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Gottfried Semper

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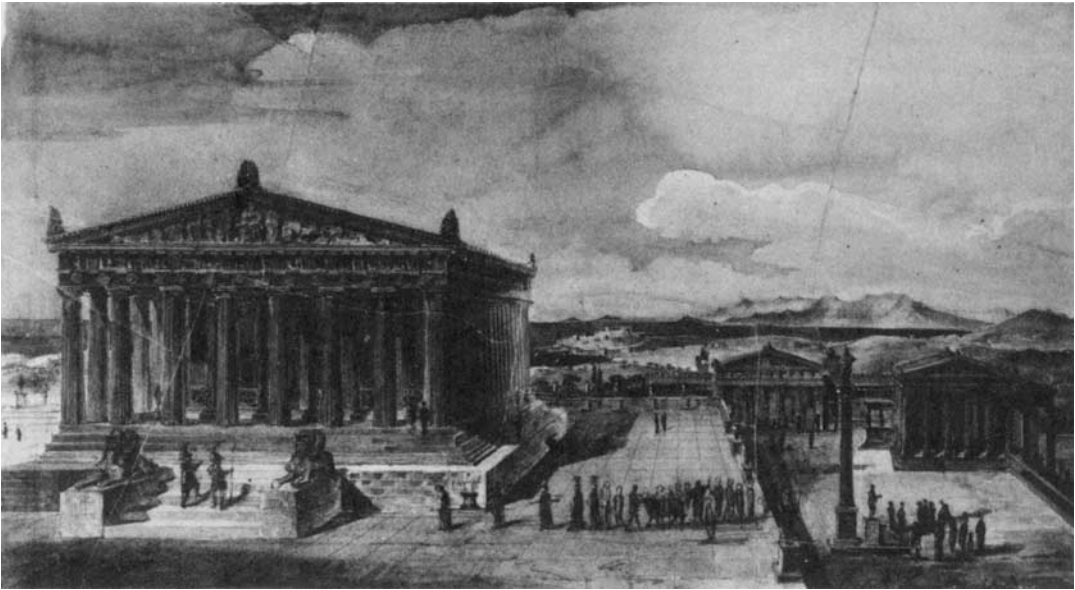
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Gottfried Semper, Parthenon and Propylaea, 1832. Courtesy Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur, ETH-Hönggerberg.

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THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURE AND OTHER WRITINGS

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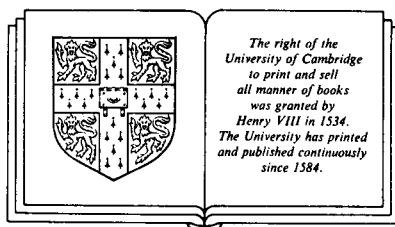
HARRY FRANCIS MALLGRAVE

and

WOLFGANG HERRMANN

Introduction by

HARRY FRANCIS MALLGRAVE



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Gottfried Semper: Architect and Historian

by Joseph Rykwert

Gottfried Semper has had a bad press from art historians in this century: The attack which Alois Riegl made on him in *Stilfragen* was echoed by Lionello Venturi, and those two influential writers made him (or at any rate his disciples) appear coarse, determinist, and materialist, one who, in spite of his disclaimers, thought that the work of the artist was entirely conditioned by materials and function.

The truth is much more interesting. Most of Riegl's readers seemed unaware that his attack was launched from within the *Austrian* (now the *Kunstgewerbe*) *Museum*, where he was curator of textiles – both building and the collection powerfully influenced by Semper's teaching and by his design. As the title of his book indicates, Riegl set out to question Semper's assumption in his masterpiece, *Der Stil*, that ways of workmanship, the use to which objects are put, and the materials of which they are made contribute to their style: For Riegl it was the ever-changing *Kunstwollen*, the "will-to-art" (sometimes also translated as "will-to-form"), an independent, unpredictable, but collective determination that fixed every changing style. This notion underlies much of the twentieth-century history of art.

