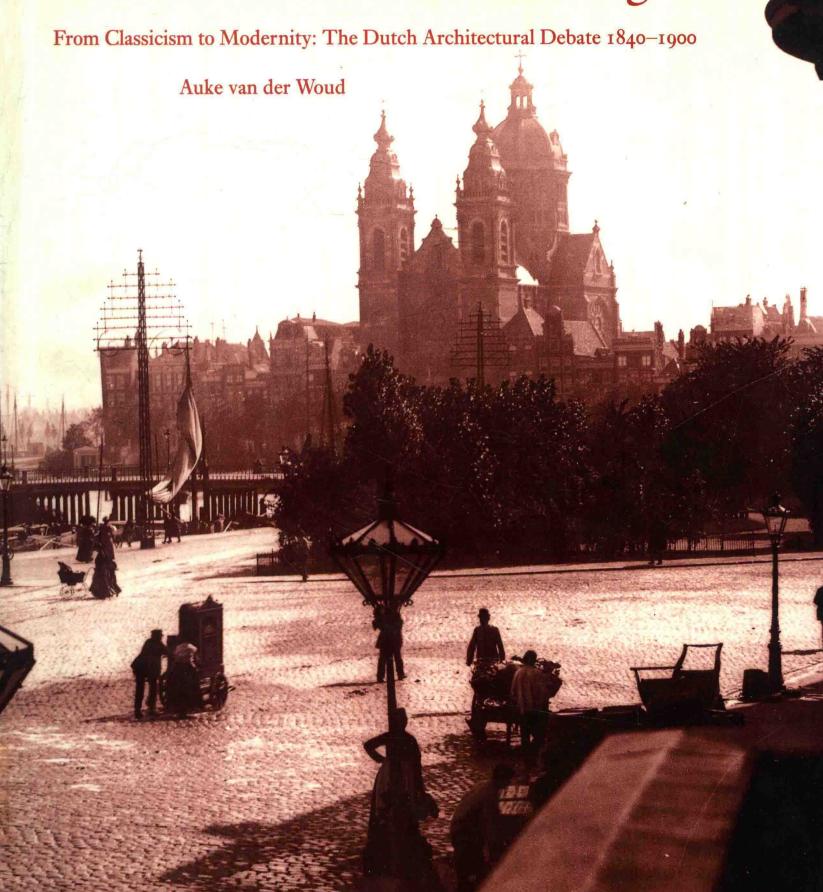
The Art of Building



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From Classicism to Modernity: The Dutch Architectural Debate 1840–1900 © Auke van der Woud, 2001

English translation © Yvette Blankvoort and Bard Janssen, 2001

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The publisher gratefully acknowledges the support of The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), The Hague and the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, Amsterdam.

Published by

Ashgate Publishing Limited

Ashgate Publishing Company

Gower House

131 Main Street

Croft Road

Burlington VT 05401-5600 USA

Aldershot

Hants GU11 3HR

England

Ashgate website: http://www.ashgate.com

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Woud, Auke van der.

The Art of Building: From Classicism to Modernity:

The Dutch Architectural Debate 1840-1900.

(Reinterpreting Classicism series)

- 1. Architecture, Modern—19th century—Netherlands.
- 2. Architecture, Modern-19th century. 3. Architecture-

Philosophy-History-19th century. 4. Classicism in architecture-Netherlands.

I. Title.

720.9'492'09034

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Woud, Auke van der.

[First English-language edition (revised) of Waarheid en karakter.

Het debat over de bouwkunst 1840-1900, Rotterdam, 1997]

The art of building: from classicism to modernity: the Dutch architectural debate 1840-1900/Auke van der Woud [translated from the Dutch].

p. cm. (Reinterpreting Classicism)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7546-0254-0

1. Architecture-Netherlands-19th century. I. Title. II. Series.

NA1147.W613

2001

720'.9492'09034—dc21

2001022526

ISBN 0 7546 0254 0

This book is printed on acid free paper

Typeset in Ehrhardt by Bournemouth Colour Press, Parkstone and printed in Great Britain by Biddles Ltd, Guildford.

FRONTISPIECE Tram depot for the Amsterdam Omnibus Company, Amsterdam (by Adolf L. van Gendt, 1893), with stables for eighty-one horses and living quarters for the foreman. The art of building is a sophisticated game with complex semantics, even in a relatively simple building such as this, which incorporates the design skills of the architect and the operating efficiency of his practice, the skills of the building workers and the intentions of the client, as well as public taste, the expression of local pride, a representation of the social order, and references to 'higher' values such as nationhood, made visible by interpretations of Dutch Renaissance architecture. Photo: Jacob Olie, 1893.



