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Il viaggio dell'architetto

a cura di
Fernanda De Maio e Christian Toson

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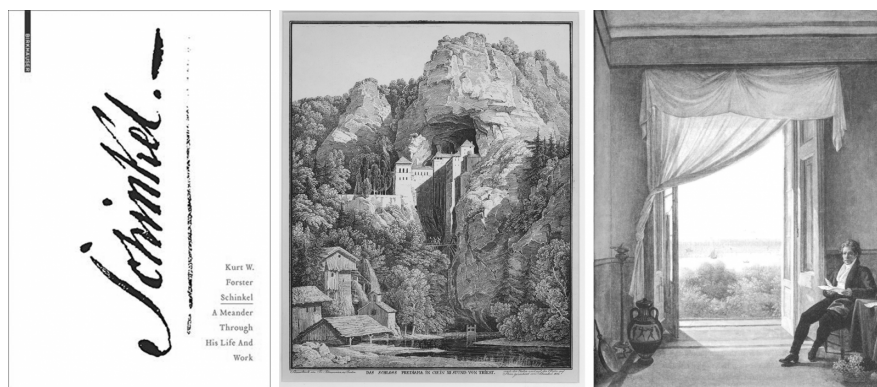
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Schinkel in viaggio

Presentazione, con brani scelti,
di Schinkel, *A Meander through his Life
and Work* di Kurt W. Forster (Birkhäuser
2018)

a cura di Christian Toson



Copertina del libro edito da Birkhäuser; Stampa di Schinkel del castello di Predjama, 1816 (British Museum); Schinkel a Napoli, dipinto di Franz Ludwig Catel, 1824 (Berlin, Alte Nationalgalerie).

I brani che qui di seguito presentiamo sono estratti dal volume *Schinkel. A Meander through his Life and Work*, di Kurt W. Forster, pubblicato nel 2018 dalla casa editrice Birkhäuser di Basilea. Il lettore che aprirà questo libro per la prima volta si troverà di fronte a una monografia atipica, che lo spaeserà nel caso si aspettasse una sistematica disamina architettonica dell'opera del grande Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Il testo di Forster non segue una struttura immediatamente leggibile ma, come suggerisce il titolo, si muove in un dedalo meandriforme che ripercorre la storia di Schinkel attraverso un percorso disegnato da anse e deviazioni, interrogando non i rettilinei ma i punti di snodo e la cartografia labirintica della sua vita e della sua opera, toccando e collegando elementi della biografia dell'architetto al suo ambiente culturale e alla storia politica e intellettuale dell'Europa della prima metà del XIX secolo.

Il lavoro di Forster spinge a chiedersi quale sia il modo con cui si può rendere quell'*unicum* che è la vita e il lavoro di un architetto e del contesto in cui si sviluppa, nel difficile equilibrio fra sintassi narrativa e la difficoltosa distinzione di elementi oggettivi di una storia intellettuale che si presenta oggettivamente come inseparabile dal dato biografico. Forster, muovendosi attraverso la copiosa mole di studi su Schinkel e la cultura europea di inizio XIX secolo, propone un difficile montaggio, un percorso tortuoso, in certe parti oscuro e abissale, che riflette su una vita, ma che finisce con il toccare la vita dello studioso autore della ricostruzione e, inevitabilmente, quella del lettore. Da questo ci mette in guardia lo stesso autore del libro:

Frau Kuehn taught me to taste strawberries with coarsely ground pepper – allegedly an East Prussian practice to spike the precious sweetness of summer; readers will take what I'm saying with a pinch of salt, and perhaps a sidelong glance beyond matters of architecture. (Forster 2018, 10)

Appassionata ed evocativa, la prosa di Forster mira a ricreare, anche attraverso il linguaggio della descrizione, quei contesti in cui Schinkel era immerso, e ci invita a “dare uno sguardo oltre le questioni dell'architettura”, senza cadere nel feticismo delle opere e dei disegni canonizzati, senza indulgere nel misticismo che si nasconde dietro l'eccesso di chiarezza e di dettaglio, della perfezione del metodo e della completezza, che, cercando di presentare il lavoro sotto una luce troppo nitida, potrebbe distorcerne l'impronta complessiva.