It was also Riegl's belief, which he shared with some of his contemporaries, that it would be best for an art historian to have no decided personal preferences, no specific taste. Such a position would have been incomprehensible to a "humanist" like Jakob Burckhardt, as it would have been to his near-contemporary Gottfried Semper, who saw himself only incidentally as a historian and theorist, since he was one of the most prolific and successful architects in German-speaking lands – and committed to the notion that the Italian architecture of the early sixteenth century provided the clue to future developments. His theories were always developed in his work on the drawing and on the site, as well as in his reading and writing.

But that came later. His early views were formed in the disputes which raged at the end of the Napoleonic period. He was born in the

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free city of Hamburg on November 30, 1803, six months after the French occupation of nearby Hannover and another six before the declaration of the French hereditary Empire. His parents moved to Altona, then a town independent of Hamburg (in the province of Holstein, which belonged to the Danish kings, though German speaking) that he regarded as his home; by the end of the century (Schleswig-Holstein were annexed to Prussia in 1864/6) it had become a suburb. Semper's childhood was therefore lived through the whole panoply of the Napoleonic wars, in which Altona only just escaped destruction in 1814. His father, a successful wool merchant destined his third-born (of eight) for the law. Gottfried himself thought of artillery and fortifications as a career; with this in view he was sent to Göttingen, the Hanoverian university that ranked as one of the most "modern" and least "speculative" in Germany.

There, some of his most inspiring teachers proved to be not Karl Friedrich Gauss (arguably the greatest mathematician of his generation) or Bernhard Thibaut, but the aged historian Ludwig Heeren and the great classical scholar, Karl Otfried Müller. Müller it was whose *Geschichte der Griechischen Stämme* first advanced the view that the Dorians were a people not unlike his idealized conception of the Prussians: tough yet peaceful, near-monotheistic, quasi-vegetarian, democratic yet hierarchical. Müller took over from Friedrich von Schlegel the notion that among Indo-European nations the Greeks had produced an art, a science, but above all a federated *Vernunftstaat*, a republic of reason, which made them the obvious models for a future German federation. He was also one of the Göttingen professors, as were the lexicographers and fairy tale collectors, the Brothers Grimm, who resigned or left in protest at the repressive and antiliberal policy of King Ernest Augustus, Queen Victoria's great-uncle, to whom Hannover fell on her accession. It was probably in that post-Napoleonic and liberal Göttingen that Semper's own deep conviction of his national loyalty, his Germanness, was formed.

Müller's advocacy of a German-Greek affinity was a powerful development of something which the most influential German thinkers had long believed. From the time of Winckelmann, they looked to a somewhat idealized Greece as a source of ideas, art, political organization: The giants of German thought and literature – Kant, Goethe, Schiller, Lessing – and many others furthered the notion that Germany was preparing to fulfill a Hellenic destiny. This was later extended to the conviction that there was a particular affinity between the spirit, the "genius," of the Greek and German languages:

*Doch, wie der Frühling, wandelt der Genius
von Land zu Land. Und wir?*

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Hölderlin's tremulous question was answered more assertively by some of his contemporaries, and has continued to influence German philosophy.

We know little of Gottfried's political activities at the university; if he was involved with Göttingen Bruderschaften, as his later political ideas might lead one to believe, nothing would appear in an archive, since their proceedings were secret. In any case, he did not complete his studies but went to Munich in 1825, it is said, to study architecture with Friedrich von Gärtner at the Kunstakademie. He did not last there either, and by 1826 had moved to a job at Regensburg. A duel there (over his attentions to a lady?) ended in his flight outside German territories, to Paris. Such a *curriculum* is not entirely surprising in a contemporary of the "Young Germans."