Acknowledgements

When I was invited to join the staff of the Architectural History Group at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, in 1000 Dr Erik de Jong and his students had created an intellectual atmosphere where the study of nineteenthcentury Dutch architecture could thrive and flourish. Without the context of this group this book could not have been written. My main debt of gratitude is to its members, including the growing number of PhD students and postdoctoral members. Our many meetings and discussions are the common substratum in which our ideas and books grow; this book being a specimen. I owe a special thanks to Hetty Berens for permitting me to use important information on Willem Nicolaas Rose that enabled me to see his very special position in Dutch architectural history. My book rests upon a mass of material collected mainly from the Dutch architectural journals of the nineteenth century. I am greatly indebted to Imke van Hellemondt for assisting me with her excellent research.

This book was first published in Dutch in 1997. For their strong support of the idea of preparing an English edition I thank Professor Ed Taverne, Rijksuniversiteit of Groningen, and Professor Luc Verpoest, Catholic University of Leuven. For their generous and decisive subsidies I sincerely thank The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, The Hague, and the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, Amsterdam. I am grateful to Yvette Blankvoort and Bard Janssen, who translated my original text, which is full of ideas and concepts that belonged to an earlier intellectual and aesthetical world. Such ideas are not easily explained to the average presentday Dutch reader. However, to translate them into contemporary English quite often seemed almost impossible. I am very grateful to Sue Phillpott, who with a marvellous understanding and an astonishing intuition copy-edited the translation, elegantly building the linguistic and mental bridge connecting times past with times present, and English minds with continental ones. In the preparation of the illustrations I owe a debt to Sophie Ploeg, who suggested fascinating material to me.

At Ashgate, I thank Pamela Edwardes and Caroline Cornish for their support, precision and great care, and Alan Bartram for the design. But above all I wish to express my gratitude to Dr Caroline van Eck, Ashgate's Series Editor and a colleague at the Vrije Universiteit for many years. I thank her for her valuable editoral work, and, perhaps more important, for so many inspiring and clarifying discussions on architectural theory, for sharing with me her ideas and her vast knowledge of the problem of 'style' in architecture – the essential theme of this book.

The Art of Building: From Classicism to Modernity:
The Dutch Architectural Debate 1840–1900
is published in the series
Reinterpreting Classicism: Culture, Reaction and Appropriation
Edited by Caroline van Eck, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

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Building is a practice: the art of building is the subject of theory. For a long time the fundamental characteristics of European architecture had been provided by the tradition of classicism, focusing upon the five classical orders and their derivations. The eighteenth century felt the need to reinvestigate the fundamentals; to define them, by means of philosophical reasoning, as they 'really were'. In their quest for the essentials of the art of building, the architects of the nineteenth century found that philosophical reasoning was insufficient, and turned their attention to the empirical, comparative study of historic buildings. In handbooks of architectural history the conspicuous absorption of their results into nineteenth-century architecture is usually referred to as historicism; a term suggesting that history was the architect's predominant concern. In following this art-historical convention, we fail fully to take account of the fact that the problems for which architects were seeking solutions did not, in fact, belong to the past, but to their own age and to the future. The architecture of the past was, for them, not primarily a respected silent witness of a bygone era. Far more importantly, it was a representation of beauty – sometimes an unusual, strange beauty, sometimes an ideal beauty. The architecture of the past, it was generally thought, would provide study material for inquiries into the aesthetic 'laws' that, objective and universal like the laws of nature, would give the nineteenth century a splendid contemporary architecture. This last consideration had more implications than we tend to realize today. Of all the arts, the art of building was the most public, and it was its pre-eminent task - and that of the architect - to edify society by means of its beauty. Architectural theory, showing the way to realize this lofty purpose, was therefore of the utmost importance.

