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Jahresbericht 2014 der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin

# ›The Seven Wonders of the World‹ from the Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum in Saint Petersburg Karl Friedrich Schinkel's only extant Dioramas and their Influence on his Art<sup>1</sup>

Ekaterina Skvortcova\*

*The article examines the newly-discovered series of dioramas ›The Seven Wonders of the World‹ painted by Karl Wilhelm Gropius after Karl Friedrich Schinkel's sketches. Around 1848, Gropius sold them to Andreas Leonhard Roller, a decorator and the first machine operator of the Imperial Theatres in Saint Petersburg, along with ›The Panorama of Palermo‹ painted by Eduard Biermann, also based on Schinkel's sketch. The panorama and the seven dioramas were displayed in the same rotunda. The panorama was later devastated in a fire that engulfed the whole building, but ›The Seven Wonders‹ fortunately survived. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century they have been kept in the Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum in Saint Petersburg, though hitherto ascribed to another artist. The article aims at establishing new attribution of the paintings, tracing for the first time the history of their showing and reception in Russia in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (on the basis of Saint Petersburg newspapers of the time and archival materials). The article also discusses the way they were exhibited in Germany and Russia, thus contributing to the debate on their definition (whether they should be called perspective-optical paintings or dioramas), and finally reveals their influence on Schinkel's later artistic projects. The last point is of special importance as these are the only surviving dioramas of Schinkel known so far, thus providing a unique opportunity to assess the artistic qualities of these highly contested works of art.*

›The Seven Wonders of the World‹ (1814) is one of a series of so-called perspective-optical paintings or dioramas created by Karl Friedrich Schinkel in his early years when he was unable to win architectural commissions in a Berlin besieged by the French. Commonly associated with popular Christmas shows, such paintings have long been underrated. Concerning Schinkel, he has increasingly been compared in recent decades with those universal geniuses of the Renaissance capable of being architects, painters and sculptors in one person<sup>2</sup>. This has resulted in meticulous research of different aspects of his artistic career, including his perspective-optical paintings. Yet while the documentary material has been gathered, the approaches have remained unchanged. And most scholars still speak of these paintings as a preparatory stage in his career, in which he gained experience helpful for his later universally recognized work as a theatre decorator.

The reasons for his perspective-optical paintings remaining so underrated lie not only in outdated misconceptions of this kind of art in general, but also in the fact that none of the Schinkel works of that sort survived. To date only textual sources and graphic sketches from the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin have provided evidence of their existence.

Moreover, some of the sketches were lost in World War Two and are known only from photographs. More important is the discovery of the series of paintings titled ›The Seven Wonders of the World‹ in the collection of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum in Saint Petersburg, which I consider to be Karl Wilhelm Gropius's copies of the original Schinkel paintings. The present article seeks to establish new attribution of the paintings which in Russia are thought to be the works of Eduard Biermann<sup>3</sup>; to trace the history of their exhibition and reception in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Russia (on the basis of Saint Petersburg newspapers of the period and archival materials); to discuss the specifics of how they were presented; and finally to show their influence on Schinkel's later artistic projects.

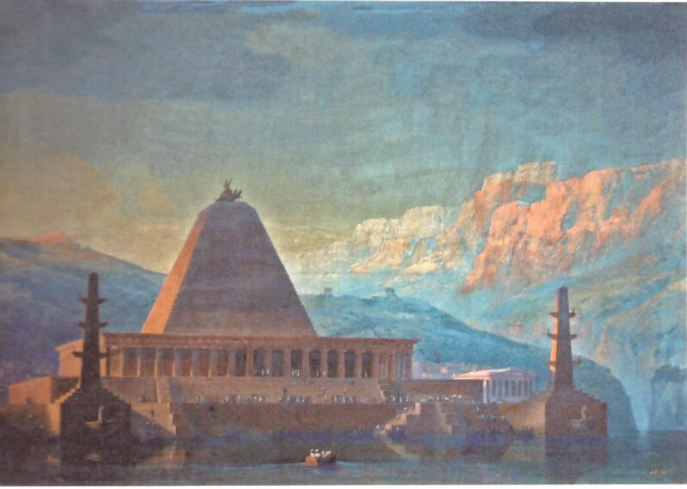
›The Wonders of the World‹ are seven large-format paintings (302 × 231 cm, figs. 1–7), painted with distemper on paper duplicated on canvas. They now need careful restoration. Since entering the collection of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum in Saint Petersburg in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they have neither been displayed nor reproduced. The exception is the recently restored ›Statue of Jupiter of Olympia‹, which was presented at the 2016 exhibition ›Inspired by Greece‹ in the Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Saint Petersburg. They are mentioned in one book only, a catalogue titled ›The Germans and the Russian Academy of Fine Arts‹<sup>4</sup>. In one catalogue contribution, author Luisa Tselischeva argues that these are works of Eduard Biermann. This attribution is based on an ›Inventory of property of paintings of Costume, Sketch, Mannequin, Scenery and Water-colour Classes‹ of the Academy of Fine Arts (Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum in Saint Petersburg, pp. 35–36, verso), in which they are listed together with twelve other paintings, as well as described as ›painted by Berlin Professor Biermann‹ and purchased in 1880 from an academician and professor of the Academy of Fine Arts, Andreas Leonhard Roller. Tselischeva identifies the subject matter in a way to suggest that these paintings could be copies of Schinkel's ›Seven Wonders of the

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1 The research was carried out with the generous help of the Internationales Stipendienprogramm für Arbeits- und Forschungsaufenthalte an den Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin.

2 Michael Snodin (ed.), Karl Friedrich Schinkel: A Universal Man, New Haven 1991.

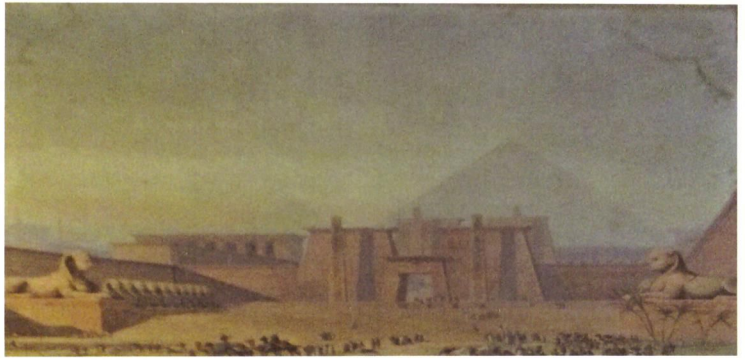
3 This aspect of the article has already been published: Ekaterina Skvortcova ›Sem' chudes sveta‹ v Nauchno-issledovatel'skom muzee Rossiiskoi akademii khudozhestv – serii kartin K.F. Shinkelia i K.V. Gropiusa (novaia atributsiia) [›Seven Wonders of the World‹ from the Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum in Saint Petersburg – the Series of Paintings by K.F. Schinkel and K.W. Gropius (New Attribution)], in: Aktual'nye problemy teorii i istorii iskusstva [Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art], 2017, vol. VII.



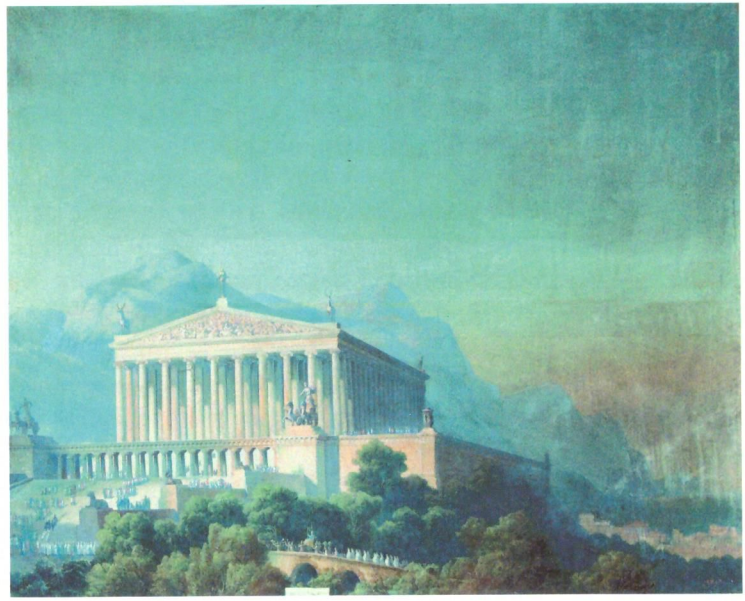
1 Carl Wilhelm Gropius after Karl Friedrich Schinkel's sketch. Mausoleum at Halicarnassus. 1847. Distemper, paper on canvas. 302 × 231 cm. Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Saint Petersburg. Inv. no. Ж-2804



3 Carl Wilhelm Gropius after Karl Friedrich Schinkel's sketch. Egyptian Pyramids. 1847. Distemper, paper on canvas. 302 × 231 cm. Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Saint Petersburg. Inv. no. Ж-2808



2 Karl Wilhelm Gropius after Karl Friedrich Schinkel's sketch. Egyptian Labyrinth. 1847. Distemper, paper on canvas. 30 × 231 cm. Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Saint Petersburg. Inv. no. Ж-2807



4 Karl Wilhelm Gropius after Karl Friedrich Schinkel's sketch. Diana's Temple in Ephesus. 1847. Distemper, paper on canvas. 302 × 231 cm. Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Saint Petersburg. Inv. no. Ж-2806

world. Tellingly, both series feature an untraditional subject, the Egyptian Labyrinth instead of the canonical ›Lighthouse of Alexandria‹. Besides, Tselischeva points to the fact that Biermann copied Schinkel's paintings in the 1830s after the commission of his close friend Carl Wilhelm Gropius. Among them was the ›Panorama of Palermo‹, which was later shown in Saint Petersburg and could have been ›The Seven Wonders of the World‹. Although the scholar faultlessly establishes the connection between the works from the Museum of Saint Petersburg Academy and Schinkel's 1814 series, she addresses neither primary sources and literature on Schinkel, nor Russian archive materials and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century periodicals, which shed light on the exhibition history of the works now kept in the Academy Museum in Saint Petersburg. Such an analysis proves Tselischeva's suggestion that the ›Seven Wonders‹ from the Academy were copies after Schinkel's paintings, yet fails to establish Biermann's authorship.