By then he was no longer a student and found work in the office of the liberal Franz Gau, Cologne-born and German speaking. Cologne had been one of Napoleon's conquests, and a number of its citizens chose French nationality when the Congress of Vienna returned their city to the Prussian state in 1815. He made the same choice as Jacques-Ignace Hittorff, and the two architects became close friends. Both were protagonists in the quarrel over polychromy in ancient architecture and sculpture, which at that time churned the artistic and the archeological establishment. Gau is now remembered mostly as the architect of the large neo-Gothic church of St. Clotilde, and Hittorff for the Gare du Nord, but in the late twenties they and a number of other architects, notably Henri Labrouste, of the Bibliothèques Ste. Geneviève and Nationale, were involved in a campaign in favor of colored building and sculpture, which at the time also took on a political, a liberal, almost a populist tinge, much disapproved at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

At any rate, Semper spent two periods there; his first visit lasted a year, and he returned for another eighteen months in 1829 to 1830, during the July revolution with which he very much sympathized. Paris was then *the* center for young architects because of the enormous authority of the technical teaching of the Polytechnic and the prestige of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Inevitably, Semper found the "schematism" of French academic teaching repugnant: The "dryness" of the axial and grid plans lacked the lyrical and artistic proportions which he sought.

Soon after the July revolution, he started out on the obligatory Mediterranean tour. Much time was spent in Athens, about to become the capital of Otto of Bavaria, who had just become king of the Hellenes. On his return, while in Berlin, Semper showed his drawings to Karl-Friedrich Schinkel, then at the height of his career. When he came home to Altona, he designed and built a small private museum for a leading burgher, but within a matter of months both his old employer Gau and Schinkel were separately approached by the Saxon

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minister, Count von Lindenau, and by Count Vitzthum, the king's art adviser, who were looking for a new head for the architecture school in the Saxon capital, Dresden; Gau recommended Semper, who was appointed in May 1834.

His fascination with archeology and with Greece never made him a neo-Greek, or even a neoclassical, architect. His first publication, dedicated to his teacher Gau, defended the polychrome ideas of Hittorff (though Semper wanted the dominant color of Greek temples to be an improbable "Pompeian" pink) and associated his taste for such things with his not altogether conformist political predilections. It followed hard on his Dresden appointment and also contained a number of attacks on his Munich teachers, as well as seditious political ideas – it was published in Altona, on Danish territory, and therefore was outside the German censor's reach.

Although he had built little, he at once became a leading Dresden architect, and in the fourteen years he spent there, he transformed the center of the town. The Saxon Electors, some of whom has been notable intellectuals and patrons (Frederick the Wise had been a protector of Luther and Cranach), like all German princes, were ambitious for Royal Majesty, which they obtained when Augustus II (the Strong) wheedled his way onto the throne of Poland, at the price of becoming a Catholic, and had the Roman architect, Gaetano Chiaveri, build him a large court church (now the cathedral) on the banks of the Elbe – the church for which Bach presumably "catholicized" his Mass in B minor.

Augustus II and his son Augustus III were indefatigable patrons, collectors, and builders. Augustus the Strong's passion for porcelain led to the European discovery of china-clay as its base and the establishment of Dresden and Meissen as centers of porcelain manufacture; his passion for jewelry (particularly diamonds) made the *Green Vault* one of the showiest jewel-boxes in the world. The Dresden palace was extended into the Zwinger, one of the most remarkable rococo confectations in Europe – but that was in the previous century. At the beginning of the nineteenth, the academy had summoned Caspar David Friedrich as professor of landscape, and he was still there when Semper arrived. So were his close friends, Georg Friedrich Kersting and the Norwegian landscape painter, Johann Christian Dahl. Artists attracted to Dresden, who did not find employment in the academy, were usually welcome in the Meissen porcelain works. They came because Dresden was reputed a lively intellectual as well as artistic center – it fancied itself the "German Florence." The Royal-electoral physician, Carl Gustav Carus, was a remarkable amateur painter and well-known art critic. Until his death in 1826, Carl Maria von Weber had been the Hofkappelmeister, while Karl Friedrich von Rumohr, the witty eccentric gourmet, was, after Winckelmann (who had also worked in

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Dresden), the second founder of German art history. He was perhaps responsible for the view the German Nazarenes and the English Pre-Raphaelites accepted, that Raphael's work was the climax to the whole history of art and that everything since then had inevitably been something of an anticlimax.