This book takes the importance of architectural theory as its starting point. From this viewpoint, it is not buildings and architectural design that are its subject matter, but ideas, theories, ideals, opinions, debates – precisely because ideas precede the material form. However, general cultural or political concepts do not result directly in specific architectural designs. There has to be an intermediate conceptual stage that in the following chapters I call the

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'concept of form', a concept that relates cultural and political values to specific characteristics of architectural design. Classicism, for example, is such a concept of form, as are the neo-Gothic and the neo-Renaissance, and eclecticism. But the art-historical tradition of referring to these as 'styles' has not been adhered to in this book, because to use this term would be confusing in a book about debates on architectural theory. For about a hundred years 'style' did have a very wide cultural meaning, until in the late nineteenth century this was reduced by art critics to a set of common formal elements. Another reason for introducing the term 'concept of form' is to break with our habit of associating style with visual characteristics only. This has more than a theoretical significance. If one concentrates exclusively on the visual form of classicism, eclecticism or neo-Gothic architecture and on the debates on these subjects, one sees only differences and contrasts (the 'battle of the styles'). But focusing on the cultural content of these concepts of form reveals connections between them, and sometimes even unity. Many ideas Fig. 1 A competition design for a small village town hall by Abraham Nicolaas Godefroy (1849). Godefroy's maxim was: 'The highest to which we can aspire is for our buildings to clearly convey their function to any intelligent human being.' The adjudicators praised the design for its 'character', which expressed seriousness, dignity and strength.

which were traditionally associated with classicism lived on when classicism itself no longer played a role of any importance as a design concept; and they lived on in its arch-rival, neo-Gothic architecture, in much of the neo-Renaissance (1860–1900), and even in the radical innovatory movement of the 1890s that wanted to free itself from architectural history in order to make a fresh start. All these, to differing degrees, were concerned with one cultural ideal: architecture with objective, universal aesthetic principles, nationally understood and supported – what was called *style*. It was this same ideal that in 1917 induced Theo van Doesburg, Piet Mondrian and J. J. P. Oud to found the Dutch art group known as De Stijl.

The outsider here was eclecticism, which considered the quest for a uniform style irrelevant. It is not improbable that the reason why art historians have shown so little interest in eclecticism is precisely because of this indifference to the notion of style, and it may well be, too, that this is why they have often marginalized the subject when writing about the nineteenth century. In this book eclecticism occupies a more important position, because it sought the future of architecture not so much in aesthetic 'laws' but in the specific requirements of contemporary society. It not only accepted the cultural multiformity of the nineteenth century, but emphasized it and made it more explicit by means of its multiform view of concepts of form. Thus it laid the foundation for twentieth-century architecture, which would display far more individualism and multiformity as well as very much less interest in history.

Indeed, by the end of the nineteenth century eclecticism was the only concept whose principles were still robustly in evidence and which enjoyed the wide support of the architectural community - and its clients. Only a few architects, who through their wealthy clients were protected against the economics of the building market, continued to maintain that the aesthetic rules of the past applied to the future, and would result in one national style. By then, the majority of architects knew better. The architectural practice of the rapidly changing nineteenth century had long since ceased to conform with aesthetic rules as expounded in books on the subject, or with aesthetic principles from the past. Also, it was evident that the quest for a generally accepted style representing the unity of the entire nation had turned out to be illusory. Back in 1840, multiformity, individualism and subjective and emotional aesthetic judgements were still very rare, the collective ideal of unity suppressing such personal forms of expression. By 1900, however, they had become ubiquitous characteristics of both social and architectural reality. Architectural theory, considered the common objective guide for architectural design for more than half a century, had become obsolete. Architecture was still thriving, but architectural design was no longer determined by words, but more than ever by images. Images became responsible for explaining and justifying design – a tautology that was to be even more forcibly felt with the breakthrough brought about by photography after 1900.

The ideas behind this book make it necessary to devote much attention to the activities of Hendrik Petrus Berlage (1856–1934) and his presumed spiritual father, 'the Dutch Viollet-le-Duc', Pierre J. H. Cuypers (1827–1921). This is not only because they generated many controversies in their time and were vociferous in these controversies, but also because for many decades there has been a consensus in Dutch historiography that regards them as the father and grandfather of modern Dutch architecture. It is my contention that this consensus should be reconsidered. And the strongest arguments against it are the ideas of Cuypers and Berlage themselves, as well as the context in which these two reputations were formulated, defended and contested around 1895. Cuypers' reputation was at that time the product of twenty-five years of continuous propaganda; Berlage was a man who lived in the past as far as his ideals on architecture and 'style' were concerned, and an opportunist who impressed his audience with his references to a variety of philosophers and his many - if somewhat stray - statements on modernity.*

This book considers the idea that the development of such an extensive phenomenon as architecture, with all its social ramifications, cannot be attributed to the achievements of just one or two individuals. On the contrary, it sees the activities of individual architects as not so much the cause but the expression of movements that have continuously changed the face of architecture; movements inspired by collective ideas and ideals concerning artistic representation, popular taste and fashion, the dynamics of building technology, the availability of building materials, new functional requirements and the demands of economic expansion. In fact, the situation is even more complex. It is not just a question of architects expressing those movements: there is also an essential interaction - individual architects can also change fashion, building technology and representational conventions, and in so doing have an effect on the building market.