Readers of this book are invited to stroll through the life of the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781–1841) as if wandering across a landscape in which his works come into view, sometimes at a distance, sometime so near one is left with just a fleeting or partial impression. At other moments, the way to his buildings leads through thick and thin, recalling the pursuits and controversies of their day and the issues that linger for future generations. (Forster 2018, 16)

L'invito che Forster rivolge al lettore è dunque quello di “vagare” nel paesaggio della vita di Schinkel, aprendo e scoprendo nuovi orizzonti. Così il libro, pagina dopo pagina, si apre svelando e mostrando sempre nuovi dettagli, come un fiume, soffermandosi in un'ansa, correndo veloce in un

altro punto, nella prosodia di una scrittura che cerca in qualche modo di seguire il flusso, ora placido ora turbolento, della vita dell'architetto. Una caratteristica del libro è la possibilità di cominciare e interrompere la lettura in due punti qualsiasi del volume, percorrendone solo un tratto, perdendo il filo ma non il senso della narrazione.

Si tratta dunque di una scrittura che ci guida in un viaggio meandriforme nel mondo di Schinkel, che può essere compiuto in parte o per intero, dove la sovrabbondanza di informazioni è calibrata dal maggiore e minore dettaglio, dalla minore e dalla ampiezza del racconto, dove il tempo della Storia "romba, clange, gremisce e ticchetta" a frequenze e tempi diversi:

Above the profound rumble of geological aeons, Schinkel's time was audible in its military violence over territorial contest, in the clangor of the iron industry, and in the roar of upheavals that played out on the implacable scale of clock and meter, the latter only just adopted by the French Convention Nationale in 1792. (Forster 2018, 32)

Entro questa struttura, il tema del viaggio ha un ruolo di primo piano. Per questo motivo, in questo numero di Engramma dedicato all' "architetto in viaggio", con il consenso dell'autore e per gentile concessione dell'editore, proponiamo due brani tratti dal libro di Forster che descrivono due viaggi di Schinkel – un dittico che è anche una lezione importante su come si possa raccontare, narrativamente e insieme metodologicamente, il viaggio dell'architetto.

Ghiaccio, Rocce, Alberi

Il primo brano è tratto dalla prima parte del libro, dedicata ai primi anni della vita adulta di Schinkel, ed è legato alla sua formazione: un viaggio giovanile nei grandi paesaggi delle Alpi, riscoperti dalle nuove scienze naturali.

I termini usati da Forster sono tutti incentrati sulla sensorialità dell'esperienza: "taste", "slip", "probe", "peer", "touch", "swim", "linger", "squeeze", sono le azioni che il giovane Schinkel compie, per conoscere il mondo. Sono i gesti squisitamente corporali, e quindi essenzialmente estetici, che permettono, regredendo allo stato primigenio di una nuova infanzia, di ricostruire un mondo che la vita sedentaria non avrebbe

permesso di vedere. Si tratta di un viaggio che si intreccia con altre vite, come quella di Alexander von Humboldt sulle orme di una geologia che si fa scienza storica, alla ricerca di quegli anelli di collegamento che si trovano sotto la superficie, nascosti sotto la crosta dell'evidenza.

L'esperienza contemplativa, immersiva e osservativa stimolata da quella particolare *Stimmung* permette di intuire processi lenti quali quelli dei licheni che spezzano le rocce, dei fiumi che scavano le montagne, o dei ghiacciai che muovono a valle portando alla luce quelle forze invisibili della trasformazione materiale e del continuo mutamento che sono, paradossalmente, l'unica vera costante della storia.

È così che il viaggio fisico diventa anche viaggio a ritroso nel tempo – un'avventura intellettuale nella quale i compagni di viaggio sono le formazioni geologiche e i massi erratici, che venuti da lontano, sono testimoni della dimensione profonda del tempo. È con le pietre – pietre della geografia e pietre della storia – che Schinkel e i suoi contemporanei si misureranno in un cemento fortemente fisico, come il taglio: sono le lunghe procedure di trasporto e la lenta lucidatura della *Granitschale*, che ricorda operazioni analoghe avvenute nella Russia zarista degli stessi anni. È nel misurarsi con la massa di queste rocce, con la materialità del tempo della natura, che lo sguardo dell'architetto si plasma e il clamore sordo dell'industria si mescola con il rombo delle acque che affonda e sembra perdersi nelle profondità geologiche. Ne consegue una considerazione che suona del tutto nuova, in quanto se le forze del presente sono quelle che hanno sempre agito per formare la terra così come la vediamo, l'architettura va riposizionata in questo mondo mutante:

Schinkel probed the earth and immersed himself in landscapes and their lore in order to *re-position* architecture within the vastness of phenomena below ground rather than only among those of celestial infinity that had lent it grandeur in the past. (Forster 2018, 24)

E così il viaggio di un architetto è anche un viaggio alla ricerca di quei nodi eterni che collegano i fenomeni della vita e quelli della natura inanimata, che, partendo dall'esperienza del naturalista, si trasferisce al sentire architettura.

