

Chapter 8

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Reconstructing Memory from Ruins: The Athenian Academy by Theophil Hansen as a Modern ‘*Lieu de Mémoire*’

1. Introduction

The Athenian Academy, the opulent and probably most eye-catching of the three edifices comprising the monumental core of the modern Greek capital – the so-called ‘Athenian Trilogy’ on Panepistimiou Avenue – has obtained universal recognition as a representative specimen of Greek modernity (see fig. 8.1). In addition, its iconic similarities with the city’s honored ancient relics commonly place it in the broad stylistic category of (neo)classicism as one of their pre-eminent modern counterparts.¹ It is the purpose of this paper to problematize the specifics of the building’s stylistic definition and the fundamentals of its inception by its architect, Theophil Hansen, with a special eye to the role that memory in its manifold nature held in his related architectural agenda.



Fig. 8.1: T. Hansen, The Athenian Trilogy on Panepistimiou Avenue: National Library (left), University (center), Academy (right), watercolor on paper (excerpt), April 1859 (Graphic Collection of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Hansen estate, inv. no. HZ 19786), reproduced with permission from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

1 See Förster (1879); N. N. (1884); von Lützow (1885: 106–107); Durm (1892: 184; 1910: 229); Ganz (1972); Fatsea (2014; 2020).

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To that end the paper proceeds in three steps as follows. First, it introduces (neo)classicism as the leading aesthetic current of the Enlightenment and, therefore, as inevitably subjected to many of the latter's theoretical shortcomings, including the characteristic epistemic divide between matter and spirit, that is, a phenomenon akin to the dissolution of traditional forms of world inhabitation, both material and immaterial.² Symptomatic of the related socio-cultural transformations was that the architectural *milieux* of people's communities lost their former coherence, whereas all the associated memory, which had served for ages as their connecting tissue, became displaced. Here, Maurice Halbwachs's theoretical reflections are aptly relevant. That social memory is always in need of a solid spatial framework to survive is an idea that features prominently in the French sociologist's literature, large portion of which has been devoted to the analysis of these frameworks, architecture included.³ Such a generic inference, however, which sets social memory in direct dependence upon architecture – that is, a structural connection particularly endangered by modernity – calls for further scrutiny. Did (neo)classicism emerge in the vacuum of these traditional frameworks to make up for the lost meaning of communities? Was (neo)classical architecture indeed as soulless and artificial as it appears from our current perspective? Was it as sundering mind from emotion as thought of in echoing the spirit of the time? Did it stand in binary opposition to romanticism?⁴ In view of these questions, the paper takes a critical stand against the undifferentiated usage of the term 'neoclassicism' by modern historiography – the Greek, in particular – which, rather grossly, subsumes under one heading incomparable architectural phenomena on the sole criterion that they all allude to the same source, i.e., Greek antiquity.⁵ As a result, this literature fails to properly address the more constructive (or poetic) variations of classicism which oftentimes eschewed the norm of unreflective

2 See Olick and Robbins (1998: 115): 'Many authors describe an existential crisis arising out of the increased possibility for abstract thought [...], out of accelerating change resulting from increased industrialization and urbanization, as well as out of the resultant decline of religious world views and of traditional forms of political authority.'

3 Halbwachs (1950) referred to this kind of memory as 'collective', which featured most prominently in the title of his posthumous oeuvre *La Mémoire collective*. Halbwachs's notion of 'collective memory' has been variously criticized, first by his colleague historian Marc Bloch (2011 [1925]: 150–155), who found it too restrictive because it presupposed a firm identity for its subjects; also excessive in the way it projected an individual's psychological state upon the collective body.

4 The related literature is vast. Among the latest critical studies which challenge such divisive preoccupations between classicism and romanticism from as early as in the eighteenth century, is Townsend (2022). See also below footnotes 19, 40 and 41.

5 Only recently the related international literature has become more refined in its definitions. See, for example, the entry 'classicism' by Schlobach and Zelle (2001) in the *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, which pinpoints the 'conceptual ambivalences' of the notion from country to country, thus undermining the authoritative (i.e., normative) principle in the very definition of the term.

imitation of precedents and passive idealism. Theophil Hansen's architecture is a case in point.

Second, the paper – in inquiring into Hansen's formation – traces his line of influences in the German tradition of Karl Friedrich Schinkel, both in an architectural and a philosophical sense. It illuminates for that the close ties of the Prussian architect with the philosophical *milieu* of the Jena romantics, as filtered through the Weimar classicism of Goethe and Schiller. It pays closer attention to the centrality of memory in (Karl Wilhelm) Friedrich Schlegel as synecdochically embedded in the notion of *fragment* (or, *ruin*) serving as the material residue of man's constant return to an indistinct prototype, yet always delivered in an incomplete and novel form in self-evident distance from its source. It is through this special reference to the idea of memory by virtue of the fragment – that is, the ground upon which both sensory and mental faculties meet in a fruitful exchange – that the German romantics sought to restore the aforementioned divide of modernity. Schinkel's commitment to this philosophical tradition shimmers through the multi-layered spirit of his works which combine classicism and romanticism into a more complex idiom often referred to as 'romantic classicism'. Much of Hansen's architectural production, including the Athenian Academy, was set out within this intellectual framework.

Third, in considering that architecture established itself as an integral scientific discipline only in modernity, this paper proceeds to unravel the structural relationship between memory and building from within the domain of architectural epistemology. It is due to its essential interaction with the world and, even more so, to its contingency upon the socio-cultural *milieu*, that architecture develops as a temporally grounded discipline with a semi-autonomous status in this period. Here, the terms 'disciplinary' and 'social' memory become pertinent for defining architecture's referencing to memory on two levels, one internal, the other external to its epistemological core; that is, memory built *in* the discipline and memory preserved *through* actual building, respectively.⁶ In this dynamic domain, the academically trained architect serves as the catalyst between the two levels; or rather, as the agent who, by employing memory as a restitutive mechanism, ensures both cohesiveness and continuity to the fractured social *milieux* of modernity, while at the same time he/she feeds all this experience back to his/her own disciplinary base. It is under this light that Hansen's Athenian Academy is being analyzed, that is, as a significant bearer of both disciplinary and social memory, wherein architecture attests to its 'semi-autonomous' status for coming to terms with the antinomies of modernity.⁷

6 The terms 'disciplinary memory' and 'social' or 'societal memory' have been introduced and properly theorized by architecture historian Stanford Anderson (1995; 1999).

7 The notion of 'quasi-autonomy' (or 'semi-autonomy') comes also from Anderson; see, for example, Anderson (2002).

2. Neoclassicism and Memory: problems of definition

(Neo)classicism is the cultural-artistic movement that we normally associate with the Age of Reason, i.e., the eighteenth century. It is known for its aspiring to both the forms and ideas of classical antiquity in reaction to the excesses of the Baroque with its profuse religious connotations. (Neo)classicism advocated simplicity, restraint, moderation, measure, and not the least adherence to rules and to the ideal of *complete form*, all epitomized in J. J. Winckelmann's famous motto 'noble simplicity and quiet grandeur' (*edle Einfalt und stille Größe*).⁸ As (neo-)classical artists were exposed at the beginning only to a limited spectrum of archaeological evidence, they naturally held a limited view of antiquity, therefore a limited and rather idealized perception of works that they could use as models.⁹ Although the Greek so-called 'Golden Age' was the ultimate reference point for most (neo)classicists, Greece *per se* as a physical entity was still largely inaccessible; so was any assiduous or contextual knowledge of its monuments.¹⁰ Even the very few who dared and made the adventurous journey to Greece, in defiance of all obstacles, exhibited a 'complete blindness' in confronting the ancient ruins because they seemed 'to trust their books rather than their eyes', as Nikolaus Pevsner pointedly observed.¹¹ With reference to the most ambitious of these expeditions by the two British architects James Stuart and Nicholas Revett in the mid-1750s, Pevsner underlines that 'there was still a long way to go from archaeological interest to emotional understanding' (see fig. 8.2).¹² Interestingly though, even after this 'emotional understanding' had been presumably achieved following more rigorous *in situ* researches, Henri Labrousse's erroneous dating of the two major temples of Paestum (i.e., Hera I and Hera II) in the late 1820s – i.e., legendary as a study as it may have been for its romantic underpinnings – shows

8 Winckelmann (1756: 17, 19ff.).

9 Characteristically, art historian Nikolaus Pevsner (1968 [1948]: 197) notes: 'Few people realize that the Greek Doric column, fluted and without a base, which is to us the symbol of Greek greatness, was virtually unknown about 1750, and that by 1760, when it had become known to a few virtuosi [...] it was the object of a passionate controversy'.

10 In 1791 first, British connoisseur Richard Payne Knight suggested that some of the seminal pieces which Winckelmann had considered canonical of Greek art and whereupon he had founded his theory, that is, mainly papal acquisitions in the Vatican collection, were Roman copies of the 2nd century B.C.; see Siegel (2000: 58). By the 1770s already 'Winckelmann's friend Anton R. Mengs (1728–1779) had argued that the sculpture of the age of Phidias and Pericles, should we ever see it, would be superior to what had survived. When Phidian originals did turn up, in the form of the Parthenon marbles, Winckelmann's canon almost immediately fell from grace [...] Though some found [their] naturalism naïve, those who admired the marbles criticized the schematization and stylization of eighteenth-century taste' (Fitzgerald [2022: 34–35]).

11 Pevsner (1968 [1948]: 197).

12 Pevsner (1968 [1948]: 204). The reference is to the monumental five-volume oeuvre of the two architects *The Antiquities of Athens* (1762–1816).

that no trustworthy index of chronology was established early enough for figuring out material evidence, that is, whether classical or archaic, and that historical accuracy remained for long open to controversy.¹³ It is due to this debatable nature of its sources, that classical antiquity is hard to adhere to its early normative descriptions. Therefore, its correlative notion of '(neo)classicism' becomes both relative and negotiable.

