgleich es somit fast den Anschein hat, als ob die Geistesrichtung unserer Zeit eine rein intellektuelle sei, zeigt doch eine andere Seite unseres öffentlichen Lebens, wie sehr wir von einem Schönheitsbedürfnis beherrscht werden*" (A life without the material advantages of modern technology and without its unceasing progress can no longer be conceived. Although the spiritual direction of our time sometimes gives the appearance that it is purely intellectual, it also makes evident another side of our public life – how very much we are controlled by the need for beauty"). See Peter Behrens, "Über den Zusammenhang des baukünstlerischen Schaffens mit der Technik," in *Kongreß für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft, Berlin 7.-9. Oktober 1913* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Guke, 1914), 251. Behrens, on the other hand, also dismisses an aesthetic derived from modern technology (p. 257, and below).

24. Wagner, 1988 (see note 3), 91–92. Idem, 1896 (see note 3), 66: "...und dadurch allein schon ziemlich deutlich den Weg gewiesen, welchen wir zu wandeln haben."

25. See Werner Oechslin, "Contro la storiografia della *tabula rasa*," *Rassegna* 5 (1981): 36–41.

26. See Werner Oechslin, "The 'Picture': The (Superficial) Consensus of Modern Architecture?" *A + U: Architecture and Urbanism* 245 (February 1991): 28–39.

27. Wagner, 1896 (see note 3), 66, 69: "*Kein Geringerer als Gottfried Semper hat zuerst unsere Aufmerksamkeit auf diese Wahrheit gelenkt (wenn er auch später leider davon abging)... Es ist Semper's unbestrittenes Verdienst, uns durch sein Buch Der Stil, allerdings in etwas exotischer Weise, auf diese Postulate gewiesen zu haben.*" Idem, 1988 (see note 3), 91, 93: "No less a person than Gottfried Semper first directed our attention to this truth (even though he later unfortunately deviated from it)... It is Semper's undisputed merit to have referred us to this postulate, to be sure in a somewhat exotic way, in his book *Der Stil*."

28. Wagner, 1988 (see note 3), 63. Idem, 1896 (see note 3), 19: "...alles aufbieten, damit er jene Position zurückerobere und behaupte, welche ihm, seinem Können und Wissen nach, absolut gebührt."

29. Wagner, 1988 (see note 3), 125. Idem, 1896 (see note 3), 120: "*Die grandiosen Fortschritte der Cultur werden uns deutlich weisen, was wir von den Alten lernen, was wir lassen sollen, und der eingeschlagene richtige Weg wird uns sicher zu dem Ziele führen, Neues, Schönes zu schaffen.*"

30. Wagner, 1988 (see note 3), 75, 58. Idem, 1896 (see note 3), 36, 9: "*Die Aufgabe der Kunst, also auch der modernen, ist aber dieselbe geblieben, welche sie zu allen Zeiten war.*" And: "*Durch den Vorstoß der 'Modernen' hat die Tradition den wahren Werth erhalten und ihren Überwerth verloren, die Archäologie ist zu einer Hilfswissenschaft der Kunst herabgesunken und wird es hoffentlich immer bleiben.*"

31. As an example of a – prominent – judgment of Wagner, in which each building is considered from the viewpoint of its novelty, see Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 72–110. In this work the still clearly historicist

facade of the Länderbank, for example, is discussed – with no discernible reason – for its “drastically simplified... facade” (pp. 76–79).

32. It must also be pointed out that the following investigation in no way raises the claim of exclusivity, but simply presents a single, although to be sure well-documented, viewpoint.

33. The “moralistic side” of this metaphor was present from the beginning of the discussion. Carl Bötticher concluded the dedication to Karl Friedrich Schinkel and Karl O. Müller in his *Die Tektonik der Hellenen* by noting: “Mit gleichem Worte der Hochverehrung gedenke ich auch des andern Mannes, ... der mit der Gewalt seiner schön eindringlichen Rede noch oft mein Herz erfreut, und mir gezeigt hat was Forschung zu lösen vermöge, so bald sie alles Selbstlichen sich entkleidend, mit Hingebung und klarem Auge ihren Vorwurf ganz durchdringt” (With the same words of great respect, I am also mindful of another man... who with the power of his impressive speech very often delighted my heart and showed me what research is able to resolve, as soon as it, divesting [entkleidend] itself of all self-centeredness, fully penetrates its subject with devotion and clear eyes).