Let us turn to the history of the creation of Schinkel's ›Seven Wonders of the World‹ and its copies. Schinkel's perspective-optical paint-

ings are known from German newspapers such as the ›Berlinische Nachrichten von Staats- und gelehrten Sachen‹, the ›Zeitschrift für Bauwesen‹, the ›Deutsches Kunstblatt‹, from early biographies of Schinkel written by Franz Kugler (1842)<sup>5</sup> and Gustav Waagen (1844)<sup>6</sup>, as well as from reminiscences of Carl Wilhelm Gropius in his letter to Alfred von Wolzogen (1862)<sup>7</sup>. Together they laid the basis for the chapter ›Untergegangene Gemälde Schinkel's‹ in the second volume of Alfred von

4 Nemtsy i Akademiia khudozhestv [The Germans and the Academy of Fine Arts], exh. cat. [Saint Petersburg, Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum, November 2003], Moscow 2003, pp. 25–27.

5 Franz Kugler, Karl Friedrich Schinkel: eine Charakteristik seiner künstlerischen Wirksamkeit, Berlin 1842.

6 Gustav Waagen, Karl Friedrich Schinkel als Mensch und als Künstler, in: Berliner Kalender, 1844, pp. 305–428.

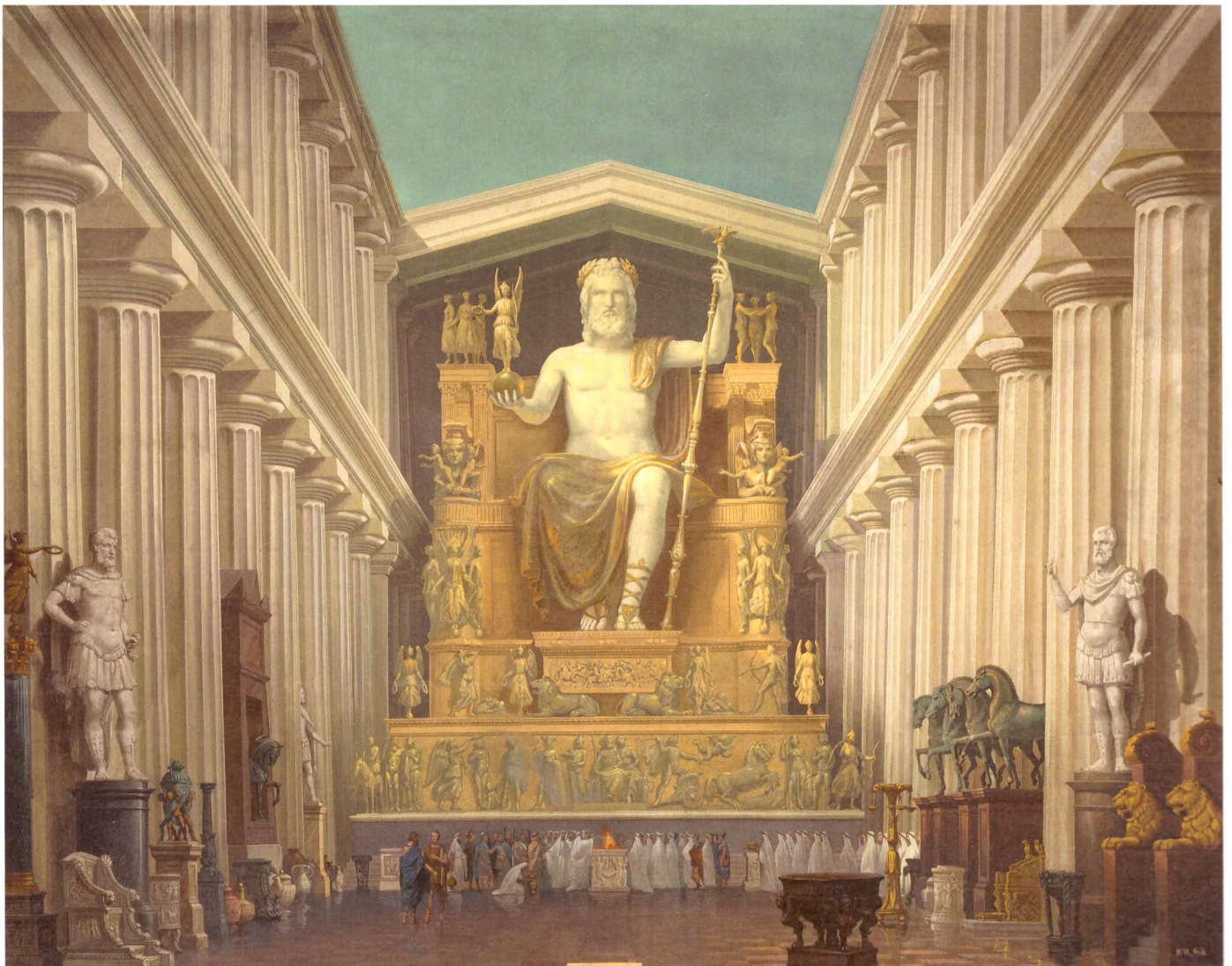
7 Helmut Börsch-Supan, Bild-Erfindungen (Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Lebenswerk, vol. 20), Munich, Berlin, 2007, pp. 648–649.



5 Karl Wilhelm Gropius after Karl Friedrich Schinkel's sketch. Colossus of Rhodes. 1847. Distemper, paper on canvas. 302 × 231 cm. Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Saint Petersburg. Inv. no. Ж-2809



6 Karl Wilhelm Gropius after Karl Friedrich Schinkel's sketch. The Hanging Gardens of Semiramis. 1847. Distemper, paper on canvas. 302 × 231 cm. Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Saint Petersburg. Inv. no. Ж-2805



7 Karl Wilhelm Gropius after Karl Friedrich Schinkel's sketch. The Statue of Jupiter of Olympia. 1847. Distemper, paper on canvas. 302 × 231 cm. Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Saint Petersburg. Inv. no. Ж-2810

Wolzogen's monograph ›Aus Schinkel's Nachlaß‹.<sup>8</sup> These are the sources for all subsequent literature. The most complete and comprehensive recent work summarising and scrutinising all the known information about the perspective-optical paintings is Helmut Börsch-Supan's major monograph, ›Bild-Erfindungen‹.<sup>9</sup>

›The Seven Wonders of the World‹ were shown in the theatre of Wilhelm Gropius and like other pictures of this kind formed a background for a performance of mechanical figures. The first exhibition of the series was not mentioned in the newspapers.<sup>10</sup> Johann Gottfried Schadow recalls that it took place in 1814, while Kugler erroneously dates them to circa 1812, which was repeated by Waagen and Wolzogen. The more probable dating of 1814 was borrowed only by Mario Zadow.<sup>11</sup> The paintings were already destroyed during Schinkel's lifetime. Carl Wilhelm Gropius recollects: ›All these paintings were painted with disemper on paper, some ›also on paper duplicated on canvas, so that durable preservation was not possible, and these works of art were totally destroyed after my having restored them with utmost diligence‹<sup>12</sup>. Later, after Schinkel's death, Gropius painted ›The Seven Wonders of the World‹ again and presented them at the Schinkel Fest in 1847 at the wish of architects Eduard Knoblauch and Friedrich August Stüler, Schinkel's followers. They were then sold to Saint Petersburg where they were destroyed in a fire. We know this from Knoblauch's notes in ›Zeitschrift für Bauwesen‹ and ›Deutsches Kunstblatt‹ which appeared in 1857, ten years after the Schinkel Fest.

More detailed information (though lacking dates) is offered by an even later source – Gropius's well-known letter to Wolzogen dating from 1862. He reiterates the story of the paintings and their copies from the very beginning: ›Along with several other paintings which I cannot recollect anymore, Schinkel painted for our small theatre with moving figures ›The Seven Wonders of the World‹. The originals of them, as with all his other paintings of this kind, disappeared altogether. These beautiful paintings are still floating in my memory and I painted them again imitating the manner of Schinkel as much as I could (I helped him when he created the originals) and exhibited them in illuminated fashion on his birthday at the wish of Stüler and Knoblauch. Later they were sold to Saint Petersburg and there destroyed in a fire, together with the large ›Panorama of Palermo‹ which was also sold there with it, and the whole building.‹<sup>13</sup>

Thus, three German sources – two notes by Knoblauch and a letter by Gropius himself – report that Gropius's copies of Schinkel's paintings were sold to Saint Petersburg. The similar subject matter of the ›Seven Wonders‹ by Schinkel/Gropius and the series from the Academy of Fine Arts Petersburg; the testimony from German contemporaries; the evidence that the first paintings were sold to Saint Petersburg; all provide grounds for equating them with each other. Finally, the comparison of the original sketches to Schinkel's paintings from the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (fig. 8)<sup>14</sup> and photographs of sketches lost in World War Two (figs. 9–10)<sup>15</sup> with paintings from the Academy of Fine Arts in Saint-Petersburg convincingly proves that the ›Seven Wonders of the World‹ from Saint Petersburg Academy are in actual fact copies of Schinkel's paintings. So they were not destroyed in the fire, but fortunately survived.