Ice, Rocks, and Trees (pp. 70-76)

In the Alps, rocks, water, and trees all exist in the “raw,” in their original state. Trees tenaciously ascend the slopes, assemble into dense woods, and occasionally conquer heights like solitary climbers do. Alpine landscapes held a special fascination for travelers during Schinkel’s lifetime, well beyond the expected encounter with lore and sublimity. Heights induce a sense of vertigo that shake not only the body, but also the mind. The sight of impassible gorges and glaciers and the experience of rough weather caused travelers to shiver, but left lasting impressions, perhaps even an intimation of the earth’s turmoil as they momentarily rehearsed it. To Schinkel’s way of thinking, rock, water, and trees did not remain what they are, but turned witness for the forces that created them.

As stand-ins, boulders often betray their erratic arrival from elsewhere, water injects swift change where nothing else moves, and trees affirm a living presence and reveal the accidents of growth. Much can only be inferred from observation: the pressure of prevailing winds is recognized in trunks that bend, the weight of snow in branches that break, and the heat of summer in parched bark. The age of rocks is impossible to fathom, the quickening effect of water immediate, and the life of trees uncertain. Some grow to be ancient, others may be struck down any moment. As they change throughout the seasons and ages, they trade characteristics or blend together: lichens and roots break up inert substances, as water contours the land, rising in sheets of fog or encrusting the ground with ice.

On his first journey to Italy in 1803–04, Schinkel marveled at the majestic course of the Danube and admired the great trees growing along the river, “trees of such perfection as the cattle grazing in their shade.”[1] The human footprint is faint in such primordial landscapes, and our interest in them the stronger for it. Schinkel’s contemporary, the painter Caspar David Friedrich, suffused his landscape paintings with a sense of distance and penumbral parting, though it was the Elbe rather than the Danube near Dresden that he depicted in *Das Große Gehege* (ca. 1832, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden), where the riverbed mirrors the sky in its stagnant puddles, and copses of trees border the flood plain. Schinkel, too, was following the Elbe and traveling on toward Bohemia when he saw the rocky mass of the “Königstein loom frighteningly over the waters of

the river and with its neighbor on the other side, the Lilienstein, making an altogether astounding impression.”[2]

Friedrich's *Große Gehege* and his *Böhmische Landschaft mit dem Milleschauer* (1808), which Schinkel anticipated in a gouache of his own,[3] belong to a new kind of image: views that are as remarkable for their scope as for their *Stimmung*. Weather and time cause seesawing impressions that alternate between “frightening, grand, and pleasing,”[4] constantly cross-hatching the traveler’s experience of the land. Dimmed down to the waning hour when the sunlight is spent and cold air wafts out of the gorges, these crepuscular moments are not just passing episodes, but allude to and follow the cadence of aeons, intimating an immensely slow extinction of life. Blanketed by vaporous exhalations, the earth fades into a state of exhaustion, as spent as the volcanic cones on the horizon and as broken as the rocks scattered about. In such surroundings, Schinkel felt tossed by contradictory experiences as he contemplated trees and cattle with an eye for their beauty, until an earthy brisket and the leek green of vegetables on his dinner plate may have restored the traveler for the next day’s journey. Schinkel was in fact fastidious about food, and inclined to recognize in local dishes a connection to the lands he crossed and to the life of people inhabiting them. At a high point along his passage from Switzerland to Italy in 1824, on the shore of Lake Geneva in Vevey, he enumerated every single plate of one of those *al fresco* lunches that pamper visitors with all that the fertile land offers on a summer day, jotting down every course from soup to nuts, as he tasted fish, meat, fowl, and vegetables in the shade of walnut trees.[5]

The sweep of alpine valleys with their forested slopes, cliffs, and quiet lakes calls for panoramic representation. At higher elevations, the draftsman may have held his breath as he recorded desolate masses of rock and ice, foaming waterfalls, and gravelly pits.[6] Icy at first, the waters spill into ravines, carving their course through rock, sculpting the surface of the land, and seeping into the ground. Always the quickening feature in the landscape, watercourses entwine with roadways, cut narrows and gorges, and meander across plains. Schinkel rarely took as much care describing the landscapes he traversed for the first time as he did after visiting the grottoes and mines in Carinthia (Austria) and Slovenia. He was mesmerized by the crystalline water of a famous periodic lake near