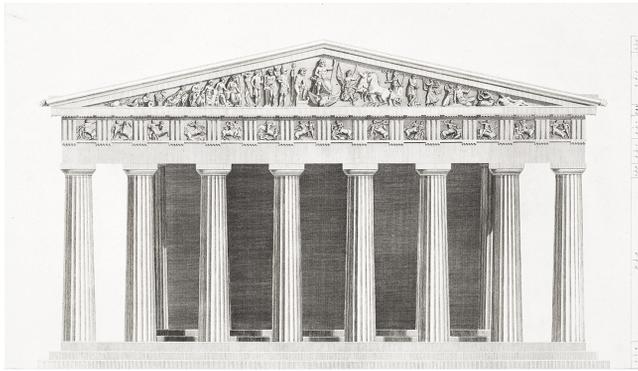


Fig. 8.2: Parthenon, E front (447–32 B.C.), precise measurements, drawn between 1751 and 1754, yet lacking optimal refinements, e.g. entasis, from Stuart and Revett (1787: ch. 1, pl. III).

The eighteenth century has also been seen as the age of the crisis of representation, in which the traditional means of understanding and portraying reality, either in writing or in art, fell short.¹⁴ A gap opened wide between the thing represented and its image in paper, stone, or other means. The rise of a secular consciousness, as reflected in both the gradual demise of traditional values and the waning trust in authority, greatly affected the sense of belonging of the individual to the community and, along with it, all the traditional forms of sense-making, starting with the open-endedness inherent in the very notion of sign. The effect of all this was the disruption of the traditional environments of memory – so-called ‘milieux de mémoire’ by Pierre Nora – and the rise, in their stead, of ‘lieux de mémoire’, that is, the rational, prosaic, and contested sites of modern memory whose purpose was to secure a base of coherence to the social body.¹⁵ (Neo)classicism flourished precisely in this context. In seeking legitimacy in the distant past as opposed to the worn out present, (neo)classicism produced works which either radically reshaped earlier spatial structures of memory or became them-

13 See Kruft (1994: 279), Bressani (2007: 89, 91–92).

14 See Pérez Gómez (1983), Vesely (2004).

15 See Nora (1989: 7ff.).

selves 'lieux de mémoire'. At the same time, history, formalized into a scientific discipline, sought to bring order and meaningful substance to the otherwise chaotic temporal universe of people's collective memory, that is, a work which until then was exclusively in the hands of traditional communities. History, in other words, created the grand-narratives of origin of modern societies by gradually displacing the folk tales, songs, and mythical heroes of the past. Spaces of memory (such as national monuments) and narratives of memory (such as documentary history), either side-by-side or poetically interweaved, became the symbolic *anchors* of many of the national states of the post-Enlightenment era. Ironically enough, the historian became the 'architect' – and reversely, the architect became the 'historian' – of this new historical circumstance by making what Walter Benjamin called the 'homogenous, empty time' of progress conform to the traditional model of 'messianic time' for modern nations, which turned to be the only coherent communities of modernity.¹⁶

(Neo)classicism came again to prominence in the nineteenth century, now as the catchword for all art and architecture of the reborn Greek state. Justifiably or not, this term (although an invention of the late 19th century)¹⁷ was broadly adopted by 20th-century Greek scholarship to denote the historical phenomenon associated with the belated entrance of the new country to the Enlightenment after the latter had run its full course in the West.¹⁸ And although the Enlightenment in Greece was very short-lived, (neo)classicism turned out not to be so. By the time that the formality and severity of its western correlate was being seriously mitigated by the radical aesthetics of romanticism – if that had not been the case from

16 See Benjamin (1968: 261). See also below, fn. 69.

17 The *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the earliest English usage of the term 'neo-classicism' in the American journal *Times*, 6 May 1893 (17/2) and the term 'neo-classic' in the British journal *Athenaeum*, 19 Feb. 1881 (270/2); see N. N. (1908: 922). However, the term 'neo-classicism' is encountered even earlier: 'A *neoclassicism* arose in France, which, in spite of many conflicts, has predominated in French literature until the successes of the romantic school in the present century' (N. N. [1863: 297]). Art historian Hugh Honour (1968: 14) frames its usage in the area of the arts thus: 'It was invented in the mid nineteenth century as a pejorative term for what was then thought to be a lifeless, chilly and impersonal 'antique revival' style expressed in stillborn imitations of Graeco-Roman sculpture: and these negative connotations still cling to it [...] Furthermore, the term Neo-classicism invites us to conceive the style as having been opposed to Romanticism [...].' In Greek literature, Koumanoudis (1900: 691) locates its use in the last decade of the 19th century.

18 As an example, some titles of historiographic monographs which feature 'neoclassicism' as a generic category for all 19th-century architecture and which apparently had a decisive influence on all later literature are: J. Travlos, *Neoklassike Arhitektonike sten Ellada* ['Neoclassical Architecture in Greece'] (1967), S. Skopelites, *Neoklassika spitia tes Athinas kai tou Peiraia* ['Neoclassical Houses of Athens and Piraeus'] (1975), and H. H. Russack, *Arhitektones tes Neoklassikes Athinas* ['Architects of Neoclassical Athens'] (c. 1991), which for no obvious reason mistranslates the title of the German original, i.e., *Deutsche bauen in Athen* (1942), and others.

the beginning¹⁹ – Greek historiography insisted on separating the two as incompatible opposites, the former as related to reason and classical moderation, the latter to unreason and exotic fancy.²⁰ A nationalist agenda seems to have endorsed this divide, that is, a meticulously constructed ideological scheme, whose sole aim was both the physical and the spiritual identification of modern Greece with its idealized past. There was a commonly shared belief that along with the country's physical recovery to the universally acclaimed standards of antiquity, the memory of its ancient glory would be restituted in spite of the immense time gap that separated the two periods. People's perennial 'milieux de mémoire' were suddenly torn to be replaced by the new 'lieux de mémoire' of the modern state. The War, with its lamentable physical destructions, may have not been the real cause; but it was certainly the facilitator of such a radical transformation process. Much ink has been shed on the various causes and the traumatic effects of this historical occurrence, even more so on the momentous physical reconstruction of the modern city-capital and its architecture. My contribution to this discourse comes mainly as a further scrutiny of the nature of '(neo)classicism' that the modern state produced as part of its nationalist agenda, starting with the unproblematized usage of the term by later scholars. I argue that Greek (Athenian) architecture in the 19th century has been neither the tail-end of western (neo)classicism, nor as uniform and compact as modern Greek historiography makes it appear. In this sense, it presents certain similarities with its western counterpart, that is, diverse for the most part.²¹ The so-called 'Athenian Trilogy', for example, which com-

19 For a certain branch of critical literature, classicism and romanticism were not consecutive movements but indistinguishably suffused from the beginning 'No absolute dividing line existed between Neoclassicism and Romanticism, and sometimes elements of the latter crossed over into the former, as in Romantic Classicism' (N. N. [1999: 161]). Further, eminent architecture historian James S. Ackermann (1993: 239) underscores the relevance of the term to architecture: 'Although some neo-classical architecture remained authentically ancient (Jefferson's Capitol at Richmond; the Madeleine, Paris), the finest architects (Soane, Ledoux, Schinkel) worked in a classical-geometrical spirit permitting unlimited invention. The term 'romantic classicism' has been coined for this tendency.' See this in connection with footnotes 40 and 41 below.

20 This phenomenon is thoroughly discussed and documented in Fatsea (2000).

21 This diversity was mainly due to the movement's absorption of romantic elements. See Rosenblum (1969): 'Far from tending toward an anonymous and repressive uniformity of style and expression, that art of late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which offers allusions to Greco-Roman antiquity in terms of subject matter and of borrowed classical forms is fully as various and contradictory [...] In fact, after confronting the scope of a Neoclassicism that must, at different times, comprise forms and emotions as unlike as those found in Fuseli and David [...], Schinkel and Nash, one soon wonders whether Neoclassicism may properly be termed a style at all, or whether it should not be termed, to use Giedion's phrase, a "coloration"' (p. 4); 'Piquant modishness, Romantic nostalgia, Utopian purism, political propaganda, encyclopedic learning, the delights and terrors of the primitive – these were some of the potential ends sought out, singly and in combination, by that enormous and diverse body of architecture loosely known as Neoclassic' (p. 109).



Fig. 8.3: The Academy of Athens, a bird's eye view of the front.
© Academy of Athens.

monly features as the epitome of Athenian (neo)classicism, is architecturally more complex than a mere translation of the Periclean monuments under modern garment. The building of the Academy, in particular, embodies memory in multiple layers. This takes it beyond the narrow vision that (neo)classicism in its infancy exhibited – probably bound by a naive and formalistic interpretation of Winckelmann's aforementioned dictum – thus producing soulless, idealized imitations of antique structures.²² The Dane architect Theophil Hansen had a different plan for his architecture: to make his buildings inhabitable and friendly to their users, carriers of deeper meanings and, at the same time, exemplary propagators of his architectural profession (see fig. 8.3).