An important task is to reveal where the paintings were displayed in Saint Petersburg before they arrived at the Academy of Fine Arts. In a letter to Alfred von Wolzogen, Carl Wilhelm Gropius mistakenly as-

serts that the paintings were destroyed together with the ›Panorama of Palermo‹. Although unlike ›Panorama of Palermo‹, the ›Seven Wonders‹ were not reduced to ashes, this comment proves that they were once exhibited together.

The ›Panorama of Palermo‹ in question is the second variant of the large painting created by Karl Eduard Biermann between 1840 and 1844 after an original sketch by Schinkel. The first version was painted in 1808 by Schinkel after his field sketches made in Italy in 1803–1805. The original panorama was displayed in Berlin and later sold to Wilhelm Gropius. Gropius in turn sold the panorama to a Neapolitan who installed it in his villa. It did not survive, unfortunately. To the present day, all that was preserved were sketches (paper verge, graphite pencil, inv. no. SM 20c.186) and an engraved plan (paper verge, etching, brush, inv. no. SM 1b.38). In 1840 Schinkel wished to create a new version of the composition on an even greater scale and discussed this with Carl Wilhelm Gropius. Due to Schinkel's fatal illness, they entrusted the task to Biermann. He was to enlarge the preparatory drawing preserved since 1808, so that Schinkel could make corrections. Schinkel was unable to do this as he died soon. But the new enlarged version of the panorama was exhibited in Berlin in 1844 (22.4 m in diameter, 9.6 m in height, 70 m in length; the 1808 variant was 4.8 m in height, 28.8 m in length). Thereafter it was sold to Saint Petersburg.<sup>16</sup>

Russian archival sources provide information that it was purchased by Gropius's friend Andreas Leonhard Roller, a German-born painter long active in Russia where he was employed as a scenic artist and the main machine operator of the Imperial Theatres in Russia. Interest in

8 Alfred von Wolzogen, *Aus Schinkel's Nachlaß*, vol. 2, Berlin 1862, p. 272, 346; vol. 4, Berlin 1864, pp. 576–577. – Börsch-Supan, like note 6, pp. 565–566.

9 Börsch-Supan, like note 6, pp. 561–572, 617–622.

10 Börsch-Supan, like note 6, pp. 617.

11 Börsch-Supan, like note 6, pp. 617–618.

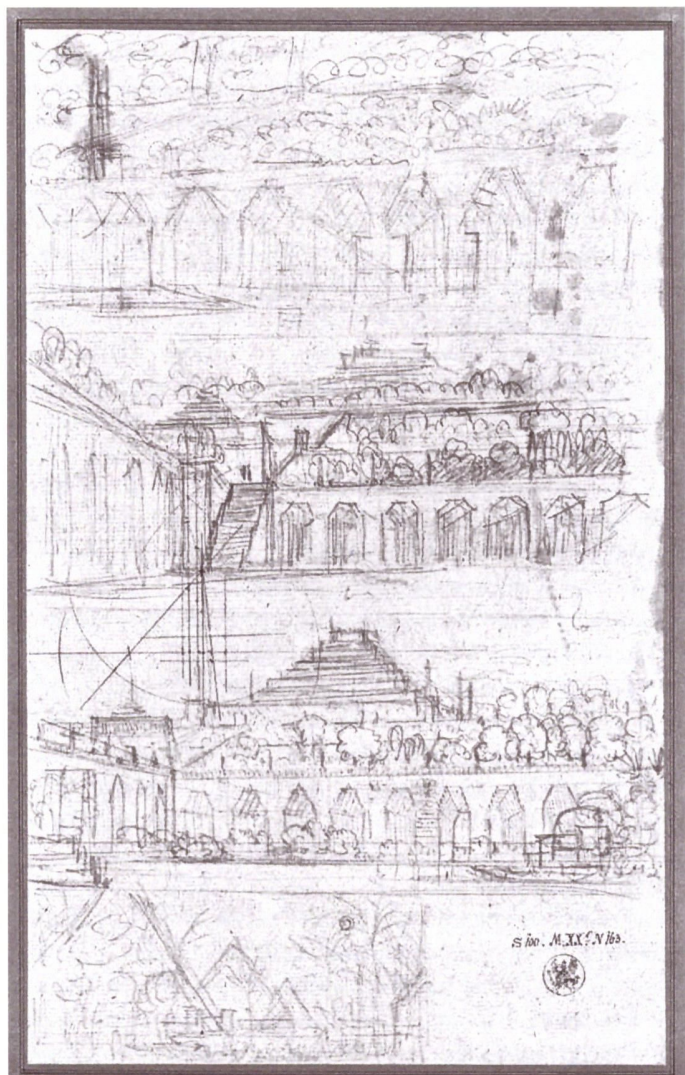
12 ›Alle diese Bilder waren in Leimfarbe auf Papier gemalt, partly ›auch auf Leinwand geklebtes Papier, sodaß eine Lange Dauer ohnmöglich war, und es sind auch diese Kunstwerke nachdem ich selbst sie 2 mal mit möglichster Mühe restauriert habe, gänzlich verschwunden.‹ Ulrike Harten, *Die Bühnenentwürfe (Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Lebenswerk, vol. 17)*, Munich 2000, p. 23.

13 ›Für unser kleines Theater mit beweglichen Figuren malte Schinkel noch außer mehreren anderen Bildern, die mir nicht mehr erinnerlich sind, die Sieben Wunder der Welt. Die originalen Bilder sind wie alle übrigen gänzlich verkommen. Da mir diese schönen Werke noch in voller Erinnerung schwebten, malte ich dieselben nochmals ganz in der Art wie ich die Schinkelschen kannte (an denen ich ja damals hülfweise Hand leisten dürfte) an seinem Geburtstage wurde diese auf Stülers und Knoblauchs Wunsch beleuchtet ausgestellt. Später sind dieselben nach Sankt-Petersburg verkauft und dort nebst dem großen, ebenfalls dahin verkauften Panorama von Palermo, mit diesem und dem ganzen Gebäude verbrannt.‹ Börsch-Supan, like note 6, pp. 648–649.

14 Die hängenden Gärten der Semiramis. handgeschöpftes Papier (vergé) mit Steg Schatten, Graphitstift, Quadrierung mit Feder in Rot. Inv. no. SM 22e.72; Drei Skizzen zu den hängenden Gärten der Semiramis & Skizze zu den ägyptischen Pyramiden. Inv. no. SM 20c.163; Gebäude im ägyptischen Stil. handgeschöpftes Papier (vélin) Graphitstift. Inv. no. SM 20c.164. The last sketch is known as ›Gebäude im ägyptischen Stil; however, the drawing actually contains pictures of the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus and Jupiter of Olympia, alongside depictions of buildings in Oriental style, including the Pyramids.

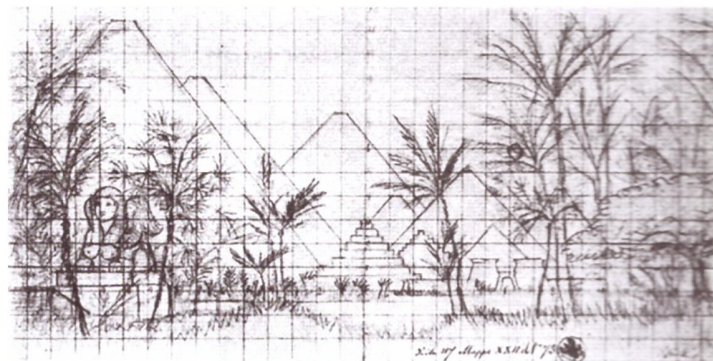
15 Das ägyptische Labyrinth. Inv. no. SM 22d.92. Kriegsverlust; Der Tempel der Diana zu Ephesus. Inv. no. SM 22d.93. Kriegsverlust; Die Statue des Jupiters im Tempel zu Olympia. Inv. no. SM 22e.68. Kriegsverlust; Der Koloss zu Rhodos. Inv. no. SM 22e.70. Kriegsverlust; Das Grabmal des Mausolos von Halikarnassos. Inv. no. SM 22e.71. Kriegsverlust; Die ägyptischen Pyramiden. Inv. no. SM 22e.73. Kriegsverlust.