^{*} The Dutch edition of this book elaborates on some points more than seemed desirable for the English edition. This applies especially to the critical assessment of the way in which Cuypers' and Berlage's reputations were constructed around 1900.

What applies in this context to the relation between the individual and the architectural scene as a whole applies just as much to the relation between the national and the international. Gothic architecture was an international cultural concept that manifested itself in buildings that, in their visual characteristics, usually referred to both the international and the regional context. This also applied to nineteenth-century architecture. Dutch architects, while part of an international community, related to a 'national' public taste, a national building technology and building market, and national political and religious ideas. In a sense this was also true of London, Berlin, Paris and Vienna, and to some extent of Chicago and New York. Dutch architects read the same journals as their foreign colleagues: the writings of Karl Bötticher, Gottfried Semper, Viollet-le-Duc and Ruskin, and the illustrations of the buildings of Henry Hobson Richardson and the many reports of the miraculous American efficiency, made concrete certain ideas that were generally felt - consciously or unconsciously - in the Netherlands as elsewhere. The enthusiasm with which these ideas were received testifies to this.

At the same time it cannot be denied that there was an incongruity in Dutch nineteenth-century architecture as compared with foreign architecture. Architects frequently complained of the unflamboyant Dutch national character that, uninterested in monumental art, failed to provide them with the means that enabled their colleagues in the major foreign cities to apply their art in a more opulent way. The conventional theological explanation of the typical Dutch soberness is inadequate here: was it really the result of the long-established popularity of Calvinism in the Netherlands, or did Calvinism become so popular there in the sixteenth century precisely because it provided the right spiritual dimension to this national character?

The idea of beauty has a strange tradition in the Netherlands. For centuries urban design was a form of hydro-engineering, in which constructing a house could easily be compared to building a ship. A silent majority of the Dutch architects of the nineteenth century followed in this tradition: for them, visual beauty was not the result of philosophy and aesthetics, but of the visible success of technical intelligence and creativity. Beauty stood not so much for the representation of a splendid abstract ideal, but for the expression of superior functionality in a purely practical sense. The grand nineteenth-century themes discussed in this book, although earnestly considered and debated in the Netherlands, were perhaps at a fundamental level somewhat un-Dutch. They originated not from a set of traditional, pragmatic ideas, but from another

architectural culture, an idealist, intellectual tradition.

It may be that Dutch architecture was only able to make its appearance on the international stage when, shortly after 1900, it discovered how to link these two traditions. The result was there to be seen not only in the well-known contributions to the Modern Movement of such architects as J. J. P. Oud, Johannes Duiker, Willem van Tijen, W. M. Dudok and Mart Stam, but also in the rapid growth and influence of the Dutch architecture profession, especially in the field of social housing and urban and planning, which immediately international interest. Two traditions – ambiguous results. Even today, a hundred years later, the Netherlands is a country where the leading architects fulfil a prominent cultural function, yet refuse to consider themselves artists or to discuss architectural beauty; while on the other hand, without irony or cultural pretension, locks, bridges, quays, viaducts and pedestrian subways are referred to as kunstwerken (works of art). With the exception of the nineteenth-century interlude that is one of the subjects of this book, Dutch architecture is not a matter of theory; it is the art of building – a matter of practice.

Preamble

Around 1900 a fundamental change took place in collective ideas about architecture, a change apparent among other things in the common parlance. The term 'art of building' was now old-fashioned, evoking nineteenth-century artistic ideals and systems in which most architects were no longer interested. 'Architecture' became the neutral, more or less technical, designation. The cause of this change must not be sought merely in the rejection of ornament, the search for a pure simplicity, or any of the other 'modern' external characteristics of architectural design. Design concepts result from ideas, and so it is those changing ideas that we should examine.

The first question to ask is how in the collective architectural mind the essence of architecture was perceived. Nineteenth-century science demonstrated that each area of empirical reality had rational and therefore knowable fundamentals which, once they had all been mapped, would reveal a system. This happened in the field of biology, economics and sociology, of health and disease, in industrial processes and technology. Was there any reason why architecture should be an exception to this universal logic? Certainly, architects recognized that like painting and sculpture it was an art, but, unlike painting and sculpture, it was also a science. To look for the fundamentals of architecture in its history was therefore as sensible, it seemed, as geologists studying the history of the earth in order to understand the geological processes of the present. And as with geologists, the historical interest of the leading architects was a means, not an aim in itself; it was, for them, the only way to discover the laws of architecture. The essential characteristic of these architects, great theorists such as Gottfried Semper and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, was that, just like geologists in their field, they were searching for the solution of the problem of contemporary architecture within architecture itself.