3. Theophil Hansen: his sources, his formation

3.1 The Philosophical Context and Karl F. Schinkel

Theophil Hansen studied architecture in the Academy of Fine Arts of his native city, Copenhagen. From an early age, and probably in reaction to the conservative academicism of some of his professors, he came to favor a more composite approach to design mixing classicism with romanticism. Seminal to his education was the German influence, mainly through the person of the leading Prussian architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel whom, although Hansen had never met him, he

²² See above footnote 17 (Honour [1968: 14]).

designated as his lifelong mentor.²³ Schinkel's particular interpretation of Greek classicism, as the happy adaptation of a singular idea to the physicality of the place, could be sensed in almost all of Hansen's buildings, too. Thus, each one of them turned into a memory token of its own *topos*, which would continue to function so even after its ruination. In the background of Schinkel's thought, from whom the Danish architect borrowed much of his theory, lies the long philosophical tradition of German Idealism which, after having passed through the Weimar classicism of Goethe and Schiller, fed into the Jena romantics, namely the Schlegel brothers, Novalis, and others.²⁴ In this tradition *memory* features prominently as the province where the tension between past and present reaches some provisional resolution. It is seen as the common ground of body and mind, where the sensory and the cognitive human faculties actively meet, not as in a passive storage box.²⁵ Memory draws its material from the past, which it constantly re-constructs in the present. Memory, therefore, undermines the linear, rational time of the Enlightenment, and replaces it with the cyclical and recurrent time of constant return to a generative beginning.²⁶ For Friedrich Schlegel, in particular, the material residue of every return can only be fragmentary – i.e., *an incomplete form* – for its being a mere reflection of a constantly reinterpreted and indistinct prototype. Schlegel thus saw the *fragment* as closely intertwined with the workings of memory and, because of that, as determining the future development of modern thought. The fragment is generally understood as the key metaphor of the human condition in modernity. For Schlegel, in particular, it stands for the irreversible loss of the past, the erosion and yet the persistence of meaning, and the split between subject and object as expressed in the above mentioned crisis of representation.²⁷ In a sense, it generates hope that art will persist as a healing power for mankind, even though fragmented – art which no longer uses classical imitation

23 See Wagner-Rieger and Reissberger (1980: 11), Fatsea (2014: 262–263; 2020: 335, 341).

24 Humboldt joined the group of the Jena Romantics – especially, the philosopher Fichte and the Schlegel brothers – during the peak of the movement and during his sojourn in Jena (1794–1797); see Paulin (2016: 65–220). Schinkel's strongest link to this tradition was the eminent scholar Wilhelm von Humboldt with whom the architect maintained a lifelong friendship; see Deicher (2005) and Kiefer (2002), who, in particular, splendidly demonstrates how Humboldt's preoccupation with the culture of the ruin was creatively interpreted by the architect, to whom he had commissioned his Tegel villa in the Brandenburg countryside, into a building program rich in poetic allusions which inventively connected past, present, and future (see fig. 8.4).

25 To the two variations of memory, the active (through the workings of imagination), and of which the former is more pertinent to this context, the passive one, Novalis associates the terms 'Erinnerung' and 'Gedächtnis', respectively; see Johnson (2002: 104–105).

26 This idea of cyclical time, which archetypally connected with the biological time of humans and the various cosmic phenomena, as incorporated by many ancient religious traditions and myths, becomes relevant again with critical value in modernity as its counter-example. This aspect has been theorized by Eliade (1949).

27 See Johnson (2002: 2).

as a tool for attaining the ideal past, but creatively re-constructs the past as always newer and authentic in the present. As Laurie R. Johnson writes, in interpreting Schlegel, ‘the praxis of memory inevitably takes place in the present.’²⁸

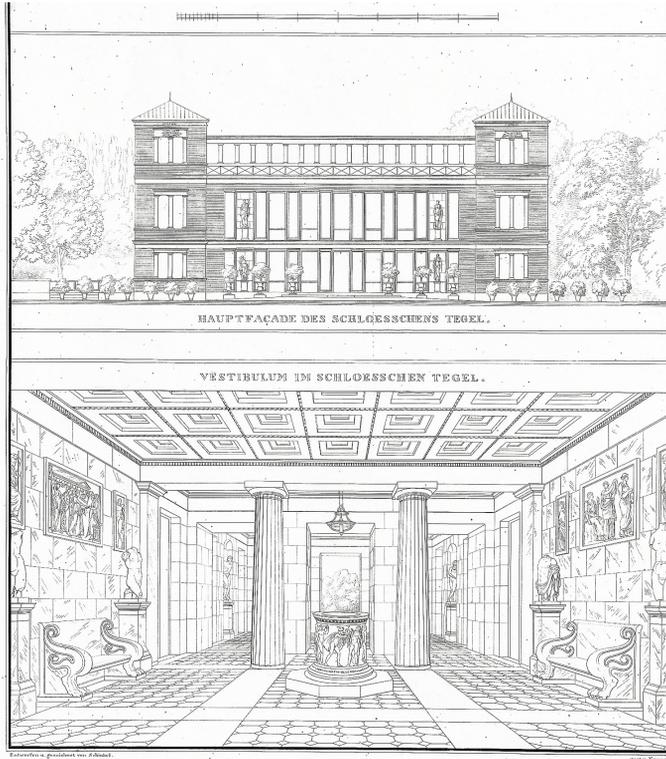


Fig. 8.4: K. F. Schinkel, Das Schlösschen Tegel (SAE 26), Main front (elevation) and Atrium (perspective), from Schinkel (1824: IV, pl. 26); where the fragment holds a leading role in Schinkel’s architecture.

No wonder then why the antique ruins gained so much attention in modernity. Far from models ready to imitate and reconstruct in their former unattainable perfection, ruins were now seen as the poetic embodiments of memory which simultaneously bore witness to the past and bespoke of its decay. They had more of a literary than ‘scientific’ import, whereby they were cherished by all, poets and artists alike, regardless of ideological orientation, whether classicist or romantic. In fact, the culture of ruins, which began in the Enlightenment and persisted with renewed force through the turn of the nineteenth century, created the *locus* in which

²⁸ See Johnson (2002: 4).

any such artificial divide was proven meaningless. Naturally all these ideas saturated Schinkel's architecture to then pass on to Hansen's.

3.2 The Archaeological Site

In the spring of 1838 the newly graduate of the Danish Academy, Theophil Hansen, sets off on a scholarship (*Reiersen Fund*) for a study trip to Berlin and Munich on his professor's (Gustav F. Hetsch's) assignment to collect specimens of the manufacturing industry toward a publication back in Copenhagen.²⁹ During this course Hansen had the opportunity to have his first hands-on encounter with Schinkel's architecture, which to that date he knew only through folio illustrations. For him this was a magical experience and a point of imaginary return for the rest of his career. Motivated and studious as Hansen was, he devised ways to convince Hetsch to extend him that scholarship to a mini Grand Tour through Austria and the Alps south to Italy. From there he took it on his own to move on to Greece and meet his brother Christian, who had been already settled in Athens for five years and was set on a splendid career path which combined independent design practice with systematic work on the antiquities, both study and restoration. For Hansen, to be in Greece at the moment of its highest popularity as the topmost excavation site, was like a dream come true, for this would enable him to study architecture at its source. For the next eight years he became passionately involved in a broad range of activities following in his brother's footsteps. Apart from his early design commissions,³⁰ Hansen became ardently occupied with archaeology. He studied and documented through measured drawings numerous Greek monuments, both in and outside of Athens.³¹ Further, he attended archaeological excavations and restoration works of many monuments, most prominently on the Athenian Acropolis in which Christian, in the company of his good friend

29 In his own words: 'to endeavour to acquaint myself with the progress in recent years in the various craftsmen's disciplines', as quoted by Villadsen (2014 [1979]: 222). Early accounts of Hansen's study-trip to Greece via western Europe may be also found in Pecht (1881: 114–119) or Niemann and Fellner von Feldegg (1893: 11–16). This section of the paper draws mainly on these sources in addition to Wagner-Rieger and Reissberger (1980: 12–18).

30 Including two still extant very important Athenian landmarks, the Demetriou-Limniou mansion (1842–1843) (totally reconstructed in the early 1960s) and the Athenian Observatory (1842–1846); see Niemann and Fellner von Feldegg (1893: 14–16), Wagner-Rieger and Reissberger (1980: 23–27).

31 Of Theophil Hansen's archaeological visits and work outside of Athens very little is known. Haugsted (1996: 247) mentions his surveys of Hosios Loukas (Boeotia) and the temple of Apollo Pythios in Sikinos. His related drawings of 1837 were published in Ross (1840: after p. 18). With Ulrich and Schaubert he re-excavated the monument trophy at Leuktra and the colossal Lion of Chaeronea (Boeotia) in 1841; see Haugsted (1996: 247). For more drawings from Hansen's archaeological researches see Bendtsen (1993: 308ff.), further Villadsen (1990).

Eduard Schaubert, had the lead.³² Of all the renowned ancient structures, the young architect developed a special interest in the Erechtheion and the Lysicrates Monument.³³ Both were highly atypical as compared with the rectangular configuration of classical temples. For that and for their superb architectural qualities both structures had attracted early expert-travellers' attention. Hansen produced exquisite drawings of both in terms of measured accuracy and rendered detail.³⁴ By using the world-famous drawings of James Stuart and Nicholas Revett for the same monuments as a yardstick, his expressed goal – as stated in a letter to Hetsch – was 'to discover certain things which had not been known with certainty before'.³⁵ Theophil found himself in Greece at a time when scientific curiosity for the Greek antiquities worldwide had brought waves of grecophiles to these sites. Groups of contesting researchers crossed paths particularly on the Erechtheion going for the latest discovery or the restoration privileges. And despite the fact that the French delegates of the *École des Beaux-Arts* finally took the project over, it was Hansen's restoration drawings which received the highest praise, that is, a clear proof not only of his technical expertise, but mainly of his ability to be in perfect tune with the latest turn regrading Greece and its monuments (see. fig. 8.5).³⁶

But what was that new turn and what was Hansen's share in it? 'Accuracy' as the sole pursuit of a survey drawing, i.e., an oft-repeated term in all testimonies of field archaeology in its early days, was proven a rather misleading criterion of quality. Older drawings – even though executed with elementary instruments – did not miss in accuracy, but in that special point of view which made the monument come fully 'alive' through the drawing because their authors happened to 'trust [more] their books [...] than their eyes', according to Pevsner's above-mentioned quote.³⁷ It was that special point of view which the newer generation of architects attained. Almost apologetically Dane architect Harald Conrad Stilling writes to Hetsch in a letter of 1853, in reference to some of his earlier drawings of the Acropolis: 'but how little idea I had then about their proper nature, situation, etc.'³⁸ Stilling, instead of 'accuracy', stresses the terms 'nature' and 'situation', that is, contextual elements which evidently altered his perception of the monu-

32 They undertook the full restoration of the Temple of Athena Nike (compl. 1839) and parts of the Erechtheion, e.g. the north porch (1837, 1844–1845); see Ross, Schaubert, and Hansen (1839) and Ross, Schaubert, and Hansen (1855: 336–348, pl. 723–728).

