**SAN ROCCO · INDIFFERENCE** Martin Abbott on New Delhi ∗ Pier Vittorio Aureli and Maria S. Giudici on the La Tourette monastery ∗ Ido Avissar on hashish and the city ∗ Campomarzio on a replica by Antonio da Sangallo ∗ Ludovico Centis on Pouillon ∗ Victoria Easton on SOM ∗ Fabrizio Gallanti on the world's top international design firms ∗ Francesco Garofalo on Angiolo Mazzoni ∗ Kersten Geers on Álvaro Siza ∗ Matteo Ghidoni on Willis, Faber & Dumas ∗ Jose Manuel López Ujaque and Esteban Salcedo Sánchez interview Anne Lacaton ∗ Francesco Marullo on Leonidov ∗ Matteo Palamini and Pietro Pezzani on Lacaton & Vassal ∗ Jelena Pančevac on the Resor House ∗ Freek Persyn and Ido Avissar on OMU and OMA ∗ Giovanni Piovene on Aymar Embury II ∗ Vittorio Pizzigoni on Mies in the U.S. ∗ Irénée Scalbert on the Escorial ∗ Giacomo Summa in conversation with Janez Gorišek ∗ Pier Paolo Tamburelli on the Gothic ∗ Guido Tesio on Loos ∗ Oliver Thill on Richard Meier ∗ Stefaan Vervoort on Luc Deleu ∗ Cino Zucchi on the Glass House ∗ With photos by Teresa Cos, Giovanna Silva and Alberto Sinigaglia and a drawing by Charlotte Schmidt

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FAKE GOTHIC

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Friedrich-Schlegels-Ausgabe,*
pt. I, bk. 4: *Ansichten und
Ideen der christlichen Kunst,*
179–80; as cited in W. D.
Robson-Scott, *The Literary
Background of the Gothic
Revival in Germany* (Oxford:
Oxford University Press,
1965), 134.

2
Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più
eccellenti pittori, scultori
e architetti* (Florence:
Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550),
introduction (chap. II);
translation by the author.

Broadly speaking, the essence of the Gothic is not up for debate. Both its supporters and its opponents provide the same definition and disagree only about its evaluation. Schlegel confirms Vasari, and vice versa. In Schlegel's words:

> The essence of Gothic architecture consists therefore in the power of creating, like nature herself, an infinite multiplicity of forms and of flower-like decorations. Hence the inexhaustible and countless repetitions of the same decorative details; hence the vegetal element. And hence too the deeply moving and mysterious power of this architecture, and its capacity to charm and delight, and at the same time to evoke our amazement at its sublimity.[1]

And in Vasari's:

> [F]or all façades and for all ornaments they created a plague of little tabernacles, each one on top of the next, with so many pyramids, darts and leaves, that it seems impossible that they should not collapse, and they seem to be made of paper instead of stone or marble. And in these buildings the Gothic architects made so many projections, breaks, consoles and racemes that they destroyed the proportions of everything they made, and often, by putting one thing on top of the other, they went to such a height that the summit of a door touched the roof.[2]

What the Gothic is is clear, and what changes follows the taste of each author. And of course, Vasari is right: the Gothic is disgusting. The Gothic finds itself on the wrong side of all possible oppositions, celebrating nature over artifice, instinct over reason, extravagance over regularity, spontaneity over conventions, imagination over rules,

genius over knowledge, depth over surface, drama over farce. As an ideology, the Gothic means pantheism, latent paganism, eco-fascism, solitary walking-in-the-woods and Martin Heidegger, with all of it finally leading to the most fearsome of all demented ideologies: *The Lord of the Rings.*

But the Gothic exists anyway; this cannot be denied. The Gothic is given, and it leaves two possibilities for classicism open: the Gothic can be considered as *a code for understanding* or as *a phenomenon to be understood.* If the Gothic is *a code,* then it is immediately an alternative to classicism. If the Gothic is *just content,* then it can be subjected to a classicist notion of form, and classicism has to take care of it as well. And given that architectural knowledge must be one and shared, if it has to try to address everybody (and thereby receives its only possible value), then there should be no alternative to classicism. So the task for a consistently universal classicism is not to oppose the Gothic, but rather to reduce it to absurdity, to dismiss its illegitimate claim of providing a possible alternative – in other words, *to espouse the Gothic* and, in doing so, *to confirm the universality of classicism,* opposing any idea of a possible *double truth* in architecture.

