



Mario Alexander Zadow

Karl Friedrich Schinkel – ein Sohn der Spätaufklärung

216 pp. with 125 ill., 233 x 284,5 mm, hard-cover, German

ISBN 978-3-932565-23-6

Euro 29.80, sfr 49.00, £ 19.090, US \$ 39.00, \$A 49.00

Specialist literature on Schinkel has grown enormously since the 200th anniversary of his birth in 1981. But so far questions about the basis of his education and training remain unanswered. No one seems to have seen that Schinkel – who is often called a classical or a Romantic architect – was actually a son of the late Enlightenment. This is supported by his teachers' lesson notes (presented here for the first time), the educational periodicals of his period, private letters, exhibition catalogues and also treatises by avant-garde architectural theorists, who also have their say.

It was a time of great elation. Kant's cry of »Sapere aude«, have the courage to use your own reason, was the motto of this crucial epoch in the history of ideas. Schinkel's father, an unorthodox cleric, fought for the principles of the Enlightenment, and so did the teachers at the two progressive »model schools« that Schinkel attended. For the first time, these schools brought children from all walks of life together under the same roof – unheard of in those days. Friedrich Gedike, a leading Enlightenment teacher and the headmaster of Schinkel's grammar school Zum Grauen Kloster, not only tried to impart universal modern knowledge to his pupils, but also to educate them as citizens and servants of the state, with strong characters, and who could cope with life.

The state was not just increasingly concerned with schooling, which had been dominated by the Church until that time, but also with education as a whole. The art academy, exhibitions and art as practised were to promote general enlightenment. To a certain extent this also applied to architecture. Friedrich Gilly, Schinkel's fervently revered master, even spoke of an architectural renaissance.

The brightest minds of this period – Schinkel met several of them – were utterly convinced that the influence of science, culture and the fine arts was powerful enough to refine human nature and to sow peace and concord among nations. And so it is not surprising that the young Schinkel came to Fichte's philosophy at an early stage. Fichte defined the concept of virtue as the good will, which prevailed without exception, to »promote the purposes of humankind to the utmost of one's strength, and to promote them especially in the state, as it instructs«. This became Schinkel's life's work.

Mario Alexander Zadow studied art history and philosophy; after that he worked as a magazine editor for a long time. He has been working on biographical research into Schinkel for over 20 years. He was awarded the Neuruppin Schinkel Prize 2000 for his commitment.

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