34. See Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen* (Berlin: G. Siemens, 1893), 32.

35. Wagner, 1988 (see note 3), 76. Idem, 1896 (see note 3), 38–39.

36. Le Corbusier, “Trois rappels à messieurs les architectes,” in idem, *Vers une architecture* (Paris: Crès et cie, 1923), 11–48. The main argument of the first reminder, “Le Volume,” the second reminder, “La Surface,” and the third reminder, “Le Plan,” begins with the definition: “L’architecture n’a rien à voir avec les ‘styles’” (Architecture has nothing to do with “styles”).

37. Paul Schultze-Naumburg, “Kulturarbeiten/Schulen,” *Der Kunstwart* 16, no. 1 (October 1902): 12–15 and figs. 1–2: “...monumental durch die geschlossene Masse” and “ein Nichts, ein Anhäufen von Motiven, mit denen nichts gesagt, mit denen nichts erreicht wird.” On the rhetoric of the images he said (p. 12): “Wir wollen von ihnen nur einige Proben zeigen und wollen einigen dieser Bilder schlechte moderne Anlagen unserem Brauche gemäss als Gegenbeispiele entgegensetzen” (According to our practice, we only want to show a few specimens of these bad modern designs and do so only in order to contrast them as counterexamples).

38. See Hermann Czech and Wolfgang Mistelbauer, *Das Looshaus* (Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1976), 77 and passim.

39. See Max Dvorak, *Katechismus der Denkmalpflege* (Vienna: Julius Bard, 1916), fig. 15, “Beispiel,” and fig. 16, “Gegenbeispiel.”

40. Architekt Baurat A. Föhr, *Bauten und Entwürfe* (Prague: V. Neubert und Soehne, 1925). Plates of the building include images taken before and after the renovation.

41. See Harald Bodenschatz, *Platz für das neue Berlin! Geschichte der Stadterneuerung seit 1871* (Berlin: Fiansit, 1987), 86–92.

42. Bruno Taut, *Die Stadtkrone* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1919), 50: “Die Architektur nur in schön gestalteter Zweckerfüllung in schmuckhafter Einkleidung dessen zu sehen, was man nun

*einmal notwendig braucht, also ihr die Rolle einer Art Kunstgewerbe zuzuweisen, das ist in der Tat eine allzu geringschätzigte Auffassung von ihrer Bedeutung*” (To see architecture only as a beautiful compliance with purpose, as an ornamental outfitting of what man once needed, that is, to ascribe to it the role of a kind of handicraft – that is, in fact, a much too disdainful conception of its importance).

43. A sphere of meaning other than the one discussed here was followed by Wolfgang Pehnt, “‘Kern und Schale’: Ein architektonisches Motiv bei Bruno Taut,” *Pantheon* 1 (1982): 16–43.

44. Hermann Bahr, “Otto Wagner zum siebzigsten Geburtstag,” in *Essays* (Leipzig: Insel, 1921), 113–16: “...*akademisch begann und aus dieser akademischen Zeit her noch alle Stilformen beherrscht...kein Neuerer aus blauem Himmel.*” “*Otto Wagner ist das Gegenteil der Wiener Ringstrasse,*” and “*Schwindel, Kitsch, Theater.*”

45. Josef Strzygowski, *Die bildende Kunst der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1907), 15, 17: “*einen der tüchtigsten Architekten,*” “*dass er keine monumentale Aufgabe grössten Stils zu lösen bekommt,*” “*in Material und Technik befangen,*” and “*er ist Verkleidungskünstler, d.h. seine Bauten liegen im Äussern nicht in ihrem struktivem Material bloss, sondern sind mit Schmuckplatten überzogen.*”

46. *Ibid.*, 89: “*Er konstruiert den Raumbau und schmückt davon unabhängig die zustande gekommenen Außenflächen mit ihren Tür- und Fensterlöchern. Seine Bauten ‘wachsen’ nicht in der Masse, sie entwickeln sich im Raum, und die dadurch entstehenden Flächen werden ‘geschmückt.’*” Notwithstanding the customary view, Strzygowski was in no way affected by the (modern) high regard for the engineer at this time. Quite the contrary, the cited passage on the “decoration” of the facade was followed with the critical observation: “*Nun, Wagner ist mehr ‘Ingenieur’ als Architekt!*” (Now, Wagner is more “engineer” than architect).