So opposing the Gothic in a direct and somehow furious way (as Palladio did with his projects for the façade of San Petronio, for instance) ultimately results in recognizing the Gothic as a legitimate alternative. But the Gothic is not another language; it is just another vocabulary – *a different bunch of words*. The Gothic is just a fashion in decoration, and this is why it is interesting today, because historical examples of confronting the Gothic with calculated indifference (e.g., Bramante's opinion about Milan's cathedral, Vignola's projects for San Petronio, Schinkel's late works in Gothic style) can be observed in order to learn to deal with fashion with the same *well-tempered* indifference. This is also why, in the end, the Gothic is OK. Because it is useless to fight against fashion. Fashion can only be ridiculed, not opposed.

A reductio ad absurdum of the Gothic is particularly evident in Schinkel's mature work.

Schinkel and the Gothic

The case of Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781–1841) is particularly telling in the context of this discussion, because Schinkel was – to a certain extent – a convert to (and later also away from) the Gothic. Schinkel confronted the Gothic for the entire span of his professional life, and the changes in his position toward it coincided with the evolutionary

shifts of his architectural thinking. A detailed description of all of the chapters of this story is not possible here, so I will concentrate on just a few episodes: his proposal for the mausoleum for Queen Luise (1810); the Befreiungsdom, or Cathedral of Freedom (1814); the Gertraudskirche in the Spittelmarkt (1820); and the projects for the Friedrichswerdersche Kirche (1821–30).

Strangely enough, Schinkel started to be an enthusiast of the Gothic during his Grand Tour (1803–5). In Italy, Schinkel drew several buildings that he described in his notes as *gotisch,* or as belonging to an unspecified *sarazenischer Stil.*[3] Although the terminology is quite generic, it is evident that the Gothic and the *sarazenisch* were, for the young Schinkel, synonymous with the exotic, bizarre and marvellous. Schinkel described the *sarazenischer Stil* as *abenteuerlich,* or adventurous. Schinkel also labelled as *gotisch* the stalactites in the caves of Prediana. The Gothic, for Schinkel, had to do with knights, pirates and zombies.

Back in Prussia, there was nothing for Schinkel to build. Napoleon entered Berlin on 27 October 1806, and for the entire period of the Napoleonic Wars Schinkel had to make a living as a painter. He mainly painted large scenes with a Gothic atmosphere, such as his *Gothic Cathedral by the Water* (1813) and *Mediaeval City on a River* (1815), or his Hollywood-ish representations of contemporary events, such as *The Fire of Moscow* (1812/13). This was Schinkel's true "Gothic period", with the architect/painter fully participating in the Gothic fashion that had gained momentum with Goethe's *Von deutscher Baukunst* (On German Architecture; 1773) and swept up more or less all German intellectuals of the period.

Anyhow, the attention of the young Schinkel was drawn to the Gothic for a series of reasons that are completely consistent with the future development of his thought. Indeed, for Schinkel the Gothic seemed to be a part of architectural reality that had been excised by narrow-minded classicism but should no longer be forgotten. What led Schinkel to the Gothic was *realism:* the Gothic was a fragment of reality that challenged the definition of the discipline, and it was thus precious for precisely this reason. The Gothic was also an undeniable element of the contemporary German cultural climate. The Gothic was new and fancy. As the *enlightened conformist* he would be for his entire life, Schinkel responded to the requests of the society around him and embraced the Gothic. For a while this looked like a conversion, but in reality it was part of a complex process that ultimately led

3
See Georg Friedrich Koch, "Karl Friedrich Schinkel und die Architektur des Mittelalters", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* (1966), 178. Schinkel's terminology derives – not without a radical inversion of values but maintaining the same degree of imprecision – from Johann Georg Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (4 vols., 1771–74).

Schinkel to a deeper understanding of classicism.