Semper arrived as a courtier of the new and more liberal king (at first coregent: Saxony had two kings reigning simultaneously just then), Frederick Augustus II, whose reign started in the wake of the Dresden riots, which echoed the July revolution in Paris, when the king turned down Metternich's offer of Austrian help. He stayed there until 1849, when another Parisian revolution set off even more severe repercussions in Dresden – this time, Prussian help offered to the same king was accepted.

Young and inexperienced (but enthusiastic), he had not been the Dresdeners' first choice. Joseph Thürmer of Munich had been appointed in 1833 but died young, and Semper took his place at short notice. At the same time, the liberal ministry appointed the sculptors Ernst Rietschel (best known for his much later Goethe–Schiller monument in Weimar) and Ernst Hähnel (“my sculptor,” Semper was to call him), as well as the painter-critic-engraver Ludwig Richter. Dresden had in fact been an important center of the first Romantic movement, but all these new artists were opposed to the “stiff and wild” manner of the Friedrich–Dahl generation. Theirs was ampler, more fluid, and much more literary; it was the kind of historicist and narrative approach that Semper's conviction in the need for an eclectic but “characterful” enveloping (*Bekleidung*) for his buildings required.

He set about reorganizing the courses: Studio teaching was to concentrate on large, collective projects. His lectures on the history of architecture were written out, and he began to form the idea for an ambitious book. But practice made increasing demands on his time. His first public commission was for the decorations and fireworks in the various Dresden squares celebrating the older coregent Anthony's birthday in December 1835. He was also asked to provide a base for Rietschel's statue of Frederick Augustus I in the Zwinger.

This prompted Semper's musing about a great forum for the city: one with a new theater and involving the Zwinger and the eighteenth-century Catholic church, as well as the Royal Guard building, for which Schinkel had recently provided designs. But that had to wait. Meanwhile, the following year, he designed the Pompeian-style polychrome decorations for the collection of antiquities in the so-called Japanese Palace. By 1838 he had many important commissions: a maternity hospital and the synagogue on the edge of the old city, as well as his most important early work, the Royal Theater in front of the Zwinger, the first installment of his imagined forum. Although its two-

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tiered organization was a curiously sober provocation to the riotous Zwinger, it allowed Semper to develop the notion of a musical theater *all'antica* launched in the middle of the eighteenth century by Francesco Milizia and revamped by Pietro di San Giorgio in Rome, as well as by Semper's friend, Edmond Gilbert (who later designed the famous lunatic asylum in Charenton) in his Grand-prix scheme at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1822, which followed inevitably a model provided by Durand in his lectures to the Ecole Polytechnique.

In plan, Semper's theater had a hemicycle auditorium enclosed by three tiers of boxes and two galleries, seating about 1,800. The stage was almost a cube. Two unusually spacious staircases joined the two bodies. Stately porte-cochères on either side of the stage tower, one for the Royal family, the other for the paying public, opened onto grand foyers. For balls, stage space, foyers, and auditorium could work as a single space.

The two-story hemicycle of seventeen Coliseum-like arches faced the "forum." The middle three were framed to make a central entrance, while the main columnar orders of the hemicycle were continued as pilasters to articulate the rest of the building. Above them a high attic supported a pitched roof, apsed to the front, and masked by pediments over the side porticoes. This arrangement allowed Semper to articulate very explicitly the different working parts of the building – public promenades, auditorium, stairways, stage towers – while maintaining the rhythmic unity of the surface.

Sculptures by Rietschel and Hähnel decorated the inside and outside, which also had elaborate sgraffito decoration, a form much loved by Semper. The coffered ceiling, the small, shallow vaults over some of the boxes, were deliberately used for acoustic effect. The interior was painted by a group of French decorators and took three years to complete. The stucco-work, sculpture, and painting had to be organized rapidly and inevitably had an effect on the state of the arts in Dresden.