47. Gustav Adolf Platz, *Die Baukunst der neuesten Zeit* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1927), 16: “*Die klare Form der Baukörper, die materialgerechte Konstruktion erscheint noch stark überwuchert von dekorativen Zutaten, denen man bei aller Neuheit deutlich ihre Abstammung von ‘Zopf’ und ‘Empire’ ansieht.*” Platz also emphasized Wagner as both the “*Renaissanceschüler*” (Renaissance student) and as the “*Vorkämpfer der neuen Baugesinnung in Schrift und Tat*” (champion of the new architectural attitude in word and deed.)

48. See Hans Tietze, *Otto Wagner* (Vienna: Rikola, 1922), 4: “...*die historisierende Baukunst des Ringstrassenstils...erzogen*” and “*durch Vorbild und durch Widerspruch.*”

49. *Ibid.*, 6–7: “*Dieses Bedürfnis hieß – in die Sprache der Architektur gebracht – Klärung des Tektonischen.*” This “clarification of the tectonic” referred to the “architectural theories prevailing in the time of Gottfried Semper.”

50. Tietze (see note 48), 15: “*Die Hingabe an die Welle des Jugendstils erscheint uns heute als das Zeitgebundendste an Wagner, was den Augenblicksvorzug der Modernität besaß, mußte naturgemäß auch die Schatten der Vergänglichkeit zeigen.*”

51. Tietze (see note 48), 15–16: “*Man könnte sich ein Elementarereignis vorstellen, das die Unwesentliche von Otto Wagners Bauten herabwüsche und sie nicht verstümmelte, sondern zu konzentrierter Wirkung erhöhe.*” Despite these clear opinions, Tietze was aware of his – too close – position as an observer and promised a later “historical evaluation.”

52. The *Makartbukett* refers to the painter Hans Makart, whose influence on the “official” taste of late nineteenth-century Vienna was considerable. Karl Marilaun, *Adolf Loos* (Vienna: Wiener Literarische Anstalt, 1922), 17: “*Dingen, die man ja keinesfalls mehr entbehren konnte und wollte, abermals den bewußten Spitzkragen umzuhänge. Ihr Zweckmäßiges mit ‘Schönheit’ zu bemänteln.*” Paul Westheim (“Loos: Unpraktisches kann nicht schön sein,” *Die Form* 5 [1930]: 573–74) stressed, for example, that Loos himself viewed Wagner positively, and that the latter “*aus seiner Architektenhaut heraus – in eine beliebige Handwerkerhaut hineinschlüpfen konnte*” (could slip out of his architect’s skin and into the skin of any craftsman).

53. These were the expressions of the “Rembrandtdeutschen” (Julius Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher, von einem Deutschen* [Leipzig: Hirschfeld, 1890], 1), which were still taken seriously by the Werkbund representatives as important proposals for forming the basis of the new progressive orientation.

54. In his autobiographical contribution to Johannes Jahn, ed., *Die Kunstwissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1924), 183–98, Tietze referred to “the first years of the second decade” as “*einem bedeutungsvollen Wendepunkt des geistigen Lebens*” (a significant turning point of intellectual life). The “*Wechselbedingtheit von Formalentwicklung und geistigem Geschehen*” (mutual dependence of formal developments and intellectual events) was given as the theme of the then-planned book *Klassizismus und Romantik*.

55. *Ibid.*, 185.

56. Tietze, in Jahn (see note 54), 185–86. Lawful trends, according to Tietze, are “not objectively given . . . but related to current attitudes.”

57. Tietze, in Jahn (see note 54), 186: “*Je nach der Entfernung des Standpunktes und der Intensität des Blickes werden in der ungeheuren Fülle unzusammenhängender Einzeltatsachen – die ja alle unmittelbar in der schöpferischen Kraft individueller Menschen verankert sind – verschiedene Entwicklungslinien wahrnehmbar; aus dem diskursiven geistigen Sehen wird erst durch einen Fixierungsakt die wahrhafte Gestalt der Zusammenhänge herausgehoben – beinahe wie die maßgebende gleichzeitige Kunstlehre das Erscheinungsbild zum Vorstellungsbild geläutert werden läßt*” (Different lines of development are perceived, depending on the distance of the viewpoint and the intensity with which one looks at the enormous wealth of unrelated individual facts, which are all anchored directly in the creative force of the individual person; the true shape of the interrelations only emerges from the discursive spiritual looking [*Sehen*] through an act of fixating [*Fixierungsakt*] – almost in the same way that authoritative contemporary art theory lets the image of appearance [*Erscheinungsbild*] become purified into the image of imag-

ination [*Vorstellungsbild*]).