Seen from an (enlightened) classicist point of view, the Gothic was an element of contradiction, and as such – in truly Hegelian terms – it brought with it an opportunity to achieve a deeper notion of truth. In 1810 Schinkel wrote:

> Since art is nothing at all, if it is not new – i.e., art practically depends upon promoting the moral progress of mankind and inventing always new expressions of it – it is evident that a higher critique will never be developed entirely out of the existing, and so art scholars who are not at the same time practising artists are totally exempt from the higher form of critique and, therefore, from a higher insight into art. And the one who bases his knowledge only on them [the art scholars] is an idiot with respect to art. Because true artistic critique will only be developed by means of creativity, which belongs to the practical and yet at the same time fulfils higher needs. But because this is an addition to the world which has never been there before, the pure scholars lose their orientation and therefore don't know what to do with it . . . [4]

Mausoleum

In 1810–11 Schinkel made a proposal for the design of the mausoleum of Queen Luise of Prussia.

Queen Luise had died in 1810 at the age of thirty-four. She had become a national icon after having personally tried to negotiate with Napoleon for more favourable conditions of peace for Prussia shortly before the signing of the treaties of Tilsit. Her precocious death only further increased her popular veneration.

For her funerary monument, Schinkel designed a very simple rectangular hall in the Gothic style. The hall received light from openings in three apses that emerged from the rectangle. Schinkel described the space as follows:

> In the midst of a chamber, whose vaulted roof and supporting pillars create the impression of a grove of palms, a sarcophagus stands on a flight of steps, embellished with many sprouting leaves, lilies and roses. Here rests the recumbent statue of the Queen with a crown upon her head. At her head stand two angels with outspread wings and palm branches in their hands, their feet resting on lilies; they scatter flowers and gaze sweetly upon the face of the Queen. At her feet another angel kneels on a calyx and gazes heavenwards in rapturous contemplation of the spirit of the departed. Light falls through the windows which surround the sarcophagus on

5
Schinkel, quoted in Robson-Scott, *Literary Background of the Gothic Revival,* 230–37.

6
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Von deutscher Baukunst" [1773], in idem, *Schriften zur Kunst: Gedenkausgabe der Werke, Briefe und Gespräche,* vol. 13 (Zurich: Artemis Verlag, 1954), 20.

7
Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Aus Schinkel Nachlass: Reisetagebücher, Briefe, Aphorismen,* vol. 3, ed. Alfred von Wolzogen (Berlin: Verlag der königlichen Geheimen Ober-Hofdruckerei, 1863), 160; cited in Georg Friedrich Koch, "Schinkels architektonische Entüffe im gotischen Stil 1810–15", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 32 (1969), 266; translation by the author.

8
Schinkel, *Aus Schinkel Nachlass,* 160; cited in Koch, *Schinkels architektonische Entüffe,* 272; translation by the author.

three sides; the stained glass suffuses the whole mausoleum, which is built of white marble with a soft, rosy glow. In front of this hall is a portico surrounded by trees of the darkest hue; you ascend the steps and enter with a gentle thrill of awe into the darkness of the vestibule, from which, through three high openings, you look into the hall of palms, where the deceased surrounded by angels rests peacefully in the clear rose of dawn.[5]

Robson-Scott noticed the similarities of this description with some passages from the description of Ottilie's chapel in Goethe's *Elective Affinities*. To a contemporary reader, it also sounds pretty much like second-rate Led Zeppelin. The watercolour presenting the interior (Staatliche Muzeen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. no. SM 54.4) displays a powerful sense of contrast. Light enters only from the three large openings at the back, and the space is animated by an emotional combination of dark and light zones that are respectively inscrutable and blinding – there is almost no in-between condition. The external walls somehow vanish. The space deliberately resembles a forest, and as such, it has no borders. Following Goethe, the pillars are understood as "sublime, broadly spreading trees of God".[6] The church is an explicit metaphor with a precise message: here "one should be encouraged to make pictures of the future for himself, and through these, to elevate his being and to feel the need to strive for perfection".[7]

In the same period, Schinkel produced reflections on the Gothic that have quite a different, more analytical tone. For instance, in 1810 he commented upon the different role of decoration in classical and Gothic architecture. He first remarked on the Gothic:

"[T]he subtle vertical lines of the towers and churches . . . were not to be considered as decorations, but as elements that were necessary to the expression of the idea. However, the decoration of ancient architecture could always be absent without substantially changing the character of the building."[8]