At the same time Semper was working on the Byzantino-Moorish synagogue. The plan was a simple cross-in-square with a shallow porch; the material was limestone, as in the theater. But money was short, and the stone dome had, to Semper's chagrin, to be replaced by a wooden one. However, he also used wood to replace the stone balustrades; that was a contrast between materials to which he was to have recourse again and again. While the theater was Bramantesque and antique, the synagogue was a mix of *Rundbogenstil*, or neo-Romanesque, (which had been advocated as the basic style of the future by the Baden architect Heinrich Hübsch) with Byzantine constructional forms and "Moorish" decoration. It was much praised at the time. Semper adopted the same style, minus the Moorish decoration, for his vast competition scheme for St. Nicholas Church in his native Hamburg of 1844, as well as for the

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“Venetian” project for the town hall there; however, the completed project by Sir George Gilbert Scott was in an inferior mechanical, prickly “decorated” (or middle Gothic) manner.

A minor but important building of the time was the Villa Rosa, just upstream of the town, on the Elbe, a summer resort for the banker Oppenheim, on gardens that descend to the river. The house, a square of smaller rooms around a top-lit central hall, opens in a two-story triple portico to the gardens. On either side of the portico, blank walls are broken by one window on each floor, both framed together to make one vertical element. The whole stands on a heavily rusticated base. The villa was already much damaged by 1870. For Oppenheim, too, he built his most important private house in Dresden, the Oppenheim Palais. It was commissioned in 1844 and took four years to build. Sited on an awkward triangle, it was again planned around an octagonal, top-lit stairway hall. The opulent four-story building was articulated into two “apparent” stories: a lower, heavily rusticated one, with arched windows over basement lunettes, and an upper story whose windows were framed in Ionic columnar aedicules. The forms are an enriched version of motifs taken from the Florentine Palazzi Pitti and Pandolfini. The windows of the attic story open in the frieze of a heavy cornice. The façade is framed by projections with heavy quoins and rusticated columns.

About the middle of 1842 Richard Wagner arrived in Dresden from Paris, via Weimar. *Rienzi*, which was his first opera performed in the new and fresh court theater, was a great success. The *Flying Dutchman* was more problematic. However, he became the *Hofkappelmeister* and stayed in Dresden. Semper at first suspected his medievalism, but Wagner succeeded in persuading him that the medieval “Germanness” of his epic was closer to the *Rundbogenstil* of Semper’s vision than to anything neo-Gothic. Many years later, in 1856, the Swiss poet Gottfried Keller wrote of Wagner’s work: “You will find that a powerful poesy, fundamentally German [*Urdeutsch*], yet purified by an antique tragic spirit, breathes through it. . . .”

In 1843 Semper’s aged friend von Rumohr died and Semper designed a monument for him. The same year Dresden was spared by a cholera epidemic; the citizens attributed their good fortune to the qualities of their water, and this was commemorated by a fountain column, which Semper curiously designed in the Gothic style, as if to show that he also could do it.

In 1844 the coffin of Karl Maria von Weber, who was considered the father of German opera, was brought back from London to Dresden, for solemn reburial. Wagner made the funeral oration; Semper inevitably designed the memorial.

His last and largest Dresden building was the new Art Gallery. Over

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the years he had done a number of projects for public buildings connecting the palace, the theater, and the river, all on the theme of the forum. In the event, the relatively modest proposal chosen was not at all the one he favored; it was to close off the open Zwinger court by providing a fourth side to the square, also creating an appropriate monumental and solemn foil to the theater. The forum he had imagined ten years earlier was taking shape.

The Saxon Electors had already put together a superlative collection of Western European painting in the eighteenth century; to Semper the idea of making the collection public seemed essential, politically as well as culturally. But there were other collections also: the jewels already mentioned, the Oriental porcelain, the artifacts from the southwest Pacific, the Indian things. This heterogeneity stimulated Semper to conceive an idea he was to develop in London, which presented the museum as a unifying experience, a kind of cloverleaf route for the visitor, who would become aware of the different ways of making things (why Semper thought there were four ways is discussed elsewhere). The fourfold route would lead the viewer repeatedly to the archetypical exhibit at the center, to the building as a unifying, total work of art to which all the crafts had contributed.