58. Tietze, in Jahn (see note 54), 187: "...die Möglichkeit begrifflicher Ausschälung der künstlerischen aus allen Arten menschlicher Tätigkeit." Even here one finds the metaphor of "peeling away"!

59. Tietze, in Jahn (see note 54), 187, 189. A few pages later (p. 194) he specifically criticized the continuation of the "causal regress" in a purely intellectual activity, as it is in art, "from the spiritual into the physical," as "a most questionable step."

60. See below, page 380.

61. For the relation of Semper's theory of *Bekleidung* to Otto Wagner, see Harry Francis Mallgrave's introduction in Mallgrave and Herrmann (see note 1), 41 ("The extent to which his ideas influenced... [has] yet to be pursued"). J. Duncan Berry ("The Legacy of Gottfried Semper: Studies in *Späthistorismus*" [Ph.D. diss., Brown Univ., 1989], 226–27) refers to Streiter but not to Wagner, with whose *Moderne Architektur* Streiter was so intensively involved in *Architektonische Zeitfragen* (1898).

62. Ludwig Volkmann, *Grundfragen der Kunstbetrachtung* (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1925). The book — here in a "new, consolidated, and expanded" edition — goes back to the lectures that Volkmann "gave twenty years ago in the Leipzig Kunstgewerbemuseum."

63. *Ibid.*, 317, 320.

64. Volkmann (see note 62), 323, 241.

65. Volkmann (see note 62), 243.

66. In this connection it must be emphasized that Adolf von Hildebrand, whose theories Volkmann followed, had in *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst* (Strasbourg: J. H. E. Heitz, 1893) explicitly argued in a cross-disciplinary way. His assertion — "*Die Beziehung zwischen Architektur und Plastik kann immer nur architektonischer Natur sein*" (The relation between architecture and sculpture can only be of an architetonic nature) — is likewise noteworthy to the extent to which the conceptual explanation sought in the preface to the third edition indicates: "...wobei ich natürlich die übliche spezielle Bedeutung des Wortes *Architektur* beiseite lasse. *Architektur* fasse ich dann nur als *Bau eines Formganzen unabhängig von der Formsprache*" (While I, of course, depart from the customary special meaning of the word "architecture," I understand it only as a building of a formal whole independent of the language of form).

67. See Francesco Milizia, "Saggio d'architettura," in idem, *Memorie degli architetti antichi e moderni*, 4th ed. (Bassano: Remondini, 1785), xxx: "...che s'impiega, o si sovrappone al vivo di una fabbrica." Accordingly, Milizia can distinguish between facades "con ordini d'architettura, o senza alcun ordine" (with orders of architecture or without any order).

68. Marc-Antoine Laugier, *Essai sur l'architecture* (Paris: Duchesne, 1753), 121–31: "...des edifices où l'on n'emploie aucun ordre d'architecture" (the edifices where one does not employ an order of architecture).

69. Carl Bötticher, *Die Tektonik der Hellenen* (Potsdam: F. Riegel, 1844), 1: 4, 8.

70. *Ibid.*, 8–11.

71. Semper (see note 1), 217: “*Das Prinzip der Bekleidung hat auf den Stil der Baukunst und der anderen Künste zu allen Zeiten und bei allen Völkern großen Einfluß geübt.*”

72. Semper (see note 1), 227, 232: “*Das Maskiren der Realität in den Künsten,*” and “*Stoffe zu bildlicher Benützung bei monumentalen Zwecken.*”

73. See Leo Adler, *Vom Wesen der Baukunst: Die Baukunst als Ereignis und Erscheinung. Versuch einer Grundlegung der Architekturwissenschaft* (Leipzig: Asia Major, 1926), 37. Adler in this regard referred to Max Dessoir’s *Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1923).