This observation already suggests the direction that Schinkel's criticism of the Gothic would take in the years that followed. The Gothic makes no distinctions: decoration is on the same level as spatial organization; all architectural problems seem to be of the same kind. A Gothic building is *organic:* every single detail seems to be as important as the whole. The Gothic building seems to have grown bit by bit, capital by capital, reaching the roof by means of stacking little tabernacles one on top of the other, as sarcastically described by Vasari. The Gothic architect seems to work like a carpenter who has been chained to his work table and thus cannot take three steps

back to have a look at the entire thing, or like a football player who can dribble past the entire opposing team but cannot lift his head to pass the ball. Seen in this light, Schinkel is clearly not a Gothic architect, and it is obvious that he had to progressively get rid of the Gothic in order to pursue his idea of architecture. For Schinkel, design clearly proceeds from the whole to the parts, as for Hegel: *das Wahre ist das Ganze.* As for Hegel, *realism* and hence *totality,* given that realism can only be based on the *totality* of reality.[9]

It was a desire for an understanding of the totality that led Schinkel to pay attention to the Gothic, and it would later be this very same desire that led him to refuse the Gothic. Schinkel never saw the Gothic (romantically) as being in opposition to classicism. On the contrary, the Gothic, for Schinkel, was always part of a more complex dialectic. In Schinkel's eyes, the Gothic was never *against* classicism, but was *because of* classicism.

In 1810 Schinkel wrote:

> We cannot immediately apply Greek and Roman styles; we have to provide what is relevant to this task independently. The Middle Ages give us a hint about this new direction of architecture. At that time, when the Christian religion was more vital within the community, this was also expressed in art. We should be inspired by the spirit of that period and develop it further, as well as aspire to complete it under the influence of the principles of beauty that have been transmitted by pagan antiquity.[10]

Here Schinkel's logic is entirely classical. The Gothic is relevant for its capacity to establish a profound relation with his contemporary society. The Gothic indicates a potential way of giving architecture the spiritual content of its own epoch, yet this content needs to be developed according to a formal logic that is strictly classical (according to the "principles of beauty that have been transmitted by pagan antiquity"). The Gothic is *content,* and thus change, history and fashion, yet architecture is about permanence, logic and *form.* Content can, of course, change, adapting to distinct historical circumstances and challenging form in all sorts of ways. The language of forms remains one, and its task is to adjust to any circumstance without losing its universal claims and to preserve its capacity to offer its promises to everybody.

The Befreiungsdom
At the end of the Liberation Wars (1814), Schinkel was asked to develop a project for a national memorial/cathedral – the Befreiungsdom, or

9
See Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel: Leçons sur la "Phénomenologie de l'Esprit" professés de 1933 à 1939 à l'École des Hautes Études réunies et publiées par Raymond Queneau* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947).

10
Schinkel, *Aus Schinkel Nachlass,* 153–62; cited in Haus, "K. F. Schinkels einstellung zur Gotik", 216; translation by the author.
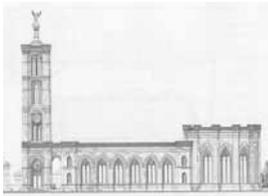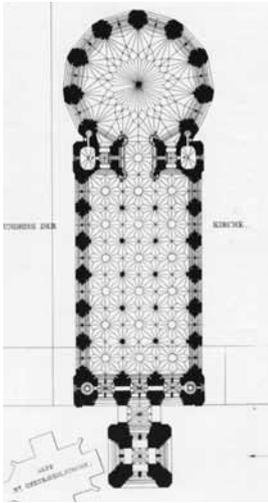
Gertraudskirche, plan and elevation