Again, Semper's sources were Florentine, Roman, and Venetian: Bramante, Sansovino chiefly, though in fact, the art gallery is a much more solemn and accomplished version of the design he had adopted for the Oppenheim *palais*. Again, Rietschel and Hähnel provided the sculptures. And again, certain themes recur. The building is a long rectangle, the long sides facing north toward the theater and south into the Zwinger, which is therefore screened by a deep colonnade. The central element is of two superimposed triumphal arches; on the ground floor it provides a colonnaded throughway between the Zwinger and the "forum," and carries a tall octagon on the upper floor, which was intended to echo the tribune of the Florentine Uffizzi gallery that was the shrine for the Medici showpieces. The dome which crowns it was finished by other hands, since Semper had not made his mind up about it when history intervened.

The intervention was brutal: echoes of the Paris revolt of 1848 were soon felt in Saxony. Frederick Augustus II, though he had been a liberal monarch, had steadily moved to a repressive style and ministry. Shocked by Parisian events, he had appointed new ministers and proposed far-reaching reforms. But the demand for the adoption by Saxony of the federal German constitution promulgated by the liberal "national" Parliament in Frankfurt (against the wishes of the Prussian monarchy) was too peremptory, and a rebellion broke out. Semper, who considered himself a liberal and even a republican, threw his lot in with the revolutionaries.

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Some have said that it was Semper's advice on the building of barricades which prolonged resistance to the Prussians – that they could not be taken by assault. At any rate, both Semper and Richard Wagner were deeply implicated and both fled on May 9, 1849; on May 14 a warrant was out for Semper's arrest. In spite of his wife's entreaties, various interventions by friends, and Semper's own conciliatory moves, the king remained hostile and he was banned from German territories for many years.

This heroic gesture was to prove nearly disastrous. Semper went first to Paris, where his old master Gau was an influential figure, and the painters he had employed in Dresden were now friends. They did help with minor commissions and temporary rooms. In the meantime he had received moral support and anonymous donations, but nothing worthy or remunerative was forthcoming. He planned a departure to the United States; it was halted by an offer of employment in London, but that too turned out to be fraught with disappointment. At first, his London stay brought out the inevitable refugee paranoia; after a number of false starts, during the exciting days of the Crystal Palace construction, he did finally find an intellectual home in the group around Sir Henry Cole, a group deeply committed to a new kind of artistic education and to the devising of natural ornamental forms, as well as of the everyday things that had always interested Semper. When Cole, who had always much disliked British architects, procured his appointment as professor of Metalwork in the School of Design, Semper was able to work with his Paris friends again in the reerected Crystal Palace at Sydenham, but no substantial architectural commission seemed forthcoming.

His Dresden friend Richard Wagner, who had moved to Switzerland when Semper had gone to England, acted the part of providence when he engineered the offer of a professorship of Architecture at the new Polytechnic in Zurich – and with it a position of authority in German-speaking Switzerland. After some hesitation (Prince Albert had finally realized Semper's importance and commissioned him to design a vast museum-cum-concert hall, which, however, was turned down again), Semper accepted. And although Zurich turned out to be very constricting and dull after the bright lights of London, it remained Semper's home for the rest of his life.

The building of the Polytechnic was crucial. It really does seem that the Zurich city fathers did not take Semper's status seriously enough at first: They declared an open competition. He was assured that the commission would be his in spite of that, yet at the end of 1857 he had virtually resigned and was negotiating to return to London (at that time he seems to have projected a palace in Whitehall, on the Horse Guards parade-grounds). In the event, the nineteen Polytechnic projects received were all rejected; by the end of 1858 Semper was appointed the

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architect, and the building went up between 1858 and 1864. This palatial rectangle overlooking the city, organized around two square fountain courtyards, opened the second part of his career, as the leading architect in German-speaking lands.