16 Börsch-Supan, like note 6, p. 569, 571, 649.

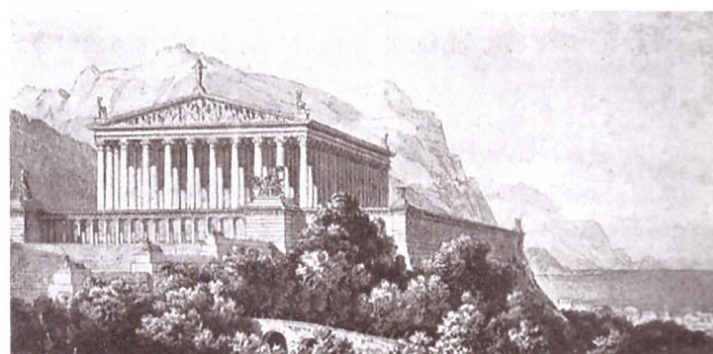


8 Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Three Sketches for ›The Seven Wonders of the World‹ (two for ›The Hanging Gardens of Semiramis‹ and one for ›The Egyptian Pyramids‹). 1814. Pencil, paper (vergé). 33 × 20.4 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett. Inv. no. SM 20c.163

Sicily was unusually high in Russia at that time following the recent trip of the Emperor's family to Palermo (1845–1846). The stay was arranged on their doctor's advice due to the worsening health of the Empress Aleksandra Fedorovna, wife of Nicholas I, after the death of their daughter Aleksandra in 1844. Together with her daughter Olga, the Empress embarked on a trip to Palermo in August 1845. Later Nicholas I and the Russian court joined them for some time. Whilst there, Princess Olga became engaged to Prince Karl von Württemberg. To keep beautiful memories from this journey, numerous art works were commissioned by the Imperial family, mainly for Peterhof, their favourite residence near Saint Petersburg. These include Olga's pavilion in Colonnist Park (architect A. Stakensneider), the tea-house or Renella (now lost) in Znamenka Park, a series of paintings with views of Palermo for the cottage in Aleksandria's park, and others. Roller had good cause to suggest that the ›Panorama of Palermo‹ would be highly appreciated in this context. The above-mentioned architectural monuments and works of arts were meant for the Imperial family and the narrow circle



9 A photograph after Karl Friedrich Schinkel's sketch for ›The Egyptian Pyramids‹ (the original drawing lost in World War II). Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett. Inv. no. SM 22e.73

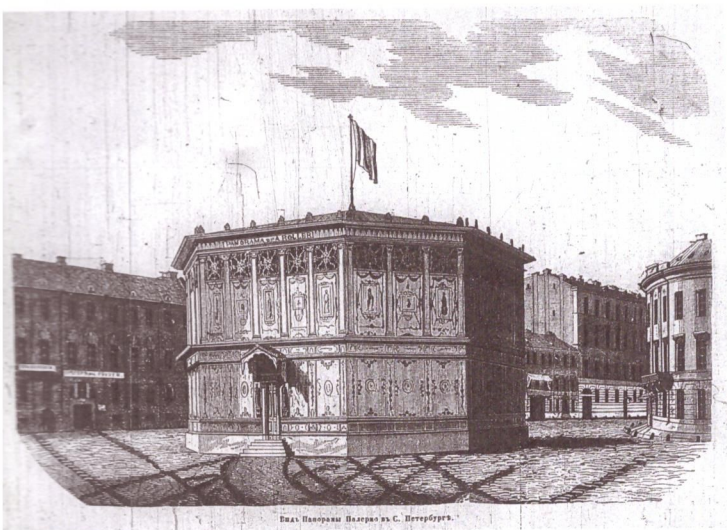


10 A photograph after Karl Friedrich Schinkel's sketch for ›Diana's Temple in Ephesus‹ (the original drawing lost in World War II). Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett. Inv. no. SM 22d.93

of their attendants. In contrast, the ›Panorama of Palermo‹ was to remind everyone of the important events in the Imperial family. The idea was greatly favoured by the Emperor. The location of the panorama was discussed, and out of six places the Manezhnaia square in the very centre of the city was chosen personally by Nicholas I. The subject of the panorama – an Italian monastery – predetermined the use of Renaissance motifs as a stylistic model for the exquisite and finely drawn composition of the rotunda facade (fig. 11). Ivy and flowers scattered over the terrace, from which visitors viewed the panorama, blended with the painted greenery. The panorama was opened on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1846 soon after the Empress' return to Russia. Even though Roller enjoyed a tax-free land holding and excise-free concession, lived in the panorama building, and introduced flexible prices and opening hours, the ›Panorama of Palermo‹ suffered from a lack of visitors. Roller wanted to complement it with two extensions for dioramas, but failed to gain permission to do so. Finally, he was allowed to erect a new edifice in Bol'shaia Morskaia street with two extensions for dioramas, but the construction dragged on, and in the meantime the panorama was devastated by fire in December 1853<sup>17</sup>.

17 Ekaterina Skvortcova, ›Panorama Palermo‹ K.F. Shinkelia v Peterburge: vospominanie o puteshestvii imperatorskoi sem'i v Palermo [›Panorama of Palermo‹ by K.F. Schinkel in Saint Petersburg: a Remembrance of Emperor Nicholas I's Family Trip to Sicily], in: *Aktual'nye problemy teorii i istorii iskusstva* [Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art], 2016, vol. VI, pp. 585–596, 905.





11 Rotunda of ›Panorama of Palermo‹ in Saint Petersburg. Illustration from the newspaper – *Illustratsiia* (Illustration), 1846, vol. 3, no. 28, 5<sup>th</sup> August, p. 447

From 1848 advertisements for the ›Panorama of Palermo‹ in Russian newspapers (›Vedomosti Sankt-Peterburgskoi gorodskoi politsii‹ (›News of Saint Petersburg City Police‹), ›Literaturnaia gazeta‹ (›Newspaper on Literature‹), ›Severnaia pchela‹ (›Northern Bee‹)) had been expanded with notices about ›The Seven Wonders of the World‹<sup>18</sup>. Presumably, these were the copies of the Schinkel series presented in Berlin in 1847. Everything converges. According to German sources, the copies were sold to Saint Petersburg and displayed with the ›Panorama of Palermo‹. Russian sources indicate that the ›Seven Wonders of the World‹ were exhibited with the ›Panorama of Palermo‹ by Roller and the paintings now in the Academy of Fine Arts were purchased from Roller.

Definitive proof is provided by the descriptions of the series shown by Roller with the ›Panorama of Palermo‹ which can be found in ›Literaturnaia gazeta‹ (›Newspaper on Literature‹) and ›Vedomosti Sankt-Peterburgskoi gorodskoi politsii‹ (›News of Saint Petersburg City Police‹). Both notes were written by P. Smirnovskii. Both list the paintings; the ›ekphrases‹ start with a detailed description of the picture and then offer a short insight into the history of the wonder. All the descriptions perfectly correspond to the related paintings from the Academy of Fine Arts. Here are the most important extracts from the note in ›Literaturnaia gazeta‹ (›Newspaper on Literature‹):

1. ›The Tomb of King Mausol.‹ Viewers are presented with a delightful landscape in Caria (Minor Asia). To the left of the panorama one sees a magnificent, gigantic, conical tomb constructed in memory of the king Mausolus by his passionately-loved wife Artemisia [...]

2. ›Egyptian Labyrinth.‹ In the foreground there is a road, along which Egyptians on camels proceed; in the middle, there is a luxurious staircase of colossal width which leads through the building in the form of a huge gate; behind it are buildings, each more opulent than the other. All these buildings, as well as the sides of the staircase, are covered with fantastic embellishments especially characteristic of the style of Egyptian architects [...]

3. ›Egyptian Pyramids.‹ Here we see a landscape that resembles a graveyard. Here and there are luxurious monuments and between them

palm-trees, strewn picturesquely. To the left through the luxurious greenery we see drowsing waters in which the just-risen moon is reflected; further behind the monuments are cone-shaped pyramids, their tops gilded with the setting sun. The surroundings are all bathed in a magical semi-darkness in which moonlight and sunlight vie with one another [...]

4. ›Temple of Diana in Ephesus.‹ To the left of the painting there is a massive building in the shape of a parallelogram, its sides decorated with columns in three rows; by the entrance is a staircase, as wide and magnificent as the very temple; on the fronton and at the corners of the roof are statues, attributes of the goddess of hunting. To the left is Ephesus, trimmed with crowns of the trees; above the whole picture is that wonderful air which is so pleasant to breath, especially for the people of the North [...]

5. ›Colossus of Rhodes.‹ In the night gloom we see Rhodes sleeping over the Pontus; in the middle the gigantic statue of Colossus rises, his legs placed so that they form an enormous gate, through which the largest ships can pass. Colossus holds a flaming bowl in his hand, its fire and smoke spreading far in the air and crimsoning the face and breast of the giant. The unity of the painting is superb [...]

6. ›Hanging Gardens of Semiramis.‹ The gardens in the painting are presented located on vast terraces, with golden-crimson rays of the setting sun passing through the arches, the whole landscape seemingly lit with the glow. The gardens and conical temple rising behind them are luxurious and magnificent. In the foreground the waves of the Euphrates sparkle subtly in the sunlight. The painting's colouring is executed to near-perfection [...]

7. ›Jupiter of Olympia.‹ In the gigantic temple, three sides are decorated with sumptuous columns, while on the fourth side stands an immense statue of Jupiter crafted with near-unsurpassable skill. The groups of priests by the flaming altar and other decorations of the temple complement the whole in this splendid painting. Especially spectacular is the statue, its seated position being particularly difficult to convey, but the gifted Roller coped with all the difficulties here, and this painting, like the other six views, is found here to the highest degree of perfection possible [...] (Translated from the Russian by Ekaterina Skvortcova.)

The descriptions leave no doubt that the paintings discussed are those which are now in the collection of the Academy of Fine Arts in Saint Petersburg. In some cases there are minor differences between Schinkel's sketches from the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and the paintings. For example, in the sketch for ›The Egyptian Labyrinth‹ there are only a few figures in the foreground, whereas the picture presents an imposing procession – a distinguishing feature noted by Smirnovskii in his description. This can easily be explained. Schinkel's original painting could have differed from his sketch and Gropius literally copied the painting. However, Gropius's replicas could have differed from Schinkel's works. The 1847 version of ›The Seven Wonders of the World‹ was shown in honour of Schinkel, but without mechanical figures. In order to make the work more interesting, especially in a painting in which the

18 P. Smirnovskii, *Peterburgskie pis'ma* [Saint Petersburg Letters], in: *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 1848, No. 17, 29th April, pp. 271–272. – *Severnaia pchela* [Northern Bee], 1848, no. 88, 22nd April.