Towards 1900 many architects became aware that this solution could not, in fact, be found in the past. Architecture could only become contemporary if it searched for the laws, the conditions for its existence, *outside* itself. It is from that moment that architects ceased to feel the need to study the history of architecture. Rather,

they now saw themselves as detached from it. It is to eclecticism that this fundamental change in the collective thinking, this radical orientation away from the internal and towards the external relations of architecture, can be attributed.

Perhaps the metamorphosis of the art of building into architecture can be highlighted in another way. To a large extent architecture withdrew from the cultural reference system in which it had remained in the nineteenth century to make a place for itself in the technical frame of reference of the twentieth. Whereas the old system was a cultural ideal fostered by an elite, a system of values and standards that owed its authority to a respectable tradition, the new system was a source of boundless technical potential, an ideal of progress that was to be professed so universally in the twentieth century that we called it mass culture; a culture of progress, directed not by history but by expectations for the future.

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Part 1

The Enlightenment Inheritance: Character, Truth and Style

Europe and the Netherlands: The Years before 1840

The common European view of the art of building held in the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth century was that architectural design could not be seen as an isolated phenomenon. Design as an aim in itself was meaningless and was therefore not accepted as art. Design always referred to a specific content – was, rather, an expression of the content. Design was the means through which the content, the 'ideal', materialized. According to this view, a successful design of the idea would result in beauty.

In order to understand why and how design in architecture changed, we must look for changes concerning the 'idea' of architecture, and changes concerning the question of what is to be considered a successful design. According to long-standing tradition, beauty was art's highest ideal; it deeply moved the observer and made him or her yearn for the loftiest human ideals. Art's exalted social position resulted from this: through its beauty it uplifted society. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this view of architecture was hardly disputed. The debate focused not on the function of beauty, but on how beauty could be created – which rules to follow, which mistakes to avoid – and on the experience of beauty. The proliferation of architectural theories in the nineteenth century reflected the diminishing consensus on the characteristics of beauty.

Classicism required the rules of beauty to have a high degree of objectivity. The increasing focus on the role of the observer, which in the eighteenth century became the driving force behind the process of individualism and greater multiformity and which would terminate classicism's supremacy, can already be discerned in the architectural theory of Claude Perrault (1613-88). In his Ordonnance des cinq espèces de colonnes selon la méthode des anciens (Regulation of the Five Kinds of Columns after the Method of the Ancients, 1683) he proposed that the fixity and absoluteness of the rules of beauty derived from systems of proportion were not self-evident. He made a distinction between on the one hand 'positive', more or less objective, beauty, based on demonstrable characteristics of a building itself, and on the other hand 'arbitrary' beauty, based on the associations and habits of the observer or on the authority of the client or architect. Rules of beauty based on proportions were not 'positive', according to Perrault, but 'arbitrary', because there was no consensus on what was an ideal proportion. The perception of beautiful proportions in architecture is fundamentally different from that in music. Whereas in music even the slightest deviation from the proper relationship between tones sounds incontrovertibly out of tune, deviations in architecture are often not even noticed, and so do not detract from the experience of beauty. Perrault was by no means an insignificant architect, and neither was he an anti-classicist. He published a learned and famous translation of the Roman architect Vitruvius' De Architectura, and built a new colonnade on the east side of the Louvre, commissioned by Louis XIV. His Ordonnance demonstrates an odd characteristic that Vitruvianism continued to display until the early nineteenth century namely, the ability to maintain its monopoly by incorporating all criticism and contrasts.

Perrault distinguished between beauty that is the result of rules similar to the laws of nature, and beauty based on convention. This dichotomy became more prominent in the course of the eighteenth century. The *genre pittoresque* in French painting and the picturesque in English landscape gardens offered the opportunity to explore – so different from classicist, 'regulated' art – the new beauty of the apparently unregulated, the coincidental, the 'natural' and the 'naive'. This fundamental renewal in the view of art coincided with a similarly fundamental reconception of nature, which found expression in a variety of ways. The authority of nature was now pitted against the authority of Vitruvianism, resulting in new views on the rationality, functionality and aesthetics of a building in general and on structure and ornamentation in particular.