33 At the Acropolis foothills, in the modern neighborhood of Plaka.

34 His restoration proposal for the Lysicrates monument was first published by von Lützwil (1868).

35 Paraphrased by Haugsted (1996: 247).

36 The winning proposal under execution belonged to French architect Jacques-Martin Tétaz. The critical comment about the superiority of Hansen's project was made by Friedrich Stauffert, the editor of the highly reputable Austrian magazine *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* (= *ABZ*), who published the drawings of both men (*ABZ* 1851: 335ff., 339); cited in Haugsted (1996: 250).

37 See above footnote 12.

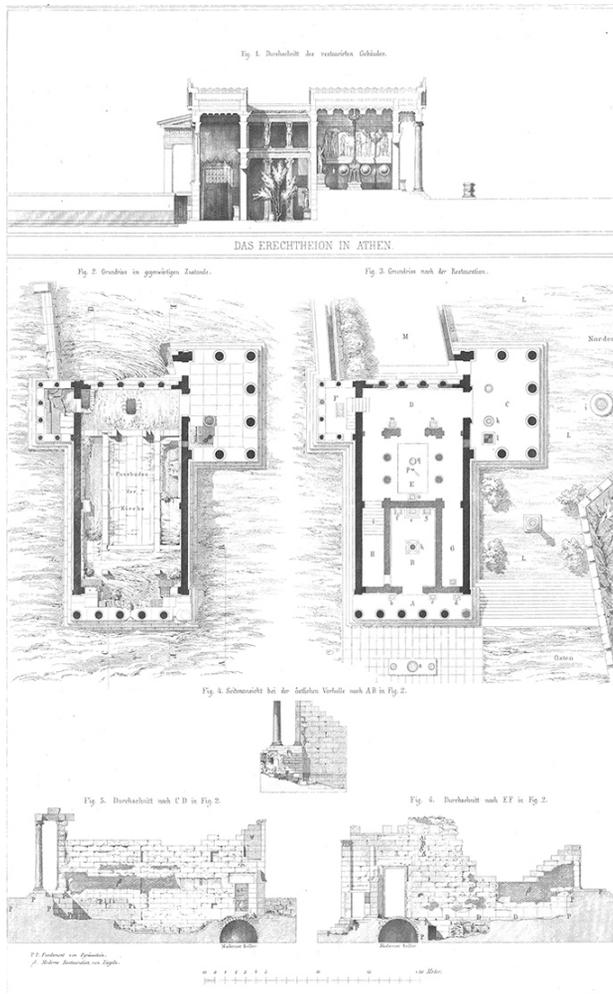


Fig. 8.5: T. Hansen, Erechtheion reconstruction drawings (c. 1845), published in *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* 16 (1851), pl. 430.

ments. The restoration of missing pieces and the recovery of a building's total silhouette were also conducive to this new perception, no doubt. However, it was the closer scrutiny on the empirical evidence – its physicality and materiality – in response to the environment, on the one hand, and to human sensibility, on the

38 As quoted in Haugsted (1996: 250). His reference is to drawings he produced for Hetsch on the most eminent buildings of the Acropolis, i.e., the Parthenon, the Erechtheion, the Propylaea, etc.

other, that guided the inquiry. Still a ruin, no matter how meticulously restored, the Parthenon, for instance, was no longer an abstract referent of its ideal state of perfection, but a vivid witness of its presence in time and through time, that is, a process engendering its continual re-constitution, similarly to the processes of memory.

In this intellectually prolific atmosphere, a series of cardinal discoveries on the 'nature' and the 'situation' of the ancient monuments came to light, the impact of which was proven decisive not only for archaeology *per se* and its restoration methods, but also for the future of new architecture, which now could not stay aloof to the developments made in this field. Most important among these discoveries were: the adaptation of the building to its site, the visual impact on the observer (theory of optical refinements), color applied as the building's outer skin (theory of polychromy), the artful expression of the building's materials and construction technology (theory of tectonics), and design based on the experience of the moving observer (theory of embodied perception).³⁹

All of these archaeological discoveries were particularly cherished by Hansen who missed no opportunity to incorporate them as *constitutive elements* in his architecture. In fact, these discoveries were well in line with all that his previous education, mixing classical and romantic influences, had prepared him for in his pursuit for the originating causes of architecture.

Far from the academic and convention-bound (neo)classicism, this new way of theorizing antiquity and its works (i.e., mainly through experience-based phenomena) was intertwined with the critical vein of romanticism according to which the longing for the bygone original was to be found in the real and the particular, the local and the indigenous. It is in this context that memory plays a key role in the way it articulates, and is articulated by, the intelligible content of perception.

All this brings up the question: does '(neo)classicism' as a stylistic attribute often applied to Hansen's architecture do justice to it? The answer is undeniably negative. The context within which the Dane architect developed both his practice and his theory had strong ties with romanticism. What is more, the borderline between the two currents, (neo)classicism and romanticism, remains to this date indistinct whereas serious doubts are raised in current literature as to whether any of the two ever existed in perfect purity. For example, in the *Grove Art Dictionary* we read: 'However rationally dictated, these fresh interpretations of the classical evoked powerful emotional responses to the past that require Neo-classicism to be understood within the broader movement of Romanticism, rather than as its

39 The bibliography of the pioneers of these discoveries, such as Hittorff, Semper, Cockerell, Hoffer, Bötticher, Penrose, Ross, Schaubert, Choisy, and others are pertinent sources of reference here. However, for a well-informed overview of the chronicle of these discoveries see Korres (1999).

opposite.⁴⁰ And further, in the *Grove Encyclopedia of American Art* the entry 'Romantic Classicism' is explained as 'The term [which] challenges the critical dichotomy of Romanticism and classicism as opposites and suggests an underlying unity between them as it recognizes the deep pleasures of the imagination that the classical past evoked for late 18th and early 19th c. viewers'.⁴¹ In general, the term 'romantic classicism' seems to have found more relevance to the parallel and inextricably connected advances of architecture and archaeology after Greek sites became the new 'golden mines' of new archaeological discoveries, that is, after the turn of the nineteenth century. In architectural historiography, on the other hand, the term has become almost synonymous with Schinkel's architecture.⁴² Only for the fact that both brothers Hansen received strong influence from Schinkel which they passed on to their buildings – especially, the Athenian ones – we can more certainly adopt this term for their architecture, instead of the highly ambiguous and unjustified '(neo)classicism'.⁴³

3.3 The Book – The Pattern Book and the Illustrated Folio

Hansen, from his early years of schooling in the Danish Royal Academy, was properly trained by his mentor Gustav F. Hetsch in the constructive unity of architecture, art, and handicraft, so that his buildings formed a 'Gesamtkunstwerk' (Total Work of Art)⁴⁴ – i.e., an idea which interestingly Friedrich Schlegel also had embraced by authoring a pioneering text on this matter.⁴⁵ In his teaching

40 Wilton-Ely (1996: 734). For the way in which the term 'romantic classicism' ties to '(neo-)classicism' see above footnote 19.

41 The term 'romantic classicism' (*Romantischer Klassizismus*) was first introduced in twentieth-century historiography to explain the complex phenomenon of classicism of the late 18th and well into the 19th century, first by Swiss historian and critic Sigfried Giedion [1922], in a rather derogatory manner, to be followed in a more positive direction by architecture historians Fiske Kimball [1944], Henry-Russell Hitchcock [1958], Vincent Scully [1961], Robin D. Middleton [1962], and others; see Simpson (2011: 301–302).

42 See, e.g., Hitchcock (⁴1977: 57–61 [¹1958: 28–35]), Samson (2016: 160), Halmi (2015: 794).

43 This is ascertained by Hitchcock (⁴1977: 68–69 [¹1958: 38–39]) in the first place.

44 See Wagner-Rieger (1978: 418, 428), Stalla (2013: 19, 20, 25), Zeese (2013: 74–75).

45 That is, his 'Athenaeum Fragment #116', in which F. Schlegel (1798: 204) presents romantic poetry as a means to a 'progressive, universal poetry' whose 'aim isn't merely to reunite all the separate genres of poetry [...] [but] make poetry lively and sociable, and life and society poetical'. Literary critic Finger (2006: 31–32) distinguishes Schlegel's notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, as identified with his 'Universalpoesie', from the meaning given to it by Richard Wagner, after whom it became better known. Although the social component of the notion was equally indispensable for both authors, for Schlegel the artwork had primarily an immanent content (i.e., 'transzendente(n)') that tied it genetically to its own genre, while being in inextricable union to all the other genres, whereas for Wagner its justification was mostly political (i.e., 'restaurativ-dialektisch[en]'), 'independent of the immanent context of the work', and hence, socialist and reformative in spirit. The author mainly draws on Rummenhöller (1965: 164).