Cathedral of Freedom – on Leipzigerplatz. Schinkel imagined the cathedral as a monument that was simultaneously religious (a church), historical (a memorial to the fallen soldiers) and artistic (a construction site where all contemporary German artists and scientists would be collaborating). The gigantic cathedral was Schinkel's last truly Gothic project. The church rested on a very high basement, somehow recalling the project for the monument to Friedrich the Great that Friedrich Gilly had developed in 1797 for the very same location. The building joined together a high tower up front, three richly decorated gates opening onto a portico below the tower, a hall with three aisles and a rotunda surmounted by a dome. The ensemble looked somehow like a natural formation, with a lavish forest of spires growing on top of the rocky basement. Similar pyramidal, metaphorical compositions appear in several sketches for the war memorial (Staatliche Muzeen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. no. SM 36b.12) and in fantasies such as *The Development of Western Culture in Three Steps* (Staatliche Muzeen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. no. SM 20b.75). All of these drawings had a similarly all-encompassing scope, trying to summarize the entire history of architecture in a single narrative. In all of them, the composition evolves from the foundations (beginnings) to the summit (fulfilment). Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Gothic fragments are organized in stepped groups that sometimes include a "natural" substratum of rocks and try to visualize a sort of clumsy evolution from matter to spirit. These wild, metaphorical fantasies would re-emerge again here and there over Schinkel's career, but with the failure of the project for the Befreiungsdom, Schinkel's romantic-megalomaniacal approach to the Gothic made way for a different attitude.

In 1815, Schinkel became the state *Geheime Oberbaurat,* or Chief Government Building Officer. This was probably the greatest change in his life. Afterward, Schinkel was no longer a free (and harmless) artist, but rather a controlled (and influential) state bureaucrat. From that moment on he also started to make buildings.

The Gertraudskirche
Schinkel presented the (never built) project for the church in the Spittelmarkt in his *Sammlung architektonischer Entwürfe* (1858; pls. 31–34)*. The project appears extremely similar to the Befreiungsdom, almost a miniaturized version of it. Once again there is a tower, a hall and a rotunda. The ornament is Gothic. And yet the tone is different. The romantic atmosphere of the Befreiungsdom is completely gone.

The project's Gothic verticality is limited to the tower, somehow concentrating all the design's Gothic-ness in a single element. As for the rest, except for the decoration (which is, anyhow, very sober), it is hard to find other traces of the Gothic: the roof of the main hall is flat, as is the roof of the rotunda, and there are no rampant arches. There are no rampant arches. The internal arrangement of the hall is extremely similar to that of the mausoleum of Queen Luise, but the atmosphere is entirely different.

The church is disaggregated into three separate pieces that are treated with a cold, analytical precision. Each element is clearly defined. The complicated symphony of the Befreiungsdom is dissected into a series of finite elements that are each individuated and mechanically combined. The different objects are aligned with the automatic precision of an Excel file: the tower, the hall and the rotunda are all aligned as in the manner of a "shotgun type". The boring and strangely paradoxical exercise in the composition of volumes remains half-way between the manner of a sadistic James Stirling and the still-life-on-an-anatomical-table atmosphere of John Hejduk's wall-houses. The ensemble conveys something that is boring, mathematical, sinister and hilarious all at the same time. Schinkel seems to be in search of a compositional logic that goes beyond style, beyond construction and beyond geometry, and perhaps he was only content once he reached the simplicity of arithmetic.

One tower, one hall, one rotunda, all aligned.

The Friedrichswerdersche Kirche
Since 1699, the French and German communities in the neighbourhood around the Werdersche Markt shared a church that by the beginning of the 19th century was in disrepair. In his role as *Geheime Oberbaurat,* Schinkel submitted a report suggesting that the church be replaced instead of restored. Following this, a project for a new building was submitted by J. G. Schlaetzer. This project was later evaluated by A. Hirt and by the office of the *Oberbaudeputation.* Not surprisingly, the *Oberbaudeputation* (i.e., Schinkel) was not happy with either Schlaetzer's proposal or Hirt's amendments. So in 1821, Schinkel developed his own proposal, the first of a series of projects that culminated in the construction of the church in 1830.