Zirknitz (Cerknica) which acts as a siphon for the melt waters of the surrounding mountains. The attraction he felt was far stronger than curiosity in a hydro-mechanical singularity, although it had been recorded by the geographer Strabo in antiquity and discussed in arcane publications during the eighteenth century. The water of this lake rises and falls in unpredictable ways, hinting at a vast subterranean system of caverns and channels that flush the region, releasing water in cascades and capturing it in underground reservoirs. Irresistibly drawn to the element, Schinkel was not content peering down to the bottom of the shallow lake from a boat, but took the plunge and swam for a good while in its silvery waters.[7]

If ever a landscape could be thought to have its own life, its own pulse and profile, but also its secrets, the mountain ranges near Trieste offered the occasion to slip into hidden folds, explore hollows and caverns, and marvel at the infinite action of water. It occasioned Schinkel to linger, to indulge his curiosity, and to puzzle out why things that appear in one guise on the surface assume quite another underground. Always intrigued by geological features, the karstic landscape captivated his imagination and initiated him into the inner life of the earth. This nascent sense for what was called "geognosis," a scientific understanding of the earth, differed from the studious interest in the stone samples and minerals that preceding generations had gathered and classified.[8] In a letter to his godfather dated June 1803, while he was still in Vienna, Schinkel remarked on the Hof-Naturalienkabinett, where every kind of animal and plant was accompanied by tokens of its native habitat and appeared to wander through the rooms in a strange and touching procession.[9] Now, a few weeks later, he could not get enough of the grottoes, squeezing through slippery tunnels and crossing rickety bridges while torches cast a ghostly flicker over stalagmites and underground lakes. The word "*entsetzlich*" began appearing in his diary as if a stain bled through its pages.[10] He also wondered about a connection between the insidious character of the region and the marauding gangs that habitually set upon travelers. Yet another connection took a hold of his mind: the suspicion that a deep affinity connects buildings with their sites. At Pola, where jagged cliffs and ancient ruins complement one another, he noted that the rows of seats in the Roman amphitheater "have in part been cut into the very rock on which [the building] stands." [11] Here and elsewhere, buildings not only shared the materials of which they were made with the sites they occupied, but

their solids corresponded to hollows in the ground. In Istria, he traveled over coastal roads that squeeze alongside cliffs and rocky shores. The ancient ruins in these parts, while numerous, he found to be in a state of “*entsetzlich*” neglect and “*schrecklich*” abuse, as when he chanced upon an outhouse that had been installed in the ruins of a temple once sacred to Diana. In every other respect, however, he saw the buildings *form* a part of the landscape and share in the making of its particular character.

Water always held a great fascination for Schinkel. His birthplace bordered the Ruppiner See and his Berlin apartment in the Bauakademie gave onto the Spree Canal. Fluvial conditions define many of his projects, whether they required undergrounding a watercourse, as did the Neue Wache (New Guardhouse) (1816—18), or driving several thousand trunks of oak into the ground in order to stabilize the waterlogged soil of the Spree Island, as did the Altes Museum (1822—30)[12]. In a town so memorably sited as Bern on a sandstone spur, Schinkel peered down from the vertiginous height of its Gothic cathedral, to see “the green waters [of the Aare River] spilling in their entirety, some 400 feet wide, over a low barrage, making a splendid rushing sound like the sea.”[13] For whom Bern can evoke the sea by the sound of its river and the height of its site, the earth will not keep many secrets or impede flights of the imagination. On the same trip, but now making his way back to Naples in late September 1824, Schinkel took lodgings in Terracina, overlooking the sea, “with [the sound] of its breakers lulling us to sleep.”[14] In the morning, when he was mistakenly awakened before dawn, he continued writing his diary and, still waiting for daybreak, “wished to occupy himself with the roaring sound of the sea.”[15]

[...]

Schinkel’s way of figuring connections among stone, water, and trees always brings up a question: what caused them to fall into place? Was it a casual encounter or a contrived arrangement? On his wanderings through his native Brandenburg and across the Alps into Italy, over the Apennines and along the coast of Sicily, Schinkel singled out places where stone, water, and trees enter into a memorable relationship. His sketches outline them within the panoramic sweep of a bay, crowd them together around a well, or push them back to a cliff. However varied their presence, these

elements always rally together in a quest for contiguity. How did they come to be where they are? Which came first? Does the building seek a foothold, or does the setting proffer the possibility of extending itself into a structure? It is easy to recognize that the rock must have arrived at time immemorial, while the tree may be dying and the water drying up. These questions don't find easy answers, but they inspire speculation about beginnings and origins. Schinkel did not cut the arguments back to bare theory. Even late in life, possessed of staggering experience, he still marveled at the carpentry of alpine huts, and about what gave them, to his way of thinking, the look of survivors, descendants of an ancient notion of structure in places very distant from their origins. Conversely, it is this distance (in time) that endows them with a quality that has vanished in their surroundings.[16]

Schinkel a Napoli

Il secondo estratto racconta il viaggio di Schinkel mediante l'analisi di una singola immagine, il dipinto *Schinkel nella sua stanza a Napoli* realizzato da Franz Ludwig Catel nel 1824, commissionato dallo stesso Schinkel. Il maestro si presenta posato e *compos sui*, ormai affermato nella sua carriera. La figura dell'uomo maturo si presenta come il risultato del suo viaggio, temporale e spirituale.