74. Ludwig Münz and Gustav Künstler, *Der Architekt Adolf Loos* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1964), 13: “*Er [hätte] auf seine Art den großen Theoretiker Gottfried Semper in der Modernität seiner Forderung besser zu verstehen vermocht als die anderen.*”

75. Riegl (see note 34), 6.

76. Riegl (see note 34), 32: “*Von der Überschätzung der Textilkunst in Semper’s Stil werden wir daher gründlich zurückkommen müssen; nichtsdestoweniger bleibt jede Seite, auf der er sich über dieses Thema äussert, auch fürderhin noch lesenswerth, wo nicht klassisch.*”

77. Riegl (see note 34), 6: “*Die Ausbildung dieser seiner Theorie in grob materialistischem Sinne ist erst durch seine zahllosen Nachfolger erfolgt.*”

78. Behrens (see note 23), 251–59. Schmarsow was to speak on the theme “Spatial Formation as the Essence of Architectural Creation.” Behrens’s well-known lecture, also entitled “Kunst und Technik,” goes back to the year 1909–1910. See Tilmann Buddensieg and Henning Rogge, eds., *Industriekultur, Peter Behrens und die AEG, 1907–1914* (Berlin: Mann, 1979), 5278. In the version given there, the “dogma” is specified with “(Riegl).” Alois Riegl is referred to as the “Viennese scholar Riegl.”

79. Behrens (see note 23), 253–55.

80. Behrens (see note 23), 257: “*Die Aufgabe der Architektur ist und bleibt aber für alle Zeiten nicht ein Enthüllen, sondern Raum einzuschließen, zu umkleiden.*”

81. Behrens (see note 23), 257–58. Behrens, incidentally, cited in this regard the Doric temple, which satisfies the mentioned aesthetic demand, since it would scarcely have received “its visual effect of stability if mathematically calculated.”

82. Behrens (see note 23), 259: “*Wenn ich einen Punkt besonders hervorheben soll, so wäre es dieser, daß ich hoffe, die lapidaren Worte, die unser großer Architekt gegen das Elend der Semperschen Theorie gefunden hat, möchten auf die Theorie und Praxis unseres Kunstgewerbes und unserer Architektur ihre Wirkung nicht verfehlen.*”

83. Behrens (see note 23), 260: “*Die hier zum Ausdruck gebrachte Alternative Semper oder Riegl erscheint mir zu begrifflich einseitig gefaßt, um mit der erlebten Wirklichkeit der Kunst-*

*geschichte und des architektonischen Kunstschaffens übereinstimmen zu können.*" Höber refers to similar thoughts that he had elaborated in the preface to his Behrens monograph, dated March 1913, in which he makes reference to the aesthetic ideas of Broder Christiansen.

84. Behrens (see note 23), 262.

85. Rudolf Redtenbacher, *Tektonik: Principien der künstlerischen Gestaltung der Gebilde und Gefüge von Menschenhand, welche den Gebieten der Architektur, der Ingenieurfächer und der Kunst-Industrie angehören* (Vienna: R. V. Waldheim, 1881), 9.

86. *Ibid.*, 233: "...den Naturproducten die Berechtigung ab[zu]sprechen, für schön gehalten zu werden."

87. Redtenbacher (see note 85), 230, 8: "Die wesentliche Aufgabe der Tektonik ist die Formgebung; die Formgebung setzte allgemeine geometrische Grundanschauungen voraus."

88. Rudolf Redtenbacher, *Die Architektonik der modernen Baukunst* (Berlin: Ernst & Korn, 1883), viii, x, and the first chapter.

89. Redtenbacher (see note 85). He dedicates his work to Rudolf Hermann Lotze but gives special thanks to Fechner. This reference clearly allows us to recognize the different nature of Redtenbacher's views.

90. Redtenbacher (see note 88), x: "Je vollständiger die Eigenschaften der Grundformen zur realen Anschauung kommen, desto günstiger im ästhetische Sinne erscheinen diese." In order to avoid one-sided generalizations, one should also compare his statement (p. ix): "Die vollständige Übereinstimmung von Form und Zweck ist die unerläßliche Vorbedingung aller Schönheit in der Tektonik, und sie verlangt die absolute Reinheit der äußeren Erscheinung des Gegenstandes als niedrigste Stufe des Schönen" (The complete harmony of form and purpose is the necessary precondition for all beauty in the tectonic, and it demands the absolute purity of the object's exterior appearance as the lowest form of beauty).

91. Redtenbacher (see note 85), 5.

92. I earlier pointed out Bayer's theoretical remarks with regard to Otto Wagner. See Oechslin (see note 25). Consideration of Bayer is also now found in Berry (see note 61), 289.