The new study of nature also implied the study of the nature of man himself. It was in philosophy, the discipline that played a primary role in the study of the as yet little understood human condition, that the study of aesthetics, concentrating on the definition, creation and experience of beauty, originated. Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), for example, studied what it is that determines beauty. His answer was that beauty comprised the primary properties of objects that can activate a feeling in relation to these objects

in the observer's psyche (An Inquiry concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, and Design, 1725). This subjective (that is, belonging to the subject) faculty of cognition, taste, is the capacity to discern unity in diversity.

The relationship between the observer's soul, or psyche, and beauty as a characteristic of an observed object was defined in a pioneering way by Edmund Burke (1729–97) in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), 'a diligent examination of our passions in our own breasts'. Burke was interested not only in the passions generated by delicate, classical beauty captured in rules ('the beautiful'), but also in experiencing beauty together with the 'terror' that accompanies it, resulting from something breathtakingly spectacular, something that is beyond comprehension and that can only be defined as 'the sublime'.

Burke broadened the range of objects and experiences that can be referred to in terms of beauty. And he transferred the inquiry into the object of beauty to the psychological mechanisms and laws on which the experience of the beautiful and the sublime is based. The development of architectural theory in France, on the other hand, remained dedicated to the classical tradition by incorporating in it the subjective, the 'natural', and thereby using it to modernize classicism. The subjective feelings of the observer were classified into a number of precisely described, and therefore more or less objective, feelings. These feelings in turn were categorized in precisely argued concepts, such as the 'elegant' (the 'graceful'), the 'sombre', the 'dignified', the 'strict' and the 'sublime'.

This theory of aesthetics, that was in principle a codification of perceptions, centred on the concept of character. A work of art, a building, has character, if it expresses its function and status through its form, ornamentation and location (which can be, for example, 'sombre', 'graceful', 'dignified' or 'sublime'). The architect and theorist Germain Boffrand (1667-1754) was the first to systematically describe caractère in his Livre d'architecture (1745).2 The theorist Nicolas le Camus de Mézières (1721-c.1793) in his Génie de l'architecture; ou L'analogie de cet art avec nos sensations (The Genius of Architecture; or, The Analogy of that Art with Our Sensations, 1780) summarized thus the generally held view: 'Fixed and invariable rules govern the formation of taste and the process by which we manipulate, in a manner both distinct and sublime, the mechanism that gratifies the senses and conveys into the soul that delicious emotion that ravishes and charms us.'3 In 1788 the theorist Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849) discussed the concept of character in great depth in his contribution to CharlesJoseph Panckoucke's Encyclopédie Méthodique (1788–1825). His central idea was that in architecture the concept of 'character' has three meanings. A building has 'a specific character' (un caractère) when the observer discerns a certain degree of originality, an out-of-the-ordinary exterior form. It has 'character' (caractère) when it has characteristics that strike the observer, especially through grandeur or through the audacity or solidity of anything approaching magnificence or strength. A building has its 'its own character' (son caractère) if its exterior, visible characteristics proclaim its purpose. This classification had a relevance more theoretical than practical – in practice the three definitions are interwoven. Seen from the perspective of the theoretical developments that were to follow in the nineteenth century, the last definition is the important one: character is the expression of 'the purpose' (the destination, the pourquoi il est fait), of what nowadays we would call 'the function' of the building.

Perrault's *Ordonnance* demonstrated that 'character aesthetics' was based on the Vitruvian tradition. Vitruvius taught that *venustas*, or beauty, consisted of six elements that were divided into three categories: *ordinatio*, *eurythmia* and *symmetria*, referring mainly to a building's proportions; *dispositio*, the constituent part of the design; and *decor* and *distributio*, which described the proper form of a building in relation to its function. The theory of character developed from the three latter elements in particular.