Schinkel's proposals for the Friedrichswerdersche Kirche can be grouped in three main chapters, each of which can be broken down into minor variations. Schinkel's first idea in 1821 was a strictly Neoclassical
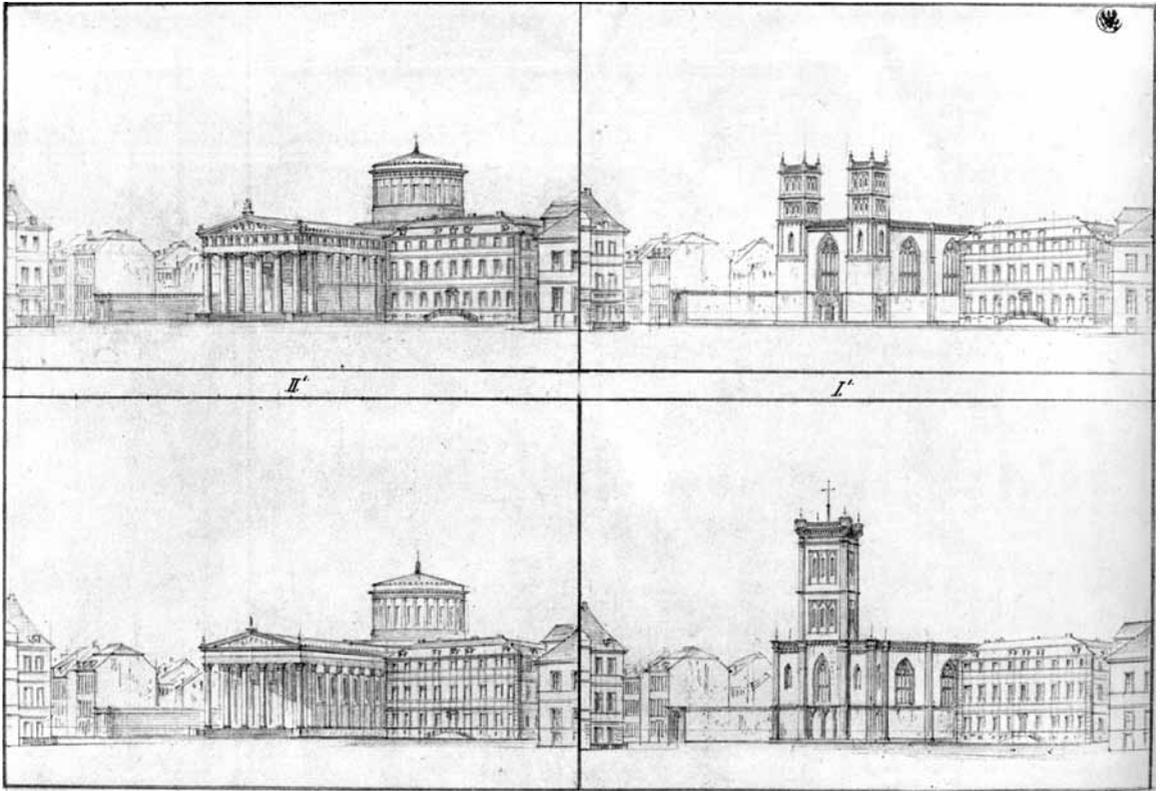
K. F. Schinkel,
Friedrichswerdersche
Kirche, four Gothic and
classical variations,,
1824 (Staatliche
Muzeen zu Berlin,
Kupferstichkabinett, inv.
no. SM 27.11)

building with a portico in the manner of the Maison carrée (with or
without a bell tower and later also developed in a version including a
cylindrical dome); the second option, of circa 1823, was a simple vol-
ume with a huge niche on the front and an elongated nave made of a
succession of four squarish spaces covered by low domes (*Sammlung
architektonischer Entwürfe,* pls. 55–58); the final – realized – version
of 1825 was a neo-Gothic brick box whose façade was defined by twin
towers (*Sammlung architektonischer Entwürfe,* pls. 85–90). Schinkel
also explored the use of different orders in the first solution as well
as an option with a single tower and another with four towers in the
Gothic version.

In 1824, Schinkel presented the crown prince with a pencil draw-
ing including four identical perspectives describing four differ-
ent options for the church's design (Staatliche Muzeen zu Berlin,
Kupferstichkabinett, inv. no. SM 27.11). On the left, two classical solu-
tions appear (the Maison carrée version, using the Doric and Corinthian

orders respectively), and on the right there are two Gothic solutions, one with a single tower and one with two. The drawing might be looked at as a manifesto of eclecticism, but in reality the choices presented to the prince are not that numerous. The position of the church was fixed (Schinkel had already played with the possibility of aligning the church with the street and discarded the idea). The relation of the church with the city was also already determined. In the *Sammlung,* at the beginning of his explanation of the first project, Schinkel makes clear that the building would necessarily be surrounded by narrow streets and that there would be no reason for particularly elaborated flanks. The difference between the façade and the flanks that would be so important to the Gothic proposals was nonetheless also present in the classical solution. The slight advancement of the façade over the alignment on the square of the existing building to the east – which gave the façade its characteristic role in the construction of the urban space – was not up for discussion either. All the prince had to decide upon was whether the design would be classical or Gothic. Once this was decided, it was then up to Schinkel to shape the entire sequence of architectural consequences that had to follow.