Fig. 8.6: Models for capitals from the temples of Athena Polias (Priene) and Apollo (Didyma), from Schinkel and Beuth (1821–37: I.1, pl. 9). Hansen later used these as characteristic motifs in the Athenian Academy

Hetsch devoted much of his time to training his students in the art of drawing and subsequently in learning through copying the greatest examples of history whose strengths, he believed, lay in the art of the *detail*. For that he used pattern books most popular at that time, and more specifically, folio collections of carefully selected and drawn to scale architectural examples, some of which he had authored himself assisted by talented students, including the brothers Hansen.⁴⁶ Equally popular in the School was a pattern book composed by K. F. Schinkel, a compendium of fine engravings (see fig. 8.6).⁴⁷ The latter became an additional virtual link between Schinkel and the young Theophil, who thus was later motivated to

⁴⁶ The most elaborate of them was entitled *Fortegninger for Haandværkere* (= 'Images in the Service of Craftsmen') of 1839–1842, and included 72 plates representing a variety of small-scale objects mainly of utilitarian function.

study the manufacturing industry of Berlin during his traveling scholarship of 1838. Certain patterns and motifs from this book often returned as leitmotifs in many of his buildings, such as the much celebrated proto-Ionic capital of a cradle-type, which he then used for all the square piers and pilasters of the Academy, i.e., a borrowing from the late-Classical temple of Athena Polias in Priene.

Evidently, drawing folios and pattern books were among the handiest tools for architects as it was through them that the latter became exposed to a much broader spectrum of examples than what their actual experience permitted. Archaeology, with its always newer finds, constantly expanded their contents, as well as their range of influences. Antiquity became thus readily available in the architect's fingertips much like an enormous depository of relics/fragments from which he could pick, choose, and inventively recombine in his aim to trigger memory and have the past be activated. English painter Sir Joshua Reynolds describes the works of the ancients as a 'magazine', a storehouse of 'common property, always open to the public, whence every man has the right to take what he pleases'.⁴⁸ The paradox of such an operation is that something ancient could appear new again with the change of context. The antique-turned-into-a-novelty was proven in fact the key desideratum of modernity. Depending on the artist's level of expertise, dissemination through copying might have led either to the dissolution (and, therefore, oblivion) of the original – often due to its excessive repetition – or to its judicious preservation as a memory token of the past. Its industrial diffusion by the capitalist market, on the other hand, raised an additional threat to its misuse. A few years later the important Czech-Austrian architect Adolf Loos, even though a combatant modernist and an arch-enemy of historicism, pointedly remarked:

'... whenever lesser architects tried to ignore tradition, whenever ornamentation became rampant, a master would appear to remind us of the Roman origins of our architecture and pick up the thread again. The last great master arose at the beginning of the 19th century: Schinkel. We have forgotten him. But the light of this great figure will fall on future generations of architects.'⁴⁹

3.4 The relevance of memory: Social vs. disciplinary memory

Theophil Hansen fell naturally in this succession and borrowed many of Schinkel's lessons, such as his *ars combinatoria*, drawing on ancient fragments and typological precedents. Schinkel's mix-and-match approach often seemed odd

47 *Vorbilder für Fabrikanten und Handwerker* [= 'Models for Manufacturers and Artisans'] (1821–1836) of 148 engraved drawings selected and composed by K. F. Schinkel in cooperation with his friend Peter Beuth, the renowned statesman and reformer of Prussia's industry.

48 J. Reynolds, *Discourse VI* (1774), as quoted in Coltman (2001: 1).

49 Loos (2002 [1910/1931]: 85), who, in fact, had placed the Romans in a position superior to the Greeks as based on a progressive scheme.

and unjustified as, for example, in his rotunda for the Altes Museum which, although modeled on the Pantheon, paradoxically featured a continuous, instead of a niched, wall; and further, his circular colonnade combined plain shafts (i.e. with no fluting) with Corinthian capitals – replicas of the Lysicrates Monument, but still missing the characteristic rosettes (see fig. 8.7).⁵⁰ To the sceptic, demanding allegiance to the original, Schinkel would reply that the paramount task of the intellectual architect is the generation of new meaning. This would inevitably require daring combinatorial decisions within whole new settings.⁵¹ But, first and

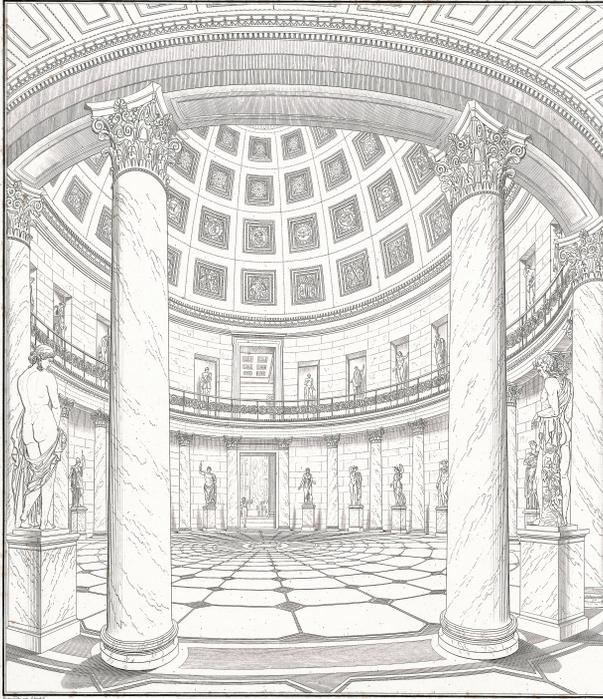


Fig. 8.7: K. F. Schinkel, Altes Museum (1825–30), rotunda perspective (SAE 44), from Schinkel (1831: XVII, pl. 104); ‘ars combinatoria’ as practiced by Schinkel: a modern interpretation of ancient replicas to awaken collective memory.

50 A variation first introduced by Hirt (1809: pl. XIII, fig. VIII); see Wittich (2004: 234), where also several other examples of Schinkel’s combinatorial solutions are presented and explained.

51 For classicists, like Schinkel, however, this happens within an overall framework of rules. Along similar lines the French A.-Ch. Quatremère de Quincy (1832: 25) states: ‘[...] every *invention* consists in a new combination of preexisting elements [... as long as these ...] already have among themselves a connection of kinship.’

foremost, it was the overall idea of building that had to be subject to rethinking, yet not at the expense of either precedent or memory. This task was left to the architect who, despite all the challenges of the time for a drastic reconsideration of all the traditional professions, never lost sight of his discipline as an indissoluble whole. In what follows I am explaining how this task was fulfilled on the basis of the complex binary scheme of 'social' and 'disciplinary' memory.

In modernity, when all the essential ties of people with their traditional communities were weakened, buildings ceased to function as the material repositories of social memory, that is, the unintentional monuments of their cultures. As architecture historian Stanford Anderson has noted, in premodern societies, 'disciplinary memory was little differentiated from social memory and had a limited range in the service of social memory'.⁵² And he continues: 'In its close association of patron and architect, this was not yet a time of severe separation of disciplinary memory from social memory'.⁵³ The close bond between the two principal agents of the task safeguarded not only the deeper knowledge of the profession but, most essentially, the common values and group identity of the community *through* building.⁵⁴ Memory was embedded in the anthropological framework of building production. The literate culture of modernity, in turn, transformed architecture into a technical profession largely divorced from the empirical realities of the social field. Further, insofar as memory had become 'voluntary and deliberate, experienced as a duty, no longer spontaneous',⁵⁵ 'a shift has occurred from a time in which societal and disciplinary memory were closely linked to one in which disciplinary memory seeks its autonomy'.⁵⁶ That was at the time when disciplinary autonomy emerged as a key prerequisite not only of architecture but of all scientific fields.⁵⁷ Recourse to abstraction and rational design methodologies became thenceforth the real 'tools' of architects who – now attached to their drafting-

52 Anderson (1995: 28).

53 Anderson (1995: 34). See also Anderson (1999: 21): 'vernacular architecture in its purest sense, in the hands of unself-conscious builders in indigenous cultures, may represent the fullest identification of social and disciplinary memory.'

54 At first phase, Anderson adopts the conventional distinction of cultures into literate and pre-literate, with the turning point historically situated in the Enlightenment, by following Halbwachs, Nora, Le Goff, but most importantly, Goody (1963). However, he soon refines this position.

55 Nora (1989: 13).

56 Anderson (1995: 36).

57 The notion of 'autonomy' is foundational to the Enlightenment thought and its system of values, along with freedom, equality, and human will, functioning as the basis of liberal democratic political theory. It was fully articulated by I. Kant who argued that it is the individual's responsibility to grow to maturity as a self-governing subject through the use of public reason, critical reflection, and moral judgment. The notion ultimately applied to social institutions and other areas of human culture including scientific disciplines and the arts, all assumed as collective agents partaking in the public sphere; see Kant (1784). For a general overview of the concept of 'autonomy' and its history, see Rosich (2019).

boards – indulged more and more in formal exercises based on historical precedents. But could architecture be only that? Here is where the memory of the discipline – i.e., ‘memory *in* architecture’ – entered the scene as the modern self-reflexive condition of the architect. Anderson makes a strong case, thus contesting Nora’s pessimistic and generalizing view that memory can no longer be ‘social, collective, or all encompassing’.⁵⁸ He writes:

Disciplinary memory can seek principles rather than formal precedent. Our relations to earth, sky, fire and water; the myriad ways of defining space and controlling light, of relating materials and structure to all these elements, of establishing systems of order (including disorder) – all this can be sought and lodged in the disciplinary memory *in* architecture. This legacy can then be employed imaginatively *in the service of society*. In modern times, this legacy has become increasing the property of the discipline but its continued effectiveness must rely on its ability to awaken responses in those who experience it [...] Learning and transmitting *these constitutive elements* is the central aspect of disciplinary memory.⁵⁹

Therefore, an architect’s resorting to socially relevant *constitutive elements* rather than to easily perishable *forms*⁶⁰ appears as the only reparative strategy against the social traumas of modernity. Anderson sees this notion of memory as developing within the exclusive domain of the profession and its literarily informed tools, i.e., ‘memory *in* architecture’. At the same time, an architect’s engaging the public in multiple ways – before, during, and after the construction event – puts a strong claim to a mitigated type of autonomy, that is, what Anderson calls ‘quasi-autonomy’ of the architectural profession. He specifies:

The exploration of [such] *principles* [...] is, in contrast, only a claim for the *quasi-autonomy* of the discipline – for the selection and use of these *principles* is guided by the social role of the work in progress. Any such asserted *principles* are endangered if they fail to maintain general social accessibility.⁶¹

And further:

It is in this quasi-autonomy that architecture discovers its own discipline, the development of forms and organizations that are not derived deterministically from social forces

⁵⁸ Nora (1989: 13).