Apart from the theory of asthetics that put the sensory experiences and feelings of the observer first, there was another that saw architectural beauty basically as an intrinsic characteristic of the object itself, a characteristic that existed in essence independently of personal, subjective perception. This view was in line with the tradition of the aesthetics of proportion that Perrault had questioned, but which had been strongly defended by Perrault's learned and eminent opponent, the mathematician and architect François Blondel (1617-87), in his Cours d'architecture (1675-83). This theory focusing on the supra-individual, objective system was expounded in 1753 in the treatise by the French abbot Marc-Antoine Laugier (1713-69) entitled Essai sur l'Architecture. This influential treatise also aimed to reform classicism and adapt it to the demands of the new era. Like so many other innovators, Laugier reverted to the original 'pure' basic principles of classicism, principles which, with the advent of the decorative late baroque, had disappeared from sight. '[I]t is to be hoped that some great architect will undertake to save the art of building from eccentric opinions by disclosing its fixed and unchangeable laws,' he stated, concluding that 'absolute beauty [beautés essentielles] is inherent in the art of building independent of mental habit and human prejudice'.⁵

The work by the Parisian architect Jean-Nicholas-Louis Durand (1760–1834 see pp. 19, 22), the *Précis des leçons données à l'École Polytechnique* (first edition 1802–5), fits into this tradition. It reduced architecture to a simple modular design system, based on a quadrantal floor plan and round-arched openings (windows, doors, arcades) in the elevations. Ornamentation played only a minor role. Durand's method was in his time a radical modernization and rationalization — perhaps we could even say a democratization of the Vitruvian tradition. In a sense, architecture became civil engineering, less a question of erudition and culture and more a question of simple common sense and technique.

Conscious anti-classicism came into being two decades later, in Germany. Formulated by the architect Heinrich Hübsch (1795-1863) in his treatise In welchem Style sollen wir bauen? (In What Style Should We Build?, 1828), it met with wide approval. He concluded that imitating ancient Greek architecture was preposterous for climatic and technical reasons, and from an art-historical point of view quite outmoded - after all, classical antiquity did not constitute an ideal for modern drama, poetry or any of the other arts. Hübsch argued that a building should be designed according to objective basic principles and solid data: the function, and the mode and materials of construction to be employed. What remained was 'free art'. A theory intended to point the way for this free art should consist not of a collection of philosophical concepts, but of a system of concepts originating from architecture itself: a style, in other words. Hübsch understood 'style' to mean the general form that is developed in a special way by the artist and that is based on the 'national aspect' (for example, a Greek, Egyptian or Moorish style), the climate, building technique and function.6

Hübsch was not the first to expound this definition of the concept of style, and he used the definition of 'character' in the way that it had been established in late-eighteenth-century France. The architect Jacques-François Blondel (1705–74) further refined the concept of *caractère* as a continuation of the ideas of Boffrand, in 1771 linking it to the concept of *style*. 'Style', he said, was the highest guiding principle that determined the form of a building, character was one of the components of that principle, and the various styles originated from the various types of character. These types of character could be determined by the characteristics of peoples – for this reason Egyptian architecture, for example, differed from Greek architecture,

and Roman from Gothic.⁷ For the headword 'character' in the *Encyclopédie Méthodique* (published in 1788) Quatremère de Quincy wrote: 'As for the immediate influence of physical or natural causes on the character of the various architectural outputs of various peoples, nobody will deny that there is a close interrelationship between on the one hand the way of life, the climate and the materials available, and on the other hand the characteristic architectural forms.'⁸

Shortly afterwards Quatremère de Quincy also made the connection between character and style. The entry 'style' in the *Encyclopédie*, probably written in about 1790 but not published until 1825 on account of the prevailing social turmoil, contains two definitions. The first refers only to literature. Then:

According to the second view, *style* is defined in a much more general sense, as that typical and characteristic form that through very general causes is attributed to products of the mind, in accordance with the differences in climate, customs, acts of governments, and political or moral attitudes. In this latter sense *style* becomes synonymous with *character*, i.e. with a special way of doing things and with the specific appearance peculiar to each work, each creator, each genre, each school [of thought], each country, each century, et cetera.⁹

This definition used by Quatremère de Quincy and Hübsch – that style expresses the character of a people, the climate and the geographical and geological circumstances, which are expressed in the building materials – may go back as far as the famous archaeologist Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68), who in the first chapter of his *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (History of the Art of Antiquity, 1764) attributed the diversity of art in the world to the differences in climate and geography, and the customs and traditions of peoples. ¹⁰ As with Quatremère de Quincy's definition of character, the definition of style as postulated by him and by Hübsch remained in use throughout the nineteenth century.

However, Hübsch added an important new dimension, which the confirmed classicist Quatremère de Quincy did not. In the course of a study tour of many years' duration through southern Europe, Hübsch learned that during the period after the fall of the Roman Empire there had been two styles, the round-arch style (*Rundbogenstil*) and the pointed-arch style (*Spitzbogenstil*). The round-arch style, a characteristic of Byzantine, Lombard and Roman buildings, was then displaced by the pointed-arch style of the Middle Ages. To Hübsch, the construction and the decorative simplicity, the functionality and 'truth' of the round-arch style, seemed eminently suitable for further

development in his own era. After the major revolutions and wars that took place around 1800, Europe was experiencing a period of recovery and reconstruction. And since this change occurred slowly and in conditions of great austerity, and demanded a simple, functional architecture, the pointed-arch style, which was far from simple, he considered less suitable.