93. See Robert Stiassny, "Ein deutscher Humanist: Joseph Bayer (1827–1910)," in *idem* (see note 2), iv–xii. This anthology, whose critical success Herman Nohl explained in a preliminary remark, was published by Eugen Diederichs, who also published Bruno Taut's *Die Stadtkrone* and the writings of Hermann Muthesius, Fritz Schumacher, Paul Schultze-Naumburg, etc.

94. Stiassny (see note 2), vii.

95. Stiassny (see note 2), iv–v: "Umso verhängnisvoller sollte es für seine Laufbahn werden, dass er, einmal falsch angemeldet und abgestempelt, fortan bloss als 'Aesthetiker' gegolten hat" (It would become all the more disasterous for his career that he was falsely declared and stamped an "aesthetician," and from then on was supposed to be merely that).

96. The relevant writings of Joseph Bayer's are collected by Stiassny (see note 2) under the

heading “Zur modernen Architektenbewegung” (Toward a Modern Movement of architects). They include “Wie sollen wir bauen?” (How should we build?), 1880; “Glas und Eisen” (Glass and iron), 1886; “Moderne Bautypen” (Modern building types), 1886; and “Stilkrisen unserer Zeit” (Style crises of our time), 1886.

97. Stiassny (see note 2), viii: “*Denkende Architekten hat es zu allen Zeiten gegeben. . . . Nur das bewußte Denken der Wissenschaft, die Tugend der historischen Gerechtigkeit ist meistens nicht ihre Sache.*”

98. Stiassny (see note 2), viii.

99. The Herbartians were followers of the German philosopher Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841). Stiassny (see note 2), vii–viii.

100. Stiassny (see note 2), x: “*Die angebliche Auffindung eigenartiger Formen ist eigentlich ein Entformen.*”

101. Joseph Bayer, “Stilkrisen unserer Zeit,” in Stiassny (see note 2), 289–95.

102. Joseph Bayer, “Stilkrisen unserer Zeit,” in Stiassny (see note 2), 293: “*Wie törricht wäre es vollends, von unserer Baukunst zu verlangen, sie solle ein neues eigentümliches Formendetail – was man nach dem Schulbegriffe den ‘Stil’ zu nennen pflegt – aus sich heraus hervorbringen.*” To the preceding went the observation, “*Eine volle Stil-Einheitlichkeit in der formalen Erscheinung der modernen Bauten ist allerdings fürs erste nicht zu verlangen*” (A complete stylistic unity in the formal appearance of modern buildings can indeed no longer be insisted upon).

103. Joseph Bayer, “Stilkrisen unserer Zeit,” in Stiassny (see note 2), 293–94: “*Endlich werden doch allmählich und unvermerkt die neuen Bauprobleme auch zu neuen Formgedanken führen; und selbst der veränderte Rhythmus der alten Formen, nach einem neuen architektonischen Lebensgesetze geordnet, ist bereits ein wesentlicher Gewinn.*”

104. Joseph Bayer, “Stilkrisen unserer Zeit,” in Stiassny (see note 2), 294–95: “*So werden durch die natürliche Reibung der Zeit ihre allzu scharfen, stilistisch eigensinnigen Ecken und Kanten sicherlich abgestumpft und, sobald die Kraft in gleicher Richtung weiterwirkt, selbst zu neuen Formen zugeschliffen.*”

105. Joseph Bayer, “Stilkrisen unserer Zeit,” in Stiassny (see note 2), 295: “*Ich wage sogar die Behauptung: die Kernbildung eines modernen Stiles ist bereits da; aber die Merkmale desselben findet man freilich nicht heraus, wenn man die Bauwerke unserer Zeit nur äußerlich auf die wohlbekanntesten historischen Stildetails hin beguckt. Dann zeigt sich dem Blicke allerdings nur, was verschieden, nicht auch dasjenige, was gemeinsam ist. Das nachweisbar Neue aber gibt sich kund in der Gesamthaltung der Bauanlagen, in ihrer Durchgliederung aus den Grundrissen heraus, in den unserem Zeitalter eigenartigen Kompositions-Aufgaben als solchen. Gar manche harren noch der Lösung, aber eine ansehnliche Reihe derselben ist von bedeutenden und weit-sichtigen Baukünstlern schon jetzt in einer geradezu architektonisch erfinderischen Weise zum Ausdrucke gebracht worden. Mögen auch die gewählten Ausdrucksmittel dem überlieferten*

*Formenvorräte angehören – das damit Ausgedrückte ist eigenartig, ist ein neues Resultat.*”

106. See Wagner’s own comments on the “central plan” and on the special requirements guaranteed by it. See Otto Antonia Graf, *Otto Wagner: Das Werk des Architekten* (Vienna: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachf., 1985), 1: 49.