Again, the whole surface of the building was rusticated, with prominent quoins, and divided into two “orders” of two stories each. The central feature was of three bays, slightly taller than the rest of the building. At ground level, Doric rusticated columns framed arched doors into the entrance hall. At top floor level, three high-arched windows opened between detached, coupled Corinthian columns onto a ceremonial chamber, the *Aula Magna*, so that the top floor, with its view over the city and the lake, was also the *piano nobile*; while the impressively pilastered and indirectly lit entrance hall continued past two monumental staircases as a spacious plaster-cast gallery which opened in turn on either side to one of the fountain courts.

Without having the benefit of his Dresden sculptors or his Parisian painters, Semper nevertheless managed to get remarkably accomplished statues to separate or crown the columns and the sgraffito decorations of the sides of the building. For the city of Zurich he also designed the Sternwarte, an apartment block containing an observatory and a small science museum. His impressive project for a new railway station was not built, nor was the project for the Stock Exchange.

The society in which he mixed inevitably included his old friends the Wagners – and therefore many other musicians – and writers like Conrad Ferdinand Mayer and Gottfried Keller, as well as some city fathers, such as Johann Jakob Sulzer, later mayor of Winterthur. This consoled him for the rather low level of teaching required by his students. Against a competing rival he was commissioned in 1865, as the Polytechnic was finishing, to design the town hall of the small, prosperous town of Winterthur some fifteen miles east of Zurich; here, a temple-like central portico on a heavily rusticated base, with two-story, lightly pilastered wings, is acceded to by a stately and symmetrical stairway, which leads into a hall within the portico, where another symmetrically inverse stairway takes the visitor up to the galleries of a top-lit council chamber.

This was the time during which *Der Stil* finally took shape: Wagner took Nietzsche to see Semper in his engraving workshop in 1862, which must have been when the final illustrations were being prepared for the book. Wagner’s company had stimulated Semper to devote much time to theater design. Even before he left London he designed an antique-type theater for the Crystal Palace at Sydenham and began working on the completion drawings for the rebuilding of the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels. In 1858 Semper was invited to compete for a new opera house for the Brazilian Emperor Dom Pedro II in Rio de Janeiro.

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His project is basically an expansion of the Dresden Court theater; it has extended framing colonnades but, more important, a festive, slightly “Oriental” exedra or central pavilion. Inevitably the scheme was discussed with Wagner. And while Winterthur was building, the famously mad King of Bavaria, Ludwig II, on his accession in 1864, decided to honor Wagner with a festival theater: first by a temporary structure in the Munich version of the Crystal Palace, the Glaspalast, then by a permanent building on the Isar. While working on the temporary Munich theater, Semper arrived at a compromise between his own hemicycle ideal and Wagner’s demand for a proscenium stage, first by cutting off the sides of the enclosed hemicycle to fit them into a rectangle, and later arriving at his definitive, wedge-shape auditorium – which meant that its back wall was not the “antique” hemicycle, but a shallow arc.

Wagner, in any case, wanted the spectators of his operas facing the same way, separated, alienated from the ideality of the stage by a deep proscenium, with a nearly invisible orchestra housed within its depth. The Munich theater was to have a shallow curved front and a central exedra corresponding to a royal box, as in the Rio de Janeiro project. The main theater was flanked by long promenade wings on either side extending the two-story ordering of the building. Throughout 1865–6 and into 1867 Semper prepared several variants of such plans, but in spite of all the drawings and models, the king changed his mind. He would build no theater, nor would he pay Semper for all the work done. Germany again seemed closed.

Soon after this disastrous episode, the greatest series of his commissions was in the offing in the summer of 1868. As one of the most distinguished German architects and theorists, he was invited to judge a number of projects for the new art and science museums adjoining the imperial palaces in Vienna, the other side of the “Ring.” His report in the winter of 1869 led to an interview with the emperor in Budapest, to another in Vienna, and finally to a personal commission from him. Although he was wary, Semper saw this as his opportunity to realize the most majestic “forum” of his career. The scheme grew to include two vast shallow exedrae connecting the old Hofburg, through triumphal arches over the Ringstrasse onto the vast exedraed piazza, one of the exedrae backing a theater very much on the lines of the Munich Festspielhaus.