Hübsch's plea was for a combination of rational and pragmatic arguments and Romantic ideas, and it introduced a quest for a national - that is to say, German – and contemporary style stemming from a shared past. Hübsch regarded the Romanesque Maria Laach Abbey at Koblenz as the best study model for his time. But whereas Durand in France upheld the Vitruvian tradition with his own round-arch style, Hübsch loosened the tie with Vitruvianism. The typically Vitruvian aspect of Durand lay in the fact that he saw style as an intrinsic characteristic of architecture; the anti-Vitruvian aspect of Hübsch was that style was for him a contingent characteristic, one that could vary in accordance with the determining historical and geographical circumstances.¹¹

Hübsch also introduced a new aesthetic concept which he proclaimed to be one of the principal laws of the art of building: truth. Truth implied, for example, that construction and decoration were not to contradict each other: 'Because the first principle in art must be truth, we must not overlay bare yet functional walls with feigned constructions.' Walls had to be made rich and beautiful through the careful treatment of materials and by ensuring that exterior, functional, structural features were linked to the construction of the interior.12 It would seem plausible that Hübsch based this rule on the essence of neoclassicist aesthetics, the standard of beauty derived from Greek temples, as expressed by, among others, the archaeologist Aloys Hirt (1759-1837) in 1809. Hirt argued that 'Architectural beauty cannot be created at the expense of the construction, or at the expense of a functional layout and interior. The nature of beauty must arise from the construction and from a functional arrangement, and must be based on these."13

Truth was to remain a fundamental principle in the architectural theories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For Hübsch it also dominated the relationship between the main form (based on objective basic principles and functional requirements) and the so-called 'free art' that supplemented it – a dichotomy already encountered in Laugier's references to the primary, load-bearing structure and the secondary 'additions'. Later, Karl Bötticher (1806–99), professor at the Bauakademie in Berlin since

1844, reformulated in his book on Greek architecture *Die Tektonik der Hellenen* (1844–52) the principal dichotomy that Hübsch had formulated as *Kernform* ('core-form') and *Kunstform* ('art-form'), the first being the invisible structural and functional essence of the building and the second the explicit artistic expression.¹⁴

Truth and character, then, were two members of the same family: the Vitruvian decor, the rule which, if a building was capable of expressing its function and its social status, led to beauty. In the concept of character, decor was represented by the subjective (but codified) perception of beauty. And we could say that, in the concept of truth, decor was to a greater degree objectified. While character presupposed a necessary relationship between the building and the observer, truth was an expression of characteristics within the object itself. Character related to the senses and feelings, truth was more closely associated with reason. An overemphasis on character opened the door to brilliant design, but also to superficiality, as the history of the nineteenth century would prove. An overemphasis on truth, on the other hand, was the characteristic of those who believed in a supra-personal, metaphysical truth and considered architecture to be instrumental in representing this higher truth.

These essentially eighteenth-century notions evolved outside of the Netherlands. However, from quite early on various prominent Dutch scholars and men of letters, including Frans Hemsterhuis (1721-90), Hiëronymus van Alphen (1746–1803), Bernard Nieuhoff (1747–1831) and Rhijnvis Feith (1753-1824), and architects such as Jacob Otten Husly (1735-95) and Abraham van der Hart (1747–1820), were acquainted with the latest theoretical concepts of art: these included the picturesque and the sublime, the aesthetics of character, and notions of national style and of the 'simple' style that Winckelmann had demonstrated so felicitously in Greek art. The Dutch architect Pieter de Swart (1709-73), much sought after in the highest circles, had studied at Jacques-François Blondel's École des Arts. Indeed, around 1800 in the Netherlands the theory of character was not unfamiliar, and certainly not in the dramatic arts where the rhetorical tradition and the doctrine concerning the appropriate use of style were still flourishing. The new concepts were also being expressed, albeit on a small scale, in architectural design - in the layout of gardens as well as in the construction of buildings.15 Thus the state of affairs at the start of the nineteenth century was that Dutch theorists and architects were acquainted with the disintegration of Vitruvianism, which, though, had never become as