19 P. Smirnovskii, like note 17, pp. 271–272.

foreground occupies a particularly important place, Gropius could have animated the foreground with staffage.

Thus, we can conclude with certainty that the paintings from the Academy of Fine Arts in Saint Petersburg are the 1847 series, ›The Seven Wonders‹. Yet the sources contradict each other in the question of authorship. Knoblauch describes the paintings as created by Gropius, as does Gropius himself. In Russian newspaper notes, Smirnovskii ascribes them to Roller. And ›The Inventory‹ of the Academy of Fine Arts name Biermann as the author. The most probable explanation is a mistake in Smirnovskii's text. He could have misstated the painter's name, because panoramas were normally associated with their owners, not the artists. A good example of a similar kind of mix-up is a message about the ›Panorama of Palermo‹ in the ›Hannoversche Magazin‹ (1844) which mentions the name of Gropius who arranged the panorama, but not Schinkel or Biermann who created the painting.<sup>20</sup> ›The Inventory‹, an official document of the Academy, must be precise in all the details. However, Roller sold the paintings to the Academy in 1880 – 30 years after the exhibition in Manezhnaia square. As the paintings were once presented together with the famous ›Panorama of Palermo‹ actually painted by Biermann, a person who recorded the information in a register could make a mistake. Moreover, even when the paintings were on show they were already incorrectly ascribed to a different artist (Roller), so were never associated with Gropius in Russia.

Furthermore, ›The Inventory‹ abounds in mistakes and inaccuracies. For instance, ›The Egyptian Labyrinth‹ is named the ›Sacred Alley of Sphinxes‹. Strictly speaking, this is not an error, but, importantly, the author names it after the most eye-catching architectural motif, notwithstanding the fact that ›the wonder‹ was not the alley of sphinxes itself, but the ensemble of the labyrinth. We know this from earlier German sources in which Schinkel's painting is called ›Egyptian Labyrinth‹<sup>21</sup> and, remarkably, from Smirnovskii's notes in Russian newspapers<sup>22</sup>. Here an inaccuracy was to be expected as the labyrinth did not belong to the ›canonical‹ wonders. The lists of wonders had their roots in ancient sources. Although in the Middle Ages the number of them differed reaching 8, 16 and even 29 wonders<sup>23</sup>, with time the old tradition with the number seven prevailed and long-established subjects dominated, with infrequent variations. The labyrinth was not among them. As a striking spectacle, the labyrinth is first mentioned by Gaius Plinius Secundus in the 36<sup>th</sup> book of his encyclopaedic ›Natural history‹. Plinius makes out four labyrinths: the earliest in Egypt, the second one on Crete, the third one on Lemnos and the fourth in Italy<sup>24</sup>. Later, a long anonymous list of wonders dated around 1300 C.E. features the Cretan labyrinth. Giorgio Sanginatio, a Greek doctor working in Rome, also mentions the Cretan labyrinth in his poem on the sixteen wonders of the world (1524).<sup>25</sup> So, the Egyptian labyrinth was not only unmentioned in the traditional list of wonders, but also overshadowed by the Cretan one. We do not know for sure why Schinkel preferred the Labyrinth to the traditional ›Lighthouse of Alexandria‹ – presumably because of his interest in exotic Oriental culture which would be brilliantly embodied in his decorations for ›Die Zauberflöte‹ just a year later. But it is little wonder that soon the subject of the painting was forgotten. On a sketch from the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (known by its photo as the drawing was lost in World War Two) was an inscription: ›Labyrinth in Creta‹. The inscription was made not by Schinkel, but emerged later. Alfred von Wolzogen also calls the painting ›Das Laby-

rinth von Creta‹<sup>26</sup>. Carl von Lorck names the painting ›Kretische Labyrinth‹<sup>27</sup>. Thus, confusion about the painting in ›The Inventory‹ of the Academy is understandable<sup>28</sup>.

More perplexing is the title of the painting which conveys the ›Temple of Artemis‹. In ›The Inventory‹ it is named ›A Temple of Athena (Pyramidal)‹. How could it happen that in the Academy of Fine Arts, focused on ancient traditions, a temple of Artemis was mixed up with a temple of Athena? This even though only the first was always considered a ›wonder‹ and the latter was not? This can be explained only by the negligence of the author of the ›Inventory‹. And this bears out the suggestion that he must have made a mistake in ascribing the paintings to Biermann.

In addition, attributions of some of the other twelve decorative paintings sold to the Academy of Fine Arts by Roller and attributed in ›The Inventory‹ to Roller need to be re-examined. There are strong grounds to think that some of them are also connected with Gropius, this time with his ›Berliner Panorama‹ which was also later sold to Saint Petersburg. Gropius had a diorama of his own in Saint Petersburg, but could have sold some paintings to Roller as well. For example, among the twelve paintings in the Academy is the ›Inner Courtyard of the Church of San Marco in Venice‹ (fig. 12). Although the painting is called ›Inner Courtyard of the Church of San Marco in Venice‹ in the Inventory, in fact it presents the interior of the named cathedral. Roller planned to show a diorama titled ›Interior of the San Marco Cathedral in Venice‹ in one of the two annexes to the main building of ›Panorama of Palermo‹ which was to be built anew in Bol'shaia Morskaia street. We know this from a project of the facade of the building in which both extensions have inscriptions (1852).<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, Gropius presented ›Das Innere der St. Markuskirche in Venedi‹ in his diorama-building in Berlin in 1850. An advertisement informed the visitors that at the end of May the pictures would be sent to Saint Petersburg<sup>30</sup>. It is likely that this painting was sold to Roller and then came to the Academy of Fine Arts. However, the question needs further investigation as there are no pictures of the original painting shown in Berlin which would enable comparison with the painting now in the Academy. And no documents have so far been found confirming that Roller purchased

20 Börsch-Supan, like note 6, pp. 571–572.

21 Kugler, like note 4, p. 148. – Waagen, like note 5, p. 338.

22 Smirnovskii, like note 17, p. 271.

23 Max Kunze [ed.], Die Sieben Weltwunder der Antike: Wege der Wiedergewinnung aus sechs Jahrhunderten, exh. cat. [Stendal, Winckelmann-Museum, 16th August – 12th October 2003], Mainz 2003, pp. 11–12.

24 Kai Brodersen [ed.], Reiseführer zu den Sieben Weltwundern: Philon von Byzanz und andere antike Texte, Frankfurt am Main, Leipzig, 1992, pp. 62, 81–83.

25 Ibid, pp. 135–137, 141.

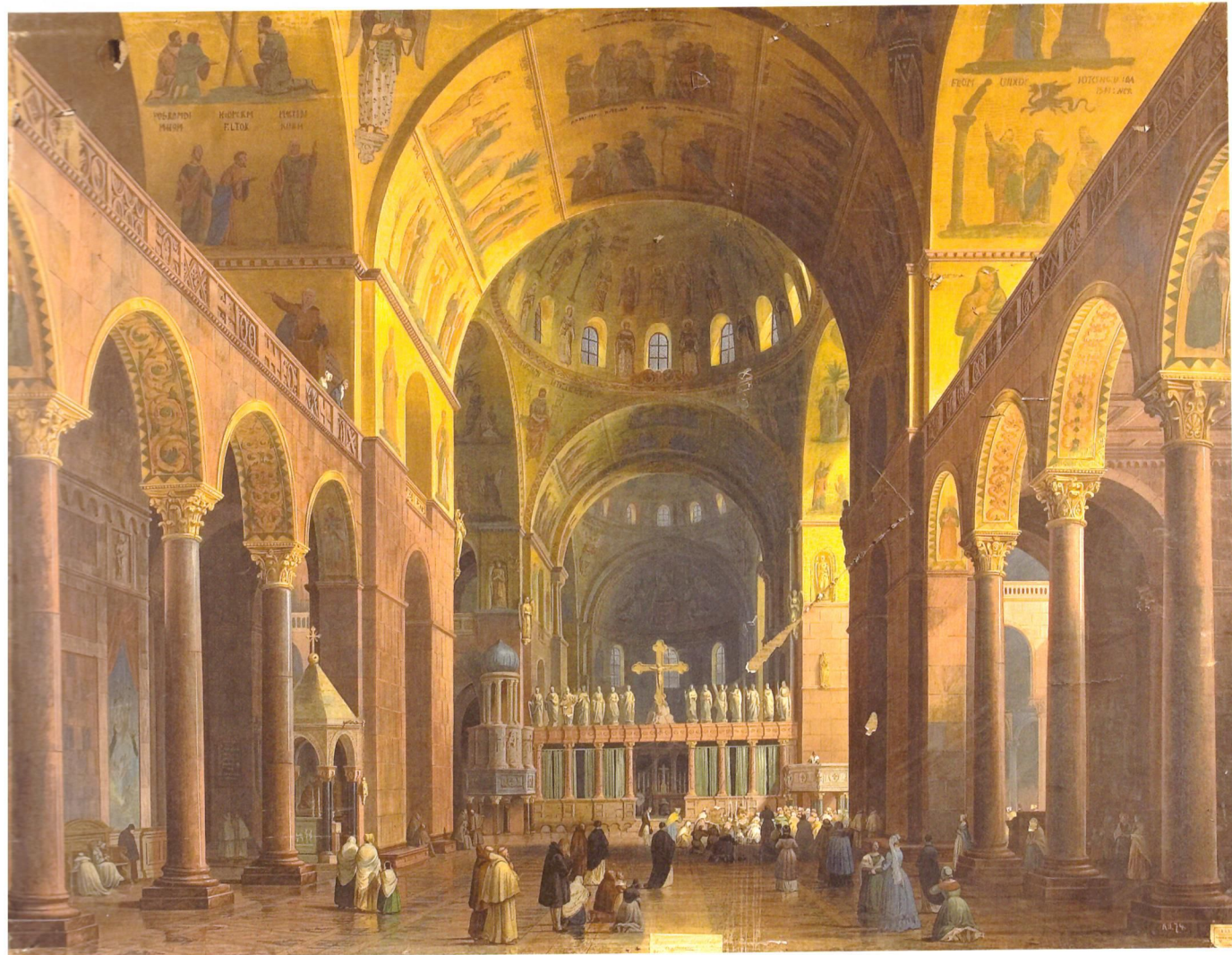
26 Alfred von Wolzogen, Aus Schinkel's Nachlass. Reisetagebuecher, Briefe und Aphorismen. Mitgeteilt und mit einem Verzeichniss saemtlicher Werke Schinkels versehen, vol. 2, Berlin, 1862–1864 (Nachdruck Mittenwald 1981), p. 272.