⁵⁹ Anderson (1995: 35). The emphasis is mine.

⁶⁰ Certain architects – e.g., the so called ‘revolutionary’ – resorted even to archetypal (i.e., idealized) forms in the name of radical autonomy. Anderson (1995:35) deduces that ‘these architects assessed classical precedents elementally’ only by reading the purest geometries behind their forms, and he concludes: ‘This is an *invented memory* of, by, and for the independence of the discipline. [However] Searches backward in time [...] searches for what constitutes the discipline of architecture [...] *need not be only, or even primarily, searches for archetypal forms.*’ The emphasis is mine.

⁶¹ Anderson (1995: 36 [the emphasis is mine]); for further elaboration on this notion see Anderson (2002: 30–37) and Anderson (1987).

[...] [and in which] there is room for invention that is fundamentally architectural without sacrificing responsibility to social need.⁶²

This horizon of architecture's 'quasi-autonomy' – i.e., a dynamic two-way process – allows Anderson to recognize in different cultures varying degrees of compliance with the literate structures of modernity based on their attitudes to the past on the one hand, and on their ways of investing their built environments with memory, on the other. For example, many arts and crafts which are being sustained for long by tradition outlive the rise of new technologies.⁶³ So do people's attitudes toward the new in general, thus often putting modern novelties, including architectural ones, under scrutiny. This is certainly a more nuanced account than Nora's generalized, binary categorization of cultures into preliterate and literate, and similarly of buildings and sites into either embodiments or not of human action and collective memory, when he writes: 'Contrary to historical objects, [...] *lieux de mémoire* have no referent in reality; or, rather, they are their own referent: pure, exclusively self-referential signs.'⁶⁴

3.5 Monuments and memory – The instrumental role of history

No less importantly, Anderson's insistence on the critical dialectic between 'disciplinary' and 'social' memory, *in* and *through* architecture, respectively – as assisted by the instrumental intervention of the historical inquiry – is intended as warning against the various misuses, or even abuses, of memory for ideological purposes, as has often been the case in modernity. Whereas social memory *through* architecture is responsible for both the consolidation of group identity and the reinforcement of the sentimental links with one's origins, at the same time it is susceptible to manipulation, distortion, coercion, and control as memory is in general.⁶⁵ Within the literate post-Enlightenment contexts, ideologically motivated uses of memory – i.e., memory servicing political ends – has varied considerably, from 'the numerous, oppressive monuments of the repressive regimes [...], and their selective restoration or destruction of earlier monuments'⁶⁶ to splendid edifices intended as props to national and ethnic identity. In most cases, architecture served as the principal agent, while myth (e.g., of origins) as the essential ingredient of it. What is interesting though is that the more autocratic – if not totalitarian – a certain regime is, the more oppressive its monuments are, which trans-

62 Anderson (1999: 20).

63 Anderson (1999: 20). However, 'a truly preliterate society engaged in unmediated indigenous building' can hardly be found in such a context; see Anderson (1999: 21).

64 Nora (1989: 23).

65 Anderson (1995: 23–24). For an interesting case of distortion and manipulation of memory for political purposes see Whitling (2010).

66 Anderson (1995: 23–24).

lates into rigid architectural forms with an iconic presence so strong as to preclude any reflective engagement or interpretation. Here, the visible aspect of the work takes over and shuts off all other aspects of the building art. The monuments stand for the state – or, more literally, for the regime – in full affirmation of it as its truest icons. Hence, architecture loses completely its autonomy: that is, a domain of open-ended significations, resilient and responsive to different times and contexts. The most this architecture can produce is ‘vacuous inventions’.⁶⁷ The



Fig. 8.8: The Haus der Kunst in Munich as an example of totalitarian classicism with allusions to Schinkel’s Altes Museum. The founding stone was laid by A. Hitler in October 1933 according to plans by P. L. Troost; the Yiddish inscription on the entablature is a temporary installation. Picture by K. Golde, 2014, *Wikimedia Commons* (CC BY-SA 4.0).



Fig. 8.9: Façade of the Altes Museum, photo by the author (10 Jan. 2017). Schinkel’s classicism: Tectonics carried to perfection.

⁶⁷ Anderson (1999: 21).

building preempts its content since it itself becomes the message. In Nazi Germany, architecture ceded its inalienable right to its disciplinary memory over to the state, i.e., the one and only source of power (see fig. 8.8 and fig. 8.9). There the essential ideal of classical 'tectonics' was completely distorted as A. von Buttlar underscores :

The fact that one would not find classical capital forms in Nazi architecture was justified by Nazi chief ideologue Alfred Rosenberg in his 1939 'Myth of the 20th Century' on the grounds that the unmediated clash of pillar and entablature, instead of the harmonisation of forces in the capital zone demanded by Schinkel, was intended to represent the 'hard struggle' in the spirit of Nazi ideology. In monumental sculpture, the 'noble simplicity and quiet grandeur' of the classic nude figure was replaced by flexing muscles, lifeless will and action.⁶⁸

Anderson speaks no word about national monuments but does not seem to place them outright in the same category as the oppressive ones. Commonly classified by postmodern literature under the rubric of 'invented traditions', that is, ideological constructions with little or no base in historical reality, but only catered to the political programs of modern nation-states – i.e., so-called 'imagined communities'⁶⁹ – national monuments have generally been decried as the modern exemplars of inauthenticity. Anderson is very cautious in his related judgment. He finds such concepts as 'invented traditions' and 'manufacturing heritage' immediately problematic, but at the same time their material referents not as unworthy as to be heedlessly dismissed. National monuments are among those referents, and – as opposed to Nazi architecture – not devoid of architectural value. Closer attention is advised so that any *constitutive elements* in them, sanctioned by both culture and use, be set off against others which are only 'nostalgic and vacuous' or 'as corrupting as reactionary appeals to racial, class, or national identity'.⁷⁰ It is now the task of the architect to make the former relevant again in any new effort at re-contextualizing these monuments. These *constitutive elements* may include plan typologies, tectonic traditions, proportional systems, spatio-volumetric characteristics, and so forth. All of them are properly codified by disciplinary memory and are fully conspicuous to the architectural expert, yet less so to the lay public, who customarily relate to buildings through sensible appearance rather than intrinsic structure.⁷¹ The technical ingenuity, for example, which the architect in-

68 Von Buttlar (2012: 158), von Buttlar (2007: 289–291). Buttlar offers a very lucid account as to how nineteenth-century 'classicism' with all its humanistic implications (e.g., Schinkel's in particular) is different from the force evoking one under the Nazi ideology with all its racial implications.

69 The term 'invented tradition' comes from Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), whereas 'imagined communities' appears in B. Anderson (1983).

70 Anderson (1999: 21).

71 For a standard reference on the iconic role of architecture in shaping national identity see Vale (1992, 2008). National heritage policies further promulgate this human disposition to-

vests to his/her design toward an integrated whole is what accounts for the building's value as an 'invention' and ultimately for its authenticity. This is something completely different from a so-called 'invented tradition', whose purpose is to forge social memory through artificial means. Best exemplified by the ancient Greek notion of 'technē', that is, the idea of a total philosophy of construction, the element of technical ingenuity in architecture persists to this day despite the overwhelming change of epochs, for it is not only as primordial as the architectural profession itself, but it also accounts for its long-standing 'internal' memory. The lay public however, in being captivated mainly by appearances, can hardly relate to this aspect of the work and – ironically – to its intricate ties to social memory.

National identity, on the other hand, is an undeniable component of social construction in modernity – hence, passionately pursued by the majority of nations – as much as it is fluid and negotiable over time.⁷² According to American historian J. R. Gillis, 'memories and identities are not fixed things [...] we are constantly revising our memories to suit our current identities'.⁷³ At the same time, national monuments, once met with approval, even enthusiasm, by their publics, may fall prey to social and political conflicts at a later date. This is because such monuments, by and large, did not stem naturally from a context of negotiation between the architect, the builder, and the social body as products of its collective memory. For this and other reasons, the social value of architecture in modernity has become highly unstable. This is precisely the gap which the expert-architect comes to fill. It is then his/her job to have these buildings imbued with tested and indisputable qualities, such that transcend the time of the nation and, at the same time, 'awaken responses in those who experience it'⁷⁴ by an appeal to architecture's enduring 'constitutive elements', on the one hand, and to the particularities of its expression (i.e., the 'charakteristisch'), on the other. The former have reference to what Anderson calls 'disciplinary memory', whereas the latter consolidate social memory as one of many other components.

3.6 The Aesthetics of Characterization

That buildings possess a characteristic expression for the arousal of human emotions, even more so, for conforming to a certain purpose or use, became a pervasive requisite in modernity and, on a second level, a point of differentiating

ward an iconic conceptualization of things as Lowenthal (1994: 43) observes: 'heritage distills the past into icons of identity.'

72 By now it is common knowledge that Western Europe and the U.S. have entered a new, post-nationalist phase since the 1960s, which is characterized by a severely critical attitude toward nationalism and its related culture; see Gillis (1994: 16–17).

73 Gillis (1994: 3)

74 Anderson (1995: 35).

French from German aesthetics. In both cases, however, this notion opened the door to the aesthetics of autonomy.