The Friedrichwerdersche Kirche has been seen as an example of cynicism, but if the church is most certainly a masterpiece of indifference, this does not imply any lack of commitment on Schinkel's part. The church's coldness is too explicit, too baffling and too uncomfortable to be just a way of getting out of trouble. Hans Sedlmayr famously disqualified the building in his *Verlust der Mitte* (1948; translated into English as *Art in Crisis: The Lost Middle*):

> Church architecture can no longer produce a new clear-cut building. It gropes indecisively after empty shells, seeking vainly for some kind of hold in them; it explores the early Christian, Byzantine, the Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance. From time to time it even seeks refuge in the externals of a Greek temple. Yet how superficial is this whole system of forms is shown with horrifying clarity by Schinkel's design for the Werdersche Kirche in Berlin. The basic cubic shape has remained unchanged, but it is dressed up, it is masked to suit the changing whim of the beholder, now with Romanesque, now with the Gothic, now with disguises suggestive of the antique. This crass divorce between basic and subordinate design (*Auseinanderklaffen von Grundform und Kleinform*), the latter being now conceived as mere decoration, becomes the fate of European art as a whole . . . [11]

11
Hans Sedlmayr, *Verlust der Mitte* (Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1948), 17; the citation was taken from the English translation *Art in Crisis: The Lost Centre* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1957), 12.

K. F. Schinkel,
Friedrichswerdersche
Kirche, interior
perspective, unrealized
version, 1824.
Sammlung
architektonischer
Entwürfe, (1820-1837)

Facing page:
K. F. Schinkel,
Friedrichswerdersche
Kirche, interior
perspective, realized
version, 1828.
Sammlung
architektonischer
Entwürfe, (1820-1837)

Sedlmayr's catastrophic reading is proved wrong by a careful analysis of Schinkel's design process. In the Friedrichswerdersche Kirche there is no divergence of *Grundform* and *Kleinform*. Schinkel operated in a classical way, separating space and decoration, yet this does not imply any separation of *basic* and *subordinate* design.

Schinkel's design approach is definitely not Gothic/organic, but it is also definitely not eclectic: rather, it is simply classical. And for the consistently classical Schinkel of the 1820s there was clearly a hierarchy separating what is basic and what is subordinate, but this did not mean there was no relation between the two. In fact, the distinct repertoires employed in the different versions of the church corresponded to the different spatial organizations. Schinkel was extremely precise. The classical and Gothic solutions presented in the *Sammlung* were developed in two entirely different architectural hypotheses. The classical project is for a single-nave, elongated church, somehow recalling a stretched version of Pellegrino Tibaldi's San Fedele in Milan. The space is comprised of a sequence of four domed spatial modules that ends in the higher space of the apse. The interior has a precisely ceremonial tone, defined through the sequence of cells that culminates in the space around the altar inundated with light. The sequence is clearly designed to frame the experience of the person entering the building: the church appears as a series of steps (four of the same kind and a final different one). Classical architecture operates – quite physically – on the basis of perception and experience, modulating movement and creating a controlled theatre of gestures. The intentions of the classical project become more perspicuous when considering the alterations that occurred when the building became Gothic. Without the large portions of wall provided by the massive pillars defining the four cells of the classical design, the Gothic interior was left without pauses to articulate the sequence of the nave's spaces. And given the fact that Gothic architecture does not consider the wall as a possible resource for architecture, the kind of spatial articulation apparent in the classical project became impossible. The elongated geometry of the church and the impossibility of framing the sequence through a series of progressions and pauses forced the spatial configuration of the Gothic church to become much simpler and more direct. The movement inside became much quicker, making the space simpler and at the same time sharper.