27 Carl von Lorck, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Berlin 1939, p. 18.

28 It is also worth questioning the name of the painting, ›The Hanging Gardens of Semiramis‹. It was always displayed under this name and there is no doubt that in the foreground are the fabulous gardens. However, it does not mention another extraordinary highlight of the city – the Tower of Babel. Can not the stepped pyramid in the background be taken for the famed ziggurat?

29 Skvortcova, like note 16, p. 905.

30 Erich Stenger, Daguerres Diorama in Berlin: ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der Photographie, Berlin 1925, pp. 49–50.



12 The Interior of St. Marcus Cathedral in Venice – a diorama demonstrated by Karl Wilhelm Gropius in Berlin in 1850 (?). Distemper, paper on canvas. 302×231 cm. Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Saint Petersburg. Inv. no. Ж-2798

the ›Inner Courtyard (or Interior) of the Church of San Marco in Venice‹ from Gropius.

Even trickier is to identify other paintings from the Academy of Fine Arts. Firstly, the titles from ›The Inventory‹ are often inexact, so it is complicated to correlate them with titles of Gropius's dioramas. Secondly, we possess no pictures of many of Gropius's dioramas. However, it is tempting to identify one more painting from the Academy – ›Roofed gallery of a Catholic Monastery‹ (fig. 13) – with a diorama demonstrated by Gropius and purchased by Roller. In the other annex of the rotunda of ›Panorama of Palermo‹, Roller planned to exhibit ›View of the Inner Courtyard of Monastery Sank Groc‹. In 1850 in Berlin Gropius presented, alongside ›Das Innere der St. Markuskirche in Venedig‹, a diorama called ›Der Hof und Kreuzgang des alten Klosters Sta. Croce in Florenz‹.<sup>31</sup> It was also to be sold to Saint Petersburg according to German sources.<sup>32</sup> And it was in spring 1851 that Roller asked Emperor Nicholas's permission to add two rooms for dioramas to the ›Panorama of Palermo‹. So we can suggest that both paintings to be presented with ›Panorama of Palermo‹ were purchased by Roller from Gropius and are now in the Academy of Fine Arts in Saint Petersburg. This also helps to decipher a strange name under which one of

them was to be displayed in Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An enigmatic monastery called Sank Groc is in fact Santa Croce in Florence. There is, regrettably, no picture of Gropius's diorama shown in Berlin and no documents proving my suggestion. Thus, it is impossible unequivocally to equate the paintings. However, the painting from the Academy of Fine Arts indeed depicts the inner yard of Santa Croce with Brunelleschi's famous Pazzi Chapel. And this certainly lends substantive credence to my claim.

Returning to ›The Seven Wonders‹, a mistake in the name of the author in ›The Inventory‹ is more than likely. And German sources are certainly more trustworthy when it comes to the attribution of this series. Gropius is not always absolutely precise in his letter to Wolzogen, as has already been observed by Helmut Börsch-Supan. But it beggars belief that he could forget that the copies were made not by himself, but by Biermann! His formulations are straightforward; he recollects the story with significant details. Remarkably, in the same letter he writes about creating a copy of ›Panorama of Palermo‹ and names Biermann

31 Ibid, p. 42.

32 Ibid, p. 42.



13 Roofed gallery of a Catholic Monastery – a diorama ›The Courtyard and Cloister of the Old Santa Croce Monastery in Florence‹ exhibited by Karl Wilhelm Gropius in Berlin in 1850 (?). Distemper, paper on canvas. 302×231 cm. Russian Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Saint Petersburg. Inv. no. Ж-2800

as the author. So he was definitely not about to appropriate the glory of another artist. Eventually, Gropius points out that he assisted Schinkel in creating the original version of the paintings. And above all, his authorship is confirmed by Knoblauch – remarkably, in the notes which appeared long before his own letter to Wolzogen.

An important question is how the pictures were presented. It is closely connected with the nature of such a complicated phenomenon as a diorama painting. Notably, there is controversy over the term. Karl Wilhelm Gropius in his letter to Alfred von Wolzogen calls ›The Seven Wonders‹ simply ›Bilder‹<sup>33</sup>. When they were on show for the first time in 1814, they were called ›Gegenstände‹ in the advertisement in the ›Berlinische Nachrichten von Staats- und gelehrten Sachen‹<sup>34</sup>. Other similar paintings were named in contemporary periodicals in a descriptive way: ›Darstellungen merkwürdiger Bauwerke und Naturgegenstände‹<sup>35</sup>. The term ›perspektivisch-optische Bilder‹ emerged later when Wilhelm Gropius inherited those paintings and showed them again in Berlin, Leipzig and Königsberg<sup>36</sup>. Details about the original mode of presentation of the paintings (not ›The Seven Wonders‹ in particular, but other paintings of this kind) are provided by the ›Berlinische Nachrichten‹: ›These pictures are shown on a flat area about 20 feet

long and 13 feet high. The spectator looks at the picture from about 30 feet away, and views it through a long colonnade which, because of its false perspective construction, seems elongated far beyond reality‹<sup>37</sup>.

An even more elaborate description is offered by Ludwig Catel: ›Powerful illumination with lamps both in front of the picture and behind it for the transparencies increased the illusion produced by the whole thing, which for the following reasons seems to be greater than that produced by usual panoramas: in the panorama the spectator's viewpoint is inside the picture, and so he has to use his imagination to weave his own ego into the illusion. On the other hand, in the presenta-

33 Börsch-Supan, like note 6, p. 649.

34 Berlinische Nachrichten von Staats- und gelehrten Sachen, 1814, no. 118 (1st October 1814), p. 5.

35 Börsch-Supan, like note 6, p. 564.

36 Börsch-Supan, like note 6, p. 564.

37 ›Diese Vorstellungen befinden sich auf einer planen Bildfläche von circa 20 Fuß Länge und 13 Fuß Höhe. Der Zuschauer sieht auf ihngefähr 30 Fuß vom Bild ab, und erblickt dasselbe durch einen langen Säulengang, der durch seinen künstlerischen perspektivischen Bau, weit über die Wirklichkeit verlängert erscheint.‹ Helmut Börsch-Supan. Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Bühnendwürfe; stage designs, Ernst 1990, vol. 1, pp. 28–29.

ns under discussion, the spectator, as in a normal theatre, is in a special place, in front of which the magic mirror is unveiled, upon which the magic illusion is painted... Faced with the enchanting sight of these presentations, anyone who is familiar with art will be forced to suppress the secret pious wish that our theatres will soon imitate an example of this kind of theatrical presentation and would adopt these merits of setting for the theatre<sup>38</sup>.

The same features were later noted by Franz Kugler: ›When viewing a panorama, which implies only overall sight of the area with undetermined borders, an eye wanders from one object to another and, though without a fixed viewpoint, perceives the overall picture, some splendid parts of it, but in general loses innumerable near and distant objects and can observe only the uncompleted picture; whereas with these paintings, when the curtain falls, it is from the magical darkness which has enveloped them through the well-arranged perspective colonnade that an eye slides across the scenes artfully and tastefully composed, appropriately lit up and shown from a certain point which enforces the examined view with meaning and prevents the free flight of fantasy to set borders<sup>39</sup>.

Alfred von Wolzogen, drawing on Gropius's reminiscences, adds to showing the pictures was accompanied by music: ›It was arranged that the pictures were shown once or twice a week accompanied by singing. Grell, Rungenhagen and other top quartets played this accompaniment which together with the pictures made an indescribable impression<sup>40</sup>.

Some of the researchers use the historical term ›perspektivisch-optische‹ (perspective-optical) paintings to describe the Schinkel works known by Wilhelm Gropius (Gustav Waagen<sup>41</sup>, Andreas Haus<sup>42</sup>, Stephan Oettermann<sup>43</sup>, Jörg Trempler<sup>44</sup>). However, some scholars including Helmut Börsch-Supan<sup>45</sup>, Carl von Lorck<sup>46</sup>, Ulrike Harten<sup>47</sup>, Annett Rensg<sup>48</sup>, Axel Rügler<sup>49</sup>, Stephanie-Gerrit Bruer<sup>50</sup> use the term ›diorama‹. Needless to say, Schinkel's paintings differ from what we now call ›dioramas‹. They lack a continuous curved surface to the background and tilted substantive plane<sup>51</sup>, with moving mechanical figures as a sort of substitute for the latter. However, lighting effects, especially the combination of front and back lighting, are certainly akin to those typical of panoramas. Moreover, a construction of a special tunnel for the viewing of Schinkel's ›perspektivisch-optische‹ paintings invites comparison to Louis Daguerre's works. They were also not identical to contemporary panoramas. But this still does not prevent us from calling him the inventor of this artistic phenomenon. There is in any case a distinction to be made between paintings by Schinkel and by Daguerre: Daguerre's were much larger (22 × 14 metres, whereas Schinkel's paintings are 2 × 3 metres; however, the length of a tunnel was almost the same: 13 metres and 9 metres respectively). Diorama painting by its very nature welcomes new experiments. So none of the existing definitions of it can be accepted as definitive: diorama painting would develop and the definitions would change.<sup>52</sup> Thus, we can safely call Schinkel's ›perspektivisch-optische Bilder‹ dioramas.