By contrast to the psychologically laden *caractère* of French theory, German theorists extended the idea on to all the various elements with form-giving potentials, including even the nature of the materials, referring to it as the 'charakteristisch' ('distinctive' or 'typical'). In either case,

aesthetic apprehension depended on the way the object was presented to the beholder, that is, a purely subjective criterion. Subjectivity then, and its aesthetic correlatives, marked a decisive shift to the way beauty was defined and understood under the spell of romanticism – that is, Hume's 'different beauty' – as opposed to the idealized beauty of all classical periods.⁷⁵

This is how the notion found its due place first in the German aesthetics of *Klassizismus* (neo-classicism). In that, famous art historian, pioneer of architectural aesthetics, and Schinkel's professor, Aloys Hirt, applied the notion of 'charakteristisch' to denote the special and undivided quality of its architectural forms.⁷⁶ He declared:

By characteristic I mean that certain individuality by which forms, movement and gesture, appearance and expression – local color, light and shadow, chiaroscuro and posture – differ, and that in such a way as the object presented demands.⁷⁷

Hegel, on the other hand, by sharing in the same discourse on the 'charakteristisch', perceptively defined it as the structural relationship between a certain content of a work (e.g., feeling, situation, action, etc.) and 'the mode and manner in which this content is presented'.⁷⁸ Moreover, he placed extra emphasis on this manner of presentation where 'everything particular in the mode of expression shall serve towards the specific designation of its content'.⁷⁹

Hegel thus returns to the ever-critical issue of 'beauty' in art (or architecture), yet now from a modern point of view, where the beautiful is coupled with what is characteristic. In this manner the aesthetic object is freed from all the earlier idealistic preconceptions of classical theory – e.g., the claim to mimetic representation – and is directed more toward the outward manifestation of the content within; more specifically, toward the means and methods of its representation. For example, more attention is now paid to the visible expression of structure (e.g., the gravitational thrusts), as well as to the various visual stimuli, which

75 Fatsea (2014: 261), Fatsea (2020: 339).

76 The term, however, did not originate with Hirt but with the anonymous author who published an essay in 1788 under the title *Untersuchungen über den Charakter der Gebäude* (N. N. [1788]), which seemed to have exerted great influence upon German aesthetics thereof.

77 See Hirt (1797: 34–35).

78 Hegel (1975 [1835]: 17).

79 Hegel (1975 [1835]: 18).

fragment-like are selectively placed on the building's surface and – either as copies of archaeological elements or as inventive new constructions – eloquently refer to historical contexts of meaningful engagement for the community at large. Far beyond superficial ornamentation, all these treatments of the surface with an eye to the 'charakteristisch' are both addressed to and aimed at the beholder's response. If seen more broadly, they seek to unite the community around a common sentiment caused by the characteristic imprints of immediate perception, at a time when collective memory has dramatically waned. Hegel, who built little faith in this kind of memory, assures that:

if the artistic subjects are drawn from the present, then their own special form, as it actually confronts us, is *firmly fixed in our minds in all its aspects* [...] The past, on the other hand, belongs only to memory, and memory automatically succeeds in clothing characters, events, and actions in the garment of universality, whereby the particular external and accidental details are obscured.⁸⁰

In essence, the artist (or architect), according to Hegel, manages to impart upon the work a certain individuality – and, consequently, a certain degree of autonomy – *vis-à-vis* the grips of convention or 'the garment of universality' – therefore, abstract idealization – and hence to deliver it as a token to future memory.

It took only the decisive intervention of an enlightened architect – Karl F. Schinkel – for architecture to find a way out of this idealizing deadlock of modernity by properly making use of the ideal of the 'charakteristisch'. The following long quote, by his both disciple and biographer, Franz Kugler, best demonstrates the architect's approach to his art:

But he is not under the command of his models. Without arbitrarily fragmenting the details of Greek architecture (as often happened in the declining period of ancient life and by less competent imitators of antiquity), without dissolving the inner coherence by which they are conditioned, he not only knows how to adapt their forms with taste to each external need, where such a need is compellingly determined, he also knows how to modify their mutual relationship to the intended impression on the viewer's mind, in this or that direction, in many ways; he also presents these forms to us in completely new and peculiar combinations; he lets completely new and peculiar compositions develop from the inner spirit of ancient art in perfect freedom.⁸¹

Kugler, here, pays homage to Schinkel's aptitude to draw on antiquity without imitating its models, to borrow from it 'fragments' without letting them show as fragments but as integral parts into a coherent whole under an overall new idea. In other words, he calls attention to his master's adherence to an organic principle of design,⁸² whereby he focuses on every current situation and interprets it through his drawing without trying to recapture the past by means of idealized ab-

80 Hegel (1975: 189). The emphasis is mine.

81 Kugler (1842: 22); my translation.

82 Kugler (1842: 22).

stractions. In many of his buildings (e.g., the Schauspielhaus, the Altes Museum, the Tegel Villa), Schinkel's fragmentary allusions to Greek precedents give grounding to both, the historical and the poetic, whereas they invest on the notion of the 'charakteristisch' for awakening the visitor to a more emotional experience (see fig. 8.4; fig. 8.7; fig. 8.9).⁸³ At the same time, by incorporating a multitude of *constitutive elements* into this experience – that is, 'the myriad ways of defining space and controlling light',⁸⁴ materials, movement, and so forth – Schinkel enhances this experience for the visitor by making it both pleasurable and memorable. Thus, his new 'lieux de mémoire' actively engaged their users, both intellectually and emotionally, rather than alienating them like many of modernity's 'invented traditions'.

Hansen, like Schinkel, subjugates surface elements to the whole as parts of its beauty by letting the detail function as a vehicle to the building's thorough comprehension by the visitor who, in effect, is moved both experientially and intellectually to a certain direction. In Christian Scholl's words, in Schinkel's work, the detail activates the function of 'normative visual clarity' (*Normative Anschaulichkeit*) out of which an easily perceptible architectural grammar emerges.⁸⁵ However – and as it will be shown in the next section – Hansen, unlike Schinkel, charges the detail with such semantic density as to turn it into a thick symbol of its cultural provenance. In this sense, Hansen's detail stands closer to Hirt's notion of the 'charakteristisch'; that is, other than a typical element of characterization of the building's function, the detail in its archaeological specificity acts as a bearer of objective knowledge. It refers directly to *its source*, while it is properly scaled and harmonized with all the other architectural elements in the building's overall fabric so that it does not strike as something pedantic or extraneous, that is, a fragment calling attention to itself (see fig. 8.10).⁸⁶

Furthermore, Hansen, in following Schinkel's example, evades identification with any single model (i.e., through imitation) by freely choosing, mixing and matching aspects of his Greek prototypes in an act of constructive synthesis. More importantly, on the level of the overall building massing, he does not replicate ideal forms or single building types (e.g., the temple, the stoa, the tholos, etc.), as Hirt would have wished, but combines them indistinctly in a novel synthesis with the sole purpose to activate the user's imagination and interest in the work. Hansen, in the *Athenian Academy*, follows Schinkel's lesson as best exemplified in the

83 According to architecture historian Mitchell Schwarzer (1993: 279), tectonics brings forth 'the unresolved conflict between an ontological urge to regard structure as an irreducible essence of architectural form and representational impulse to manifest built expressions through poetic commentary.'

84 Anderson (1995: 35).

85 Scholl (2009: 92), who notes that the term 'Anschaulichkeit' appears as a key idea in Schinkel's *Architektonisches Lehrbuch*, published posthumously and edited by Peschken (1979).

86 Fatsea (2014: 264); Fatsea (2020: 343).

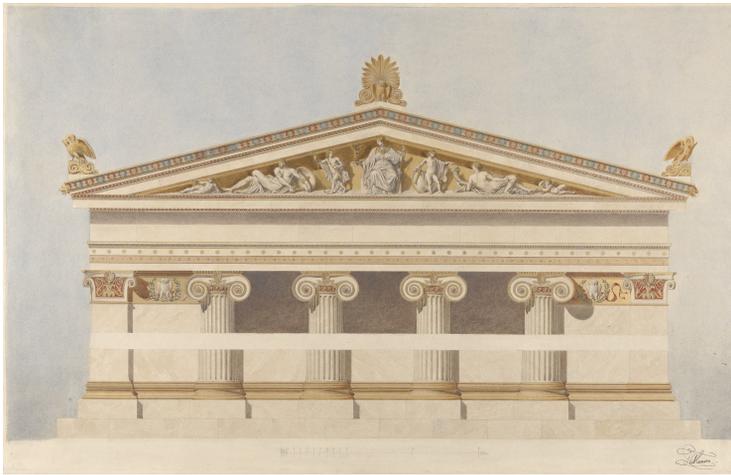


Fig. 8.10: T. Hansen, Academy of Athens, corner pavilion front, ink on paper, 1859 (Graphic Collection of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Hansen estate, inv. no. HZ 20364), reproduced with permission from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

case of his Altes Museum,⁸⁷ in which the Prussian master managed to bring together in a happy and unprecedented union two ideal building types, the Roman Pantheon and the Greek stoa, as a response to his contemporary question: ‘What a modern museum ought to be?’

4. The Athenian Academy of Arts & Sciences (1859–1884)

Hansen’s Athenian Academy is a characteristic case in point which invests considerably on this new culture of the fragment. In fact, its immediately perceptible envelope brings together into an admirable synthesis fragments of two sorts: those that the architect ‘collected’ through his extensive hands-on experience of the classical monuments and a good selection of others, which he copied from some of the best-known illustrated anthologies of significant building details at the time.

Pattern books or illustrated anthologies of decorative details, such as those by Schinkel and Beuth, Hetsch, and other noted authors, were intended as valuable sources providing for both of these levels of architectural design (see fig. 8.6). They were addressed not only to artisans and craftsmen who were more habitually inclined to a mix-and-match design practice, but to professional architects, too,

⁸⁷ Hirt severely criticized this building for its spatial excesses, its extravagance and waste; see Spiero (1934: 66–68), Forssman (1981: 114–118).

to whom all those drawn-to-scale examples were not as commonly available through personal research. In addition, celebrated building typologies, fragmentarily composed and newly re-interpreted, provided the canvas for memory to be interweaved, that is, disciplinary memory engaging the social body as an active participant of architecture.