Of this scheme, one of the exedrae, the two museums, and the theater (the *Burgtheater*) were built. In sheer bulk, but also in the refinement and opulence of the detail, they are Semper’s greatest achievement, even if he shared the work with a younger Viennese colleague, Karl von Hasenauer.

There was another triumph in his old age. His great Dresden theater

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burnt out at the end of September 1869, and almost as soon as the fire stilled, there were demands for Semper's return. The new king of Saxony, John, was a man of great culture and the author of the standard German translation of Dante. Semper had been amnestied, and when he was finally commissioned in 1871, he decided to situate the new and larger theater well to the back of the old one, which had been designed with a close dependence on the Zwinger, a dependence that his own art gallery made pointless. It was therefore to be larger in scale and further in perspective, to open the forum wider, and to give an unobstructed view of the museum façade. The Dresden theater and the Viennese buildings were still under construction when he died in 1879 in Rome.

The fulsome *Kakanian* dress, the *Bekleidung* of Semper's later buildings in submissive statuary and sgraffito, with ample, but indifferent paintings crowding the walls, was as indigestible to the young Riegl, who spent his working life in the Oesterreichisches Museum and the University (both by Heinrich von Ferstel, both influenced by Semper) as was Semper's view of the history of art. Art, Riegl taught, is not a simple by-product of the craft process, as Semper might have been understood to have taught; style is not an indifferent matter in the clothing of the structure. On the contrary, art is in the first place representation and arises from the conflict between the inner desire for a form and the externality of circumstance. This reaction is so important for art as well as for its history in the twentieth century that an unexpected tribute to Semper's architecture is worth quoting. Speaking of his admiration for the clarity of Greek architecture, the Swiss sculptor-architect Max Bill confessed that his first encounter with "Greek architecture"

. . . was the Town Hall of his native city, Winterthur, built by Gottfried Semper. I learned to value this building both as neo-Classic architecture and as an example of a completely balanced exterior and interior: columns, staircases and masonry were all in harmony. . . ."

From someone whose theoretical assumptions were so very different, one for whom the concept of *Bekleidung* had lost all meaning, it is both a perceptive and a generous tribute.

Acknowledgments

With the exception of the two portions from *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts*, all works have been translated in their entirety. We have used the German first editions as the source texts, except in the few instances where other manuscripts have been noted. The translation of the prospectus to *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts* was based on MS.205 (ETH-Hönggerberg). We consulted and learned from the unpublished English draft of *Science, Industry, and Art* (MS.89, ETH-Hönggerberg), as well as John Root and Fritz Wagner's translation of *On Architectural Styles*, prepared for the *Inland Architect and News Record* in 1889–90. The decision to translate two extended excerpts of his major work, *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts*, was made with the greatest reluctance. While it is always to be preferred that works of theory be left intact to be properly studied, we felt an exception was necessary in this case. The size of this incomplete work (1,100 pages) and the complex, often cumbersome nature of Semper's style – we believe – will continue to discourage a complete translation of this work, and the presentation of Semper's theory without his important prolegomenon and thesis on “dressing” (*Bekleidung*) would bypass the philosophers' stone of his theory.

For me, this project concludes several years of work on Semper that began with my doctoral studies at the University of Pennsylvania. My first debt is to G. Holmes Perkins and Stanford Anderson who guided me through this initial stage. My preparation of several of Semper's London lectures for *Res: Journal of Anthropology and Aesthetics* was suggested by Joseph Rykwert, whose encouragement also prompted me to begin this particular work. Kurt W. Forster's sagacity and assistance heartened my efforts at a crucial point in the work's development. I am indebted to Wolfgang Herrmann for our conversations and working relationship during the project. Albert Fehsenfeld, Gunther Dittmar, and J. Duncan Berry assisted me by reviewing parts of the typescript. I would also like to thank Alan Gold, Therese Schweizer at the ETH-Hönggerberg, Rowan Watson at the Victoria and Albert Museum Library, The British Architectural Library, and the staff at the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, especially Anne-Mieke Halbrook, Loisann Dowd, Laurie Hope, Don Williamson, and

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