Schinkel was extremely clear about the different options provided by the Gothic and classical repertoires:

The Gothic disdains ostentation: everything in it comes directly from the Idea, and thus has the character of necessity, earnestness, dignity and elevation. The decoration of the Gothic serves a free-acting Idea, [while] the decoration of Antiquity serves a notion of experience.[12]

Given the heavy limitations of the Gothic in terms of framing experience, Schinkel simply decided not to try to achieve the impossible. Confronted with the fact that Plan A was not possible, he very reasonably went ahead with Plan B. All of the architectural decisions that followed were incredibly consistent with this approach. For instance, in the Gothic version the geometry of the pavement was no longer framed by the large ribbons disposed perpendicularly to the nave that were supposed to slow and articulate the progression toward the altar in the classical project, but instead ran quickly straight to the choir.

Also, the Gothic church could not relate to the square through a sequence of spaces, so the mediating space of the porch was reduced to the thin, flat surface of the façade, which appeared slightly exposed on the square, thereby discovering the combination of box and screen in quite a Venturian manner (with the screen simultaneously hiding and showing the box behind it, as in Venturi's Football Hall of Fame). In its extreme simplicity and its specific placement in the city, the box was the true architectural theme of the church. The idea of the brick box – a storage space for churchgoers – was stronger than the Gothic style.

In the Friedrichswerdersche Kirche, there is nothing Gothic in the organization of the perimeter wall, for its pillars do not emerge: it is just a plain brick wall with pilasters in low relief and no expression of the structural skeleton (more than any other Gothic building, the Friedrichswerdersche Kirche resembles the basilica in Trier, particularly in the sketch Schinkel made in 1816; Staatliche Muzeen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. no. SM 18.40 recto). The rigidity of the walls seems to be sufficient to sustain the building without any spectacular constructive solution. The importance of the wall is underlined by the flatness of the windows (which carefully avoid creating any sense of volume), by the wall's neat horizontal cut and by the presence of the small, simpering, perforated horizontal cornice capping off the volume. The horizontality of this "Gothic" church is actually amazing. The building concludes against the sky with a flat, sharp line. There is no roof to be seen. The horizontal cornice even incorporates a whimsical series of small obelisks on top of each pilaster. In the true spirit of the Gothic, these obelisks are just a bad joke – a self-destructive

12
Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Briefe, Tagebücher, Gedanken* (Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 1922), 197; cited in H. J. Kunst, "Bemerkungen zu Schinkels Entwürfen für die Friedrich Werdersche Kirche in Berlin", *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 19 (1974): 245; translation by the author.

13
Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Reisen nach Italien,* ed. G. Riemann (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1979), 121; cited in Haus, "K. F. Schinkels einstellung zur Gotik", 222; translation by the author.

14
This is an Italian expression meaning "design is labour". The expression has been used by Carlo Aymonino on several occasions and derives from the title of a collection of poems by Cesare Pavese. Pavese's (almost untranslatable) title is *Lavorare stanca* (a bad English version of this would read something like "working is tiring").

commentary on the structural irrelevance of the pilasters and on the self-satisfied repression of any verticality.

The ornament in the Friedrichswerdersche Kirche is perfectly deprived of any vitality. It is certainly impossible to say of it what a young and enthusiastic Schinkel wrote about the Milan cathedral: "the architect invested the same spirit even in the smallest details".[13]

A few years later, in 1828, Heinrich Hübsch published a famous pamphlet entitled "In welchem Stil sollen wir bauen?" (In Which Style Should We Build?). But this was really not Schinkel's problem. The Friedrichwerdersche Kirche is proof of Schinkel's complete indifference with regard to this issue. In fact, the church could be Gothic or classical precisely because there was no given style corresponding to its function, its values, its epoch. Whether it was Gothic or otherwise did not matter. Repertoires are simply equal on an ideological level. The classical and the Gothic are equally viable; they simply require a different formal development, given the different resources they make available. What matters is the grammar, and the grammar is *classical* only in the sense that it implies an ambition to be shared.

Tasks are assigned, functions are assigned, a budget is assigned – style can be assigned as well. And all of this can be regarded with complete indifference. Intelligence lies in how these assigned elements are combined; intelligence lies in respecting the labour that is part of the design process. "Progettare è fatica"[14] – and here is where indifference ends.