The Athenian Academy can be unmistakably described as a multi-layered 'lieu de mémoire'. For it, the architect drew upon the broader context to which the building belonged. Thus, he ensured that its ties to the cultural and the collective mentality of its audience was direct and undeniable. Beginning with its plan, Hansen combines the ideal type of the Greek Propylaeum for its overall articulation, the Greek amphiprostyle (tripartite) temple for its central unit and the Greek stoa for the two connecting branches on each side. Further, the entirely modular composition with the wide-open forecourt draws on the Palladian villa type of the Renaissance which continued through the Baroque and was particularly honored by authors of modernity, such as the French J.-N.-L. Durand (see fig. 8.11). All elements are orchestrated by way of a sophisticated system of classical proportions (i.e., a reflection of cosmic harmony) as in antiquity, which persisted even in Hansen's time after having been subjected to severe criticism by radical anti-classicists.⁸⁸ In other words, proportions survived as key constituents of the tradition of the architectural profession and, therefore, were incorporated in its disciplinary memory (see fig. 8.12). However, memory's part is not exhausted in this rather intellectual, and largely invisible substratum of the Academy, but also extends to the experiential one. According to many of the above-mentioned authors – including Anderson, Hirt, and Schinkel – it concerns *constituent elements* of architecture, such as space, light, shadow, atmosphere, and movement. The experience of walking through the main temple-like wing is one – the most important – among others in and around the building. After a linear and ascending path spanning through a semi-urban setting one enters a tripartite spatial sequence in which light diminishes as formality escalates: portico, hallway, assembly hall. Entering the latter through its enormously heavy double-doors marks a transition similar to that from a secular to a sacred space. Here, the experience is sensational as the scale expands to quasi-transcendental. Conducive to it is the nature of materials (i.e., white marble, wood, and leather) accentuated with gilded trimmings, and the majestic lighting entering through the single central lightwell in a mode reminiscent of hypaethral temples. The panoramically laid out Prometheus myth on all four sides, animated with scattered glows under dim light, enhances the sublimity of the experience by calling for a momentary pause (see fig. 8.13).

⁸⁸ Such as the 17th-century French physician and amateur architect Claude Perrault with his radically modern realized proposal for the East façade of the Louvre (1667–1670), which instigated the notorious so-called 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes'; see Braham (1980: 25) and Mallgrave (2005: 6–9).



Fig. 8.11: Typological models and possible influences of the Athenian Academy as preserved in the disciplinary memory of the architectural profession. Center: The Academy of Athens, a bird's eye view. © The Academy of Athens. Upper left (a): The Propylaea, Athens, reconstruction view, from Le Roy (1758: II pl. XIII). Lower left (b): Diagram of the Parthenon with basic proportions in plan, composed by the author. Upper right (c): Restored elevation of the Royal Stoa in its first period, drawing by W. B. Dinsmoor, 1970 (ASCSA arch. no. 2012.58.0458). © American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora excavations. Lower right (d): Plan and façade of the Villa Saraceno, from Palladio (1570: II 56).

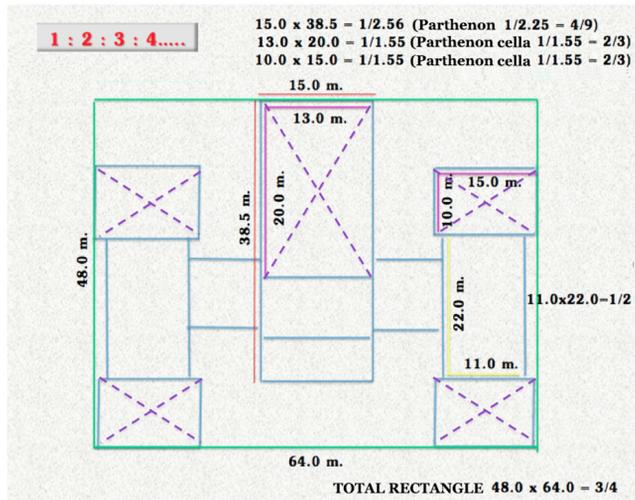


Fig. 8.12: The proportional system at work in the Academy as preserved by disciplinary memory and based on the first integers, originally studied by the Pythagoreans and applied in Greek architecture. Graphic diagram drawn by the author.

The linear course via the assembly hall continues and terminates at the visitor's exiting through the rear portico and a long staircase directly into the private garden of the building (originally planned as a miniature English orchard), thus completing a virtual propylaea-like through journey of a quasi-mystical significance. On the other hand, elements bearing prominent ornamental qualities aim at the immediate response of the beholder in both an emotional and a cognitive sense. They tend to awake memories, indistinct for the most part. Some of these are: the central hexastyle portico (doubled on the rear side), which copies the east portico



Fig. 8.13: T. Hansen, Academy of Athens, longitudinal section through the Assembly Hall, ink on cardboard, 1859 (Graphic Collection of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Hansen estate, inv. no. HZ 20365), reproduced with permission from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

of the Erechtheion and the frontispieces of the corner pavilions (repeated eight times) which combine the west front of the Erechtheion with the tetrastyle portico of the temple of Athena Nike. All are in the Ionic style and originate in Hansen's *in situ* experience of the monuments (see fig. 8.14). In the scale of detail, we find the previously mentioned and repeated throughout proto-Ionic flat capital originating in fourth century Asia Minor, as well as the two gigantic (statue bearing) Ionic columns, freely interpreting those of the Temple of Apollo in Bassae. All these items stem from well-known collection books of ancient specimens; however, they have been reworked and inventively re-composed in a romantic spirit, thus becoming the characteristic (*charakteristisch*) elements of the Academy aimed to impart special character to it.⁸⁹ Further, polychromy,⁹⁰ another important

89 For the application of the term in Th. Hansen's work see Kugler (1842) and von Lützwow (1885).

90 Some of the earlier publications which inaugurated the polychromy debate were Hittorff and Zanth (1827), Semper (1834), Jones and Gouy (1836–1845), Müller, Oesterley, and Wieseler (1832). For a contemporary critical account of the controversy and its theoretical

discovery of romanticism and a strong statement of architecture's social and contextual derivation, is amply used by Hansen as another 'characteristic' and unifying component of the whole (see fig. 8.15). All of the above are elements which had been chosen mainly for their visual effect and their ability to trigger memories embedded in habituated environments of people's lived experience. They are rather contingent and fragmentary. They could have been easily replaced by others or recomposed with no major harm caused to the building's integrity. They belong to the thinner layer of its memory.

Lastly, the Academy features prominently the language of *tectonics* as an additional *charakteristisches Element*, which articulates the wall by bringing scale and rhythm to it and, consequently, to the entire structure. It employs consistently and celebratorily the post-and-lintel system of the ancients, who had used it first in a similarly double role: as structure and ornament. Rather tacitly, it connects



Fig. 8.14: Elements (*charakteristisch*) triggering social memory, drawn on familiar archaeological relics, all combined in new and inventive compositions in the Academy. Center: Front Facade of the Academy of Athens, photo by Giorgos Spiliotis, 2018, *Wikimedia Commons* (CC SA 4.0). Upper left (a): Erechtheion, East elevation, from Fletcher (1921: 98). Lower left (b): Erechtheion, West elevation, from Fletcher (1921: 98). Upper right (c): Temple of Nike Apteros, Western elevation, reconstruction, from Ross, Schaubert, and Hansen (1839: pl. III, fig. 1). Lower right (d): (left) The Ionic capital of the temple of Apollo Epicurius, Bassae, from Normand and Mauch (1832: T. IX, pl. LXXII); (right) Interpretation of the Bassae column by T. Hansen, ink on paper (excerpt), 1859 (Graphic Collection of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Hansen estate, inv. no. HZ 20375), repr. with permission from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

the orderly geometry of the plan with the immediately perceivable features of the elevation, like the colonnade in an ancient temple. It is expressive of the deeper essence of the building while it alludes to the generative laws of architecture in time immemorial. In this sense, tectonics belongs equally to the disciplinary and

context see Van Zanten (1977). Regarding polychromy in Th. Hansen's architecture, in particular, see Franz (2013).



Fig. 8.15: Academy of Athens, the library wing, interior (photo repro). © Academy of Athens. Polychromy, as recently discovered and documented in Greek architecture (by Cockerell, Hittorff, Semper, Kugler, etc.) is applied by Hansen both in the interior and the exterior of the Academy to induce social memory through the public's emotive response.

to the social memory of architecture. It is the element that brings the two layers into a constant interplay. This is precisely why it was persistently thematized, analyzed, and extolled by romantic authors.⁹¹

91 See especially Bötticher (1843: xiv–xvi) and Semper (2003 [1860]: 71–72, 378–379, 249–250). Its significance for historicist architecture was also properly addressed by contemporary authors, such as Anderson, Buttlar, Mallgrave, Schwarzer, and many others.

5. Conclusion

In the case of the Athenian Academy and while working in the context of Romantic Classicism, Theophil Hansen fabricated a building out of fragments which he intended to perform as a virtual bridge between past and present by being antique and modern at once – therefore, being conducive to his vision for a more unified world based on the universal idea of *hellenism*. Thence comes his oft-quoted expression ‘Hellenische Renaissance’. Its beholders ever since projected on it various sentiments, nationalist and others, which ranged widely from adoration to contempt. Nevertheless, the building continues to speak to the most perceptive for what it really stands for, i.e., a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Total Work of Art) as it skillfully embraces the two layers of memory: the disciplinary and the social. A poetic *lieu de mémoire*.

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