È originale, nella lettura di Forster, che per l'architetto tedesco il luogo della memoria personale sia trasferito a Napoli, luogo di viaggi passati e cari, in una stanza e in un paesaggio che si fanno memoriale della sua vita. La fissazione del luogo del viaggio si tramuta nella intima celebrazione della propria storia personale, in un gioco che non è più improntato alla fervida ricerca dell'esperienza, ma piuttosto alla raccolta dei frutti del tempo, e all'inserimento della propria storia nella storia.

Le azioni associate a Schinkel in questo capitolo sono quelle della contemplazione e della rimembranza: "taking time", "transporting himself", "brief pause", "cerebral pleasure of views", "embraced", "contemplation", "immersed", "bathed", "basking", "longing", "gaze", "glance", "imprinted". Una contemplazione che riprende l'osservazione giovanile dei grandi paesaggi, ma che si rivolge retrospettivamente, con lo stesso sguardo contemplativo, nei confronti della propria vita,

rappresentata come esito del processo purificatorio del viaggio e per questo ridotta a pochi elementi essenziali.

Siamo, ancora una volta, invitati a guardare oltre la figura del soggetto-architetto, a soffermarci sui paesaggi geologici dei Campi Flegrei sullo sfondo, sui vasi di terracotta e i reperti archeologici a lato, sui cesti di frutta fresca ai piedi dell'architetto, in una sceneggiatura dove gli oggetti fanno coro, dove le visioni si mescolano, e il soggetto non si presenta in modo concentrato ma diffuso.

Ancora una volta la scrittura di Forster è una lezione di metodo su come combinare la lettura attenta degli scritti, dei disegni, dei contesti, per raccontare il viaggio di un architetto, e di come il viaggio stesso possa essere una chiave per l'osservazione del tempo attraverso lo spazio, e dello spazio attraverso il tempo.

E quello che si dice per Schinkel potrebbe benissimo essere applicato anche al modo di studiare e di scrivere di Kurt Forster:

Typically, Schinkel *observed* things rather than dutifully registering them, and he rarely failed to put the near-at-hand in a relationship with things that are remote or appear altogether unrelated. (Forster 2018, 25)

Schinkel in Naples (pp. 304-311)

In the early morning of 23 October 1824, Schinkel went to the studio of an old friend and longtime resident of Rome, the painter Franz Ludwig Catel, and sat for a portrait. They had agreed beforehand that Catel would record the precise locale where Schinkel stayed almost twenty years before, in a room with a splendid view of the Bay of Naples and the Isle of Capri. Actually, Catel painted at least two views of the room that year, one of them oriented toward the harbor and Mount Vesuvius with a dog as its sole occupant (Cleveland Museum of Art), the other in preparation for the arrival of his friend to claim his rightful place (Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin). The painting glued on paper to canvas is small, and the sitter correspondingly tiny, eccentrically seated at a table, busy handling correspondence and momentarily looking up as if awaiting a word from the painter. A man in possession of his powers, the 43-year-old architect is taking time away from his round of appointments for a matter that is

exclusively his own. He had asked Catel for a portrait he wished to present to his wife Susanne as a Christmas present. This may have been the reason why he wanted the painter to place him in the exact room he had occupied in Naples when he was half his present age, purposefully transporting himself to a time of youthful, even adventurous forays into the land he came to love above all others and was now enjoying once more. From the outset, then, the portrait not only embeds the man in a memorable locale, but it also conflates his first visit to Italy with his latest that is still ongoing.