107. Joseph Bayer, “Moderne Bautypen,” in Stiassny (see note 2), 280–88.

108. Joseph Bayer, “Moderne Bautypen,” in Stiassny (see note 2), 280: “*Eine bestimmte, aus dem innersten Grund und Wesen des Zeitalters stammende Denkweise und Gestaltungs-Außerung der Kunst, die nur eine obligatorische vorgezeichnete Hauptrichtung haben kann.*” With that, there is also the analogous formulation (p. 281), “*Seit jeher ist der Bau-Organismus ein symbolisches Abbild des Gesellschafts-Organismus gewesen; er soll und muß es in unseren Tagen auch wieder sein*” (The building organism has all along been a symbolic picture of the social organization, it should and must be the same today).

109. Joseph Bayer, “Moderne Bautypen,” in Stiassny (see note 2), 281.

110. See above and note 54.

111. See Joseph Bayer, “Gottfried Semper” (1879), in Stiassny (see note 2), 86–128.

112. See above and note 38. Even the fictional meeting of Fischer von Erlach and Wagner was a theme for caricature. See figure 8 in this essay.

113. Bahr (see note 44), 115.

114. Tietze (see note 48), 3: “*Wagners Kunst hat wie die Fischers die gesunde Kraft eines Stammes.*”

115. Strzygowski (see note 45), 15.

116. Adolf Loos, *Trotzdem 1900–1930* (Innsbruck: Brenner, 1931), 61–62.

117. See above and note 52.

118. Graf (see note 106), 1: 81 and fig. 142.

119. The disputed project is one of the themes now explicitly documented in Peter Haiko and Renata Kassal-Mikula, *Otto Wagner und das Kaiser Franz Josef-Stadtmuseum: Das Scheitern der Modernen in Wien*, exh. cat. (Vienna: Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, 1988), n. 107. In that text Peter Haiko also discusses the influential voices of Viennese art historians, whose concrete views related to the project cannot be considered here, yet which demonstrate (notwithstanding the specific nature of reasons) that more than the architecture needed to be resolved, namely, interpretational issues related to Wagner and the architecture of Fischer von Erlach.

120. The concepts were voiced in Wagner’s own commentary. See Graf (see note 106), 2: 457–58.

121. Graf (see note 106), 2: 567.

122. It is moreover significant how much Wagner “deviates” and prefers to make the necessary decorative additions in plastic adornment, which he places on top of the architectural mass.

123. See Graf (see note 106), 2: 567.

124. Compare the well-known presentation of the middle projection of Wagner's design (Graf [see note 106], 2: fig. 798) with the engraving of Ch. Percier and P.-F.-L. Fontaine in their *Description des cérémonies et des fêtes qui ont eu lieu pour le mariage de S. M. L'Empereur Napoléon avec S. A. I. Madame l'Archiduchesse Marie-Louise d'Autriche* (Paris, 1810), pl. 4. It is characteristic that at that time the "ornament" was also granted a larger autonomy within the official structure of the academy. Percier and Fontaine are themselves prominent examples of this development, as is the specific class of "*ornato*" set up in Milan and tied to the name Albertolli.

125. See above and note 47.

126. In this context, the above-cited description by Strzygowski is pertinent (see above and note 45).

127. Schmarsow presented these ideas, for instance, in his lectures on art and education. See *Unser Verhältnis zu den bildenden Künsten* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1903), fifth lecture, "Das Raumgebilde und seine Grenze: Die Wand," 108–35.

128. *Ibid.*, 114–17.

129. See above and note 69.

130. See Werner Oechslin, "Emouvoir – Boullée und Le Corbusier," *Daïdalos* 30 (1988): 42–55.

131. Cited from Semper's original English manuscript for this lecture (ms. 122) in *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 6 (Autumn 1983): 6.

132. August Schmarsow, *Peruginos erste Schaffensperiode* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1915), 6: "Aber unsere entwicklungsgeschichtliche Denkweise wird ja stets die Vergleichung zeitlich vorangehender und folgender Erscheinungen mit der Auffassung der gerade gegenwärtigen verbinden; je mannigfaltiger die Fäden miteinander verwebt sind, desto überzeugender wird uns die organische Zusammengehörigkeit der Gebilde untereinander."

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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