Were ›The Seven Wonders of the World‹ presented in Russia in the same way? There are no detailed descriptions of the process of their showing in Russian sources. However, in Smirnovskii's articles in ›Literaturnaya gazeta‹ and in ›Vedomosti Sankt-Peterburgskoi gorodskoi politzii‹ there are some noteworthy remarks which offer a chance to construct the specific arrangements. In ›Literaturnaya gazeta‹ Smir-

novskii describes ›The Seven Wonders of the World‹ as ›seven large paintings in the form of panoramas‹ (here and further translation from Russian by Ekaterina Skvortcova). Each particular painting was obviously not a panorama, i.e. not a large cylindrical painting surrounding the spectator in virtual continuum. In the rotunda of the ›Panorama of Palermo‹ there was, of course, no space for seven separate panoramas. They may feasibly have been exhibited in the same room as the large ›Panorama of Palermo‹ placed in the form of a huge polygon, so that the ›Palermo‹ and ›The Seven Wonders‹ were presented alternately. However, the use of the plural form in Russian (›in the form of panoramas‹, not ›in the form of a panorama‹) contradicts such an interpretation. By this time, the meaning of the term ›panorama‹ was not so strict, the word also being used to describe a large-format painting covering a wide space. The term was used in the same way by Ludwig Catel. Furthermore, Smirnovskii precedes the list of paintings with a phrase: ›This is the order in which they are daily shown to the visitors‹. In ›Vedomosti Sankt-Peterburgskoi gorodskoi politzii‹ he is even more exact. He says that they are displayed ›in a separate, excellent and comfortable room‹, emphasising that he ›narrates about them in the sequence in

38 ›Eine kräftige Lampen-Erleuchtung, sowohl vor dem Bilde als hinter demselben zu den Transparents, vermehren die Täuschung des Ganzen, welche aus folgenden Gründen diejenige der gewöhnlichen Panoramen zu übertreffen scheint: Im Panorama liegt der Standpunkt des Betrachters im Bilde selbst, derselbe muß also seine Einbildungskraft anspannen, um sein eigenes Ich in die Täuschung zu verweben. Bei den hier erwähnten Vorstellungen hingegen, bleibt der Zuschauer wie bei den gewöhnlichen Bühnen in einem besonderen Raume, vor welchem sich der Zauber-Spiegel enthüllt, auf den sich das magische Blendwerk malt... Bei dem bezaubernden Anblick dieser Vorstellungen wird einem jeden Kunstkenner der heimlich fromme Wunsch abgedrungen, daß doch unsre Bühnen bald ein Beispiel dieser Art der theatralischen Darstellung nachahmen und dieser Vorzüge der Decorationen der Theaters aneignen möchten.‹ Börsch-Supan, like note 37, pp. 29–31.

39 ›Wenn das Auge bei Vorlegung eines Panoramas, welches nur den allgemeinen Überblick einer ganzen Gegend in weniger bestimmten Grenzen beabsichtigt, ungewiß von einem Gegenstande zu den andern irrt, und, ohne gewissen Standpunkt, das Bild des ganzen zwar aufnimmt, die einzelnen vorzüglich schönen Partien aber in der Masse zahlloser näher und entfernterer Gegenstände verliert und nur unvollkommen beobachten kann; so gleitet es bei diesen Gemälden, sobald der Vorhang aufrollt, aus dem magischen Dunkel, welches es vorher umschloß, durch eine wohlgeordnete perspektivische Colonnade auf Scenen, welche mit Kunst und Geschmack gewählt, zweckmäßig beleuchtet, bei einem bestimmten Gesichtspunkt, den forschenden Blick des Verstandes fesseln, ohne dem freien Fluge der Phantasie Grenzen setzen zu wollen.‹ Börsch-Supan, like note 6, p. 564.

40 ›Die Einrichtung war so getroffen, daß die Bilder an einigen oder an zwei Tagen in der Woche mit Gesang begleitet wurden. Grell, Rungenhagen und andere der besten Quartett-sänger hatten diese Musikbegleitung übernommen, die zusammen mit den Bildern einen nicht zu beschreibenden Eindruck hervorbrachte.‹ Wolzogen, like note 7, vol. 2, p. 345.

41 Waagen, like note 5, p. 338.

42 Andreas Haus, Karl Friedrich Schinkel als Künstler. Annäherung und Kommentar. Munich 2001, p. 92.

43 Stephan Oettermann, Das Panorama. Die Geschichte eines Massenmediums, Frankfurt am Main 1980, p. 160.

44 Jörg Trempler, Karl Friedrich Schinkel – Baumeister Preußens. Eine Biographie, Munich 2012.

45 Börsch-Supan, like note 7, p. 561.

46 Lorck, like note 25, p. 17–19.

47 Harten, like note 11, p. 22.

48 Kunze, like note 21, p. 64.

49 Ibid, p. 9.

50 Ibid, p. 108.

51 Aleksei Druzhinin, Khudozhestvennaia diorama kak vid iskusstva [Diorama as a Form of Art], PhD Thesis [State Institute for Art Studies, unpublished], Moscow 2014, pp. 15–16.

52 Ibid, pp. 15–16, 20–21.

which he has seen them‹, and that each picture appears ›when the curtain falls‹ (he repeats this twice – when speaking about ›The Hanging Gardens‹ and ›The Temple of Diana‹). He also mentions the lighting of the pictures: ›When looking at these splendid pictures, one does not know what to admire more – the depiction of objects deserving genuine amazement [...] the artist who managed to execute superbly such splendid pictures which strike us with their naturalness or the art with which they are shown and lit up‹. So we can conclude that the way of exhibiting such pictures was close to that used in Gropius's mechanical theatre – they were shown one by one, appearing as if on a theatrical stage after the curtain fell, and skilfully lit (although we cannot say whether they were simply lit up or the lighting was changing, turning the showing of each picture into a sort of a performance). There is regrettably no word about music or about a tunnel-style colonnade separating the viewer from the painting – thus, there is no evidence whether such effects were used or not.

Smirnivskii emphasizes that he lists the paintings in the sequence in which they were shown: ›Mausoleum at Halicarnassus‹, ›Egyptian Labyrinth‹, ›Egyptian Pyramids‹, ›Diana's Temple in Ephesus‹, ›Colossus of Rhodes‹, ›The Hanging Gardens of Semiramis‹, and ›The Statue of Jupiter of Olympia‹. Remarkably, the sequence reproduces the one described by Franz Kugler<sup>53</sup>. Unlike Smirnovskii, Kugler does not state that this was the order in which they were presented. But the fact that they match is remarkable. Though Gustav Waagen registers the paintings in a different sequence<sup>54</sup>, there are still some congruencies: ›Egyptian Labyrinth‹ and ›Egyptian Pyramids‹ are placed as numbers two and three, while ›The Statue of Jupiter of Olympia‹ is at the end of the list, presumably marking, as Helmut Börsch-Supan pointed out, the climax of the performance.

Tellingly, both Schinkel and Roller were connected to the theatre. Not only did Schinkel later show himself to be an outstanding theatre decorator, but he also devised at the dawn of his career a thorough reform of the theatre, which was based on principles close to those of the pictures shown in the mechanical theatre of Wilhelm Gropius<sup>55</sup>. Roller in his turn was the main machine operator and decorator of the Imperial Theatres in Saint Petersburg. He was also famous for staging ›living pictures‹ there.

Schinkel's series is a certain milestone in the development of the ›The Seven Wonders‹ theme in fine arts. After a number of engraved series, going back to the one after the drawing by Maarten van Heemskerck (1572)<sup>56</sup>, this was the first painted cycle. The only precursors of the Schinkel series in this respect were fresco-seccoes in Velturms Castle (Velturmo), 1582, and frescoes in Neustift Abbey (Novacella), 1669, in South Tyrol, replicating engravings after van Heemskerck's drawings. Axel Rügler<sup>57</sup> and Stephanie Gerrit Bruer<sup>58</sup> compare Schinkel's ›Seven Wonders‹ primarily with Guckkastenbilder by Georg Balthasar Probst (1731–1801), obviously as they both belong to what can be called ›experimental kinds of art‹ trying to attract the attention of the general public. In Russia a forerunner of the Schinkel series in art of this kind were ›The Seven Wonders‹ on show in the 1830s in Joseph Lexa's cosmorama in Kossikovski's house at the corner of Malaia Morsaia and the Nevsky Prospect<sup>59</sup>, the history of which still remains obscure<sup>60</sup>.