On this second trip to Italy, via the Rhine Valley and the French-speaking region of Switzerland, and then across the Alps over the Simplon Pass, Schinkel invited the young Gustav Friedrich Waagen to accompany and assist him in dealing with matters of art and collecting.[17]

On the way back to Berlin, he arranged a stopover in Weimar in order to pay a visit to Goethe on 1 December. Already during the previous summer, Goethe had been made aware of the plans for a museum: Christian Daniel Rauch noted in his diary on 24 June that the poet “expressed his wholehearted approval of Schinkel’s elevations and plans for the great art museum to be erected in Berlin.”[18] Catel painted Schinkel during a brief pause in this mission, and surrounded him with the trappings of an emissary and prospector by placing three ancient objects in the umbrous corner to the left of the window where a panathenaic vase, a bronze receptacle, and an Augustan candelabrum had been set aside, soon to be transferred from the collection of Jakob Ludwig Salomon Bartholdy, Prussian Consul-General in Rome, to the Berlin Museum.[19] Bartholdy had enjoyed an adventurous career, ascending from his Jewish origins and studies in Halle to the Prussian ministry via a stint in the Austrian army. He was passionately interested in art, had journeyed to Greece, and extended generous support to German painters in Rome.[20] The antique objects in his collection may have been unearthed in Pompeii and elsewhere, but they were not actually in Naples and certainly not in Schinkel’s room. They figured among items whose acquisition he successfully negotiated for Berlin. In contrast to the antiquities forcibly extracted from gravesites and volcanic burial, the basket laden with grapes on the other side of the room stands for the natural riches the Italian soil yields voluntarily.

A tall window separates the ancient wares from the fresh grapes, framing a view across the bay toward Capri, one of the views the painter never tired of depicting for the many visitors whose longing for a world of timeless enchantment they so perfectly satisfied. Schinkel greatly enjoyed fruits and their fragrance, no less than the more cerebral pleasure of views and the appreciation of antiques.[21] A letter from Naples to his cousin Valentin Rose in Stettin that dates from Schinkel's first trip to Naples in 1804 praises the beauties of the land and people with a rapturous description of his surroundings: from his window, he embraced "a view over the sea on whose coastline Vesuvius rises with its firey vorago to the left ... and the bold rocks of the Isle of Capri emerging on the right." [22] Travelers devoted themselves to the contemplation of the bay, but there was also a veritable "sea of artifice, wherein one is immersed," as Schinkel put it in a letter to his friend Rauch back in Berlin, explaining that "you must try to imagine how I feel repeatedly being struck by entirely new revelations about art, revelations that come from objects which have fulfilled their purpose to perfection. Yesterday," he went on to explain, speaking about Bartholdy's collection, "I saw bronzes and vases: I had no idea of the riches of this collection." [23] So much of Schinkel's knowledge had been sifted and applied in Berlin — culled from books and digested in learned discussions, but all at a distance from the objects themselves — that a fresh encounter with antiquities of every kind made him feel "immersed," swept away, even swallowed by *things*, objects that conserved and documented what he carried with him as knowledge.

In these pieces of ancient art Schinkel not only recognized the evidence of an eclipsed culture; he also experienced pangs of regret for its demise, the remoteness of its forlorn fragments, and the inevitability of their ruin. These feelings firmed up his resolve to *study* and understand them as only an historian is able to do. While anyone could experience a vague sense of loss or wonder, it required intellectual distance from those remote times to see these objects as something other than stray finds. It fell to the objects themselves to bridge the gap, to come to hand as tokens of a lost world. Removed from their origin and sometimes puzzling in their isolation, ancient bronzes and vases seemed to yield a meaning beyond their fate to those who were able to appreciate the distance that separates them from their past.

In Naples, still immersed in the sea of artifacts and bathed by a benign climate, Schinkel occupied, at his express wish, a room with a view everyone would envy, yet he is seated at his table, busy with papers and not basking in the view he loved, having chosen his hotel for the very purpose of enjoying the famous prospect of the bay.[24] Destined for his wife Susanne, the painting juxtaposes a view of Capri in the distance — an image of longing beyond reach — with a portrait of her husband, putting him ‘on-location,’ making a show of both the man and the setting rather than an image of the architect pondering a beloved subject. This contrast instantly deflects the viewer’s gaze, tracking from Schinkel’s disarmingly expectant glance and shooting out over the bay and across a deep cleavage in the island’s crestline into pure light.[25]

Catel’s painting is at once *more* and *other* than a likeness of Schinkel: his posture and focused expression define his personality, however diminutive his presence, while the objects in the room weave a dense web of connections between the present and the past, between way stations along his travels and his home in Berlin. Schinkel ‘entered’ into a scene Catel had prepared in Naples, in which his friend would take his assigned place before seven in the morning on 23 October. The tall window, draped with muslin and partly shielded by treetops, is, in Schinkel’s words, “exactly as it was when I lived there.”[26] With excavated objects and fresh grapes at his feet, he seems graciously to accept homage from the country whose soil abounds with riches. Such *embarras de richesse* had overcome him on his visit to the ruins of Tiberius’s villa on Capri a little more than a month earlier, on 20 September; he remarked in his diary how freely he indulged in “grapes, figs, bread, wine, and cheese” after staggering through the ruins.[27] The spontaneous gratification of the palate and the thirst for knowledge (of antiquity) make for Italy’s wistful attraction and for experiences that suspend the familiar distinction between the enjoyment of nature and the beauty of artifacts. Catel’s picture prods viewers to make such a *salto*, to see the clutter of objects as authentic testimony of life in antiquity, the curious geology of some of the islands as shards of the volcanoes that still exhale fumes and spout fire, and the Bay of Naples as the arena for the grandest spectacles of nature and history.

In Rome, where Catel was laboring on this modest picture, Schinkel had taken time out between hurried meetings with merchants and artists,

before paying cordial visits to diplomats and friends, interrupted by an occasional cup of hot chocolate in one of the *piazze* that lured him away with spectacles of their own. Between drafting reports, jotting down observations in his journal, and fixing an occasional flash of intuition that pierced the darkness of remote times, he regularly visited the semi-abandoned sites of antiquity, proceeding for example

Into the garden of the Villa Negroni, where one can see the remains of a long section of the wall King Servius Tullius built after Rome's foundation, a remarkable monument. At the highest point, a colossal antique statue of Roma had been erected in a circular grove of cypresses. [Suddenly] the sky began to cloud over, and we along with others believed that we heard the repeated thundering of a distant earthquake.[28]

The body of the earth is rumbling under their feet, the sky darkening, remains of ancient Rome momentarily, almost threateningly, springing to life. Catel's formula for his portrait of Schinkel seems to have imprinted itself on another Roman work, Jacques-Louis Dupré's self-portrait of 1824-25. Dupré, who had studied with David, principally resided in Rome and was, when Catel portrayed Schinkel, in the midst of publishing his illustrated volumes *Voyage à Athènes et à Constantinople*,[29] which he embellished with lithographs. Though Dupré's picture is more bluntly conceived, the image not only correlates directly with Catel's, it virtually adopts the same frame of geological and historical references, being composed as a view of the Acropolis in Athens from the canopied balcony of the French consul's house, the foreground studded with salvaged antiquities.

Note

[1] *Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien, Tagebücher, Briefe, Zeichnungen, Aquarelle*, ed. Gottfried Riemann (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1979), 18. At many moments along his way to Bohemia and on into Italy, Schinkel meditated on the geology of the landscape, and rarely did he fail to register changes in climate and vegetation, as when he observed in 1803 how "the climate turns milder, the vegetation more exuberant the farther we advance into the valley [of the Danube]; at the foot of a mountain one reaches the monastery of Mariaschein whose towers and chapels hide behind tall linden trees and orchards in bloom," 20. It is not at all outlandish to appreciate the shape of cattle: Friedrich Schiller was taken with the expansive horns of a specimen of the extinct aurochs (conserved in Jena at

Haeckel's Phylogentisches Museum), and lamented the difficulty he experienced in drawing their complex curvature; see Friedrich Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke*, 10 vols. (Berlin: Aufbau, 2005), vol. VIII, 664.

[2] Riemann, *Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, 19.

[3] Cf. Helmut Börsch-Supan, *Schinkel Lebenswerk, Bild-Erfindungen*, 2007, 21B, no. 87.

[4] In the Steiermark, Schinkel recorded such a flip-flopping experience: "Das enge Murtal, von den entsezlich hohen Gebirgen ...umschlossen, gibt abwechselnd schauerliche, große und angenehme Situationen," Riemann, *Schinkel. Reisen nach Italien*, 25.

[5] Riemann, *Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, 152.

[6] Börsch-Supan, *Schinkel Lebenswerk, Bild-Erfindungen*, 168.

[7] Riemann, *Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, 37. Schinkel spent days climbing into the grottoes of Predjarna and exploring the mines of Idrija, where mercury was harvested; see in this volume the vignette "Predjama, On the Rocks and in the Bowels of the Earth."

[8] With "life of the earth," allude to Carl Gustav Carus's definition of the "new landscape painting," such as Friedrich's, whose true nature, he explained, was that of an "Erdlebenbild"; see *Romantische Kunstlehre. Poesie und Poetik des Blicks in der deutschen Romantik*, ed. , Friedmar Apel, 4 vols. (Frankfurt am Main Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1 992): "Ein anderes Wort also wäre zu suchen und einzuführen, und ich schlage hierzu vor: *Erdlebenbild*," vol. IV, 257f.

[9] Riemann, *Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, 24.

[10] Riemann, *Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, 38–41 and passim. The word "entsezlich" captures the frightening, horrific, and even terrifying aspect of things from which one spontaneously recoils.

[11] Riemann, *Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, 40.

[12] Elgin von Gaisberg, "Schinkels Museum. Planung und Ausführung am Beispiel del Pfahlrostgründung," Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Geschichte und Poesie: Das studienbuch, ed. Hein-Th Schulze Altcapenberg and Rolf H. Johanssen, published in conjunction with the 2012–13 exhibition presented at the Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and the Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung Munich (Berlin: Kupferstichkabinett SMB and Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2012), 211–223.

[13] Börsch-Supan, *Schinkel, Lebenswerk, Bild-Erfindungen*, 149.

[14] Riemann, *Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, 181, 202.

[15] Riemann, *Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, 131.

[16] See the letter from Schinkel to his brother-in-law, Bad Gastein, 15 July 1836, in which he praises vernacular buildings as equivalent to ancient temples, in *Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Briefe, Tagebücher, Gedanken*, ed. Hans Mackowsky (Berlin: Propyläen, 1922), 183f.

[17] Gustav Friedrich Waagen, "Karl Friedrich Schinkel als Mensch und als Künstler," in *Berliner Kalender das Schalt-Jahr 1844* (Berlin: Preußische Kalender Deputation, 1844), quoted after *Die erste Biografie Schinkels im Berliner Kalender von 1844*, ed. Werner Gabler, reprint ed. (Düsseldorf: Werner, 1980), 372.

[18] Paul Ortwin Rave, *Schinkel Lebenswerk, Berlin I: Bauten für die Kunst, Kirchen, Denkmalpflege*, 1941, rev. ed., 7.

[19] Adolf Greilenhagen, "Nachklänge griechischer Vasenfunde im Klassizismus (1790— 1840)," in *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 5 (1963), 84—105.

[20] See Jakob Ludwig Salomon Bartholdy, *Bruchstücke näheren Kenntnis des heutigen Griechenlands, gesammelt auf einer Reise im Jahre 1803—04* (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1805).

[21] On 3 August 1326, Schinkel sent a thank you note to his collaborator Ludwig Persius for a gift of fragrant fruit: "Das vortreffliche Geschenk der beiden herrlichen Früchte haben mir und meiner Familie eine große Freude gemacht, denn unser ganzes Haus duftet davon aufs Angenehmste," quoted from Ludwig Persius (1603—1845). *Bauberichte, Briefe und architektonische Gutachten — eine kommentierte Quellensammlung*, ed. Andreas Meinecke (Munich and Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2007), 92. Persius must have recognized Schinkel's faible for fruit, and thus offered him, when he was in Dresden in 1829, a pineapple (102), and in December 1835, some "most aromatic grapes" (126).

[22] Schinkel's letter of 3 May 1804 precisely locates his room in Naples with its splendid views over the Bay of Naples toward the Amalfi coast and out to Capri. He also claims that Naples by far eclipses Paris and London as a place of urban "tumult" and excitement, *Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Briefe, Tagebücher, Gedanken*, ed. Hans Mackowsky (Berlin: Propyläen, 1922), 56f.

[23] *Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien, Tagebücher, Briefe, Zeichnungen, Aquarelle*, ed. Gottfried Riemann (Berlin: mitten & Loening, 1979), 184.

[24] He recorded in his diary and described to his wife the fact that the room was the one he occupied in Naples, *Riemann, Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, 268. Rooms with open windows were a favorite of nineteenth-century painters, especially of artists in their studios at home and abroad; see Sabine Rewald, *Rooms with a View: The Open Windows in the 19th Century* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), but note inaccuracies, for example, Schinkel's coat is not black and the curtains are not green, 98.

[25] Images of the Bay of Naples, Mount Vesuvius, and Capri were among the most popular, and as such were reproduced on wallpaper from the Alsatian firm Zuber & Co. for the corridor of Charlottenhof; see Meinecke, Persius, 90f.

[26] Riemann, *Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, 227.

[27] Riemann, *Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, 197.

[28] Riemann, *Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, 228.

[29] *Voyage à Athènes et à Constantinople, ou collection de portraits, de vues et de costumes grecs et ottomans, peints sur les lieux, d'après nature* (Paris: Doney-Dupre, 1825).

English abstract

In this review, we present two excerpts from Kurt W. Forster, *Schinkel, A Meander through his Life and Work*, Birkhauser, Basel 2018. The excerpts focus on Schinkel's travels as a methodological example of how the topic of the architect's voyage can be narrated and described. A text focuses on Schinkel's travels during the years of formation, and the wide variety of his interests about nature and geology. The other deals with the mature architect representing himself in a voyage of memories.

keywords / Karl F. Schinkel; Kurt W. Forster; Travels; Geology; Naples; Archaeology.