The ›Seven Wonders of the World‹ series from the Academy of Fine Arts is valuable not only per se, but also as a source shedding light on

Schinkel's dioramas in general. Researchers often assert that in mature years Schinkel sought to distance himself from this sort of painting. However, evidently he used some of the motifs from them in his sketches for theatrical scenery which proves that he was certainly not disappointed in his dioramas. Several researchers have already pointed out that the temple of Artemis in Schinkel's decoration for ›Olympia‹ and the temple of Apollo in ›Alceste‹ replicate the depiction of the temple of Jupiter in Olympia from ›The Seven Wonders‹ series (in the case of the decoration for ›Alceste‹ the similarity is reinforced by the same posture given to the statue)<sup>61</sup>. The characteristic forms of the arches in ›The Hanging Gardens of Semiramis‹ were echoed in his Taurida museum project in the palace of Orianda in the Crimea meant for Nicholas I<sup>62</sup>. The list can be continued with the huge sphinx in the sketch for the decoration of ›Die Zauberflöte‹ which is a transcript from ›Egyptian Pyramids‹, while the alley of sphinxes in the yard of Orianda Palace is a fresh interpretation of the old motif used in the ›The Egyptian Labyrinth‹ diorama. A row of sphinxes is also represented in the decoration for ›Die Zauberflöte‹ depicting the Temple of Sarastro. The sphinxes alley motif itself was not invented by Schinkel, but borrowed from ›Voyage pittoresque en Syrie‹ by Luis-François Cassas (1799). However, tellingly, after introducing it into his diorama, he used it again and again.

Besides, these paintings demonstrate Schinkel's interest in the relationship between architecture and nature which would later prove so important for him as for an architect. Franz Kugler noted: ›At the same time Schinkel perceived the works with perfect poetical imagination in their climatic environment and treated them with diverse light effects, so that they appear modern‹<sup>63</sup>. Mountains, trees and other ›elements of nature‹ are not elaborately conveyed. And it is indeed due to carefully calculated proportions and atmospheric and light effects that they are perceived as compelling natural surroundings. The sketches reveal that in ›Mausoleum of Halicarnassus‹, ›Temple of Artemis in Ephesus‹, ›Egyptian Pyramids‹, and ›The Hanging Gardens of Semiramis‹, the

53 Kugler, like note 5, p. 148.

54 ›The Hanging Gardens of Semiramis‹, ›Egyptian Labyrinth‹, ›Egyptian Pyramids‹, ›Colossus of Rhodes‹, ›Mausoleum at Halicarnassus‹, ›Diana's Temple in Ephesus‹, ›The Statue of Jupiter of Olympia‹. Waagen, like note 6, pp. 338–339.

55 Friederike Knipper, ›Zwischen ›symbolischer Andeutung‹ und ›historischer Treue‹. Karl Friedrich Schinkels Arbeiten für das Berliner Hoftheater, in: Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Geschichte und Poesie. Das Studienbuch, Berlin 2012, pp. 73–82.

56 Kunze, like note 21, p. 12.

57 Kunze, like note 21, p. 95.

58 Kunze, like note 21, p. 108.

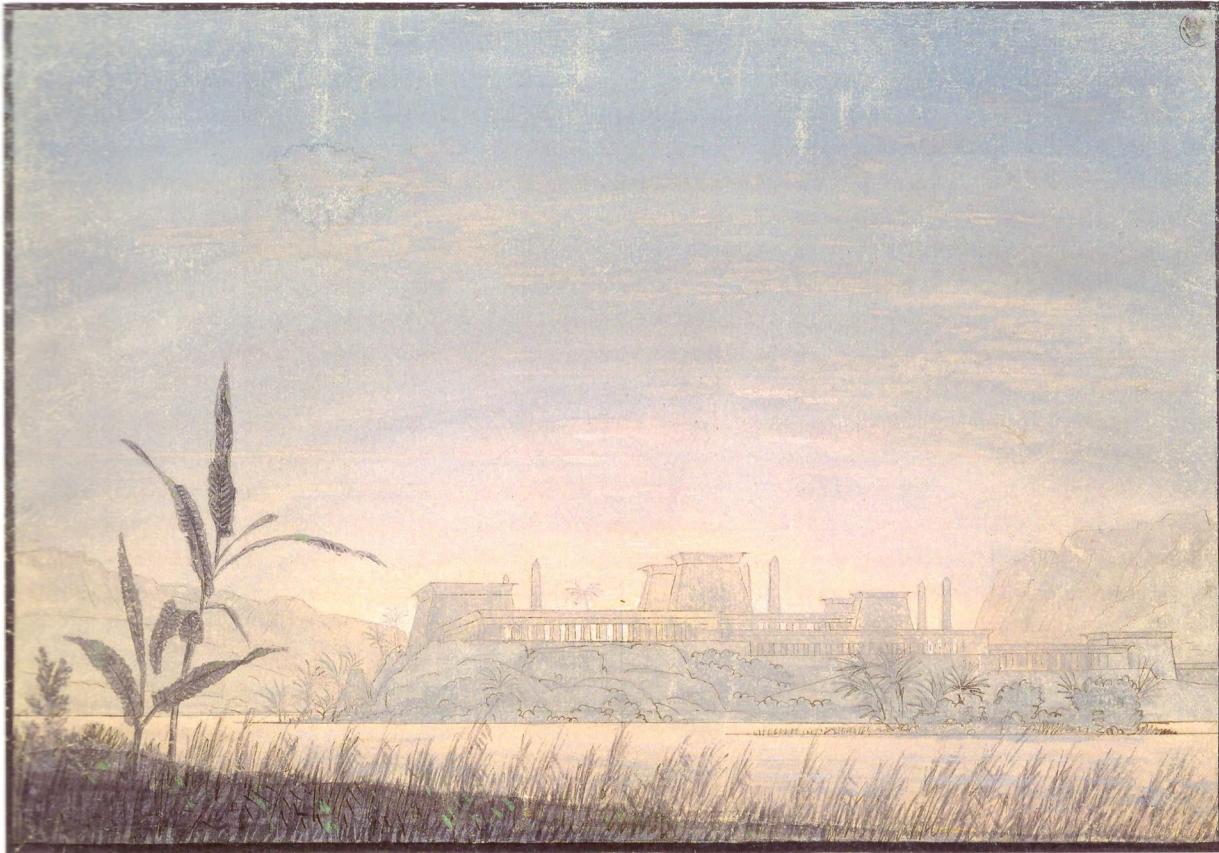
59 Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti [Saint Petersburg Times], 1833, 31st December.

60 On cosmorama in Russia see: Alina Novik, Motiv ›voobrazhaemogo putesthestvija‹ v panoramnyh predstavlenijah pervoj poloviny XIX veka v Rossii [A Motif of Imaginary Trip in Panoramic Performances of the First Half of the 19th Century in Russia], in: Aktual'nye problemy teorii i istorii iskusstva [Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art], 2017, vol. VII.

61 Börsch-Supan, like note 7, p. 625.

62 Margarete Kühn, Ausland. Bauten und Entwürfe (Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Lebenswerk, vol. 15), Berlin 1989, pp. 95–96. The author names what is in fact the gardens of Semiramis Mausoleum of Halicarnassos by mistake (Drei Skizzen zu den hängenden Gärten der Semiramis & Skizze zu den ägyptischen Pyramiden. Inv. no. SM 20c.163).

63 ›Zugleich aber hatte Schinkel, mit vollkommener poetischer Freiheit, die Werke in ihrer klimatischen Umgebung aufgefasst und sie durch verschiedenartige Lichtwirkung auf eine Weise behandelt, dass sie unmittelbar gegenwärtig zu sein schienen.‹ Kugler, like note 4, p. 149.



14 Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Landscape with Sarastros city (10th decoration for ›Die Zauberflöte‹). Circa 1815. Gouache, pen, paper (vergé), 32.7 x 46.8 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett. Inv. no. SM 22c.111. Photo: R. Saczewski

interaction of architecture and nature played an important role from the very beginning. Notably, in the last case, out of the two different but equally well-known wonders of the city of Babylon – the walls and the hanging gardens – Schinkel prefers the latter.

Even more significantly, the paintings from Saint Petersburg Academy allow us to assess the purely artistic influence of these series on later works by Schinkel. It was in these paintings that Schinkel found the sophisticated Oriental palette of gentle bluish and pinkish colours – as though the landscape is touched by the rays of the rising sun – which was then used by him in the delightful sketches for ›Die Zauberflöte‹. The colours of ›Landscape with Sarastros city‹ (10<sup>th</sup> decoration, SM 22c.111, fig. 14), ›The Yard in front of the Temple of Sarastros‹ (4<sup>th</sup> decoration, SM 22c.118), ›Front Hall of the Labyrinth‹ (8<sup>th</sup> decoration, SM 22d.96) recall with variations the bluish-pinkish palette of ›Mausoleum of Halicarnassus‹, ›The Hanging Gardens of Semiramis‹, and ›The Temple of Artemis‹, while the deep blue of ›The Garden Sarastros with Sphinx in the Moonlight‹ (7<sup>th</sup> decoration, SM 22b.102, fig. 15) and ›A Palm Grove, the Place of Assembly of Priests‹ (5<sup>th</sup> decoration, SM Th.20 = C.23 (alt)) are evocative of ›The Egyptian Pyramids‹.

The paintings perfectly render Oriental colours and, notably, without the use of plain air. Such a success is rooted in an understanding of light which was absolutely central for Romantics. In natural philosophy light is opposed to matter<sup>64</sup>. A splendid artistic embodiment of such an opposition is found in the painting ›Pyramids‹ in which shimmering light slides upon the surface of massive stones. This very feature was

noted by Kugler: ›So were the Egyptian Pyramids, their simple colossality was fittingly conveyed in twilight, in the foreground partly covered from the side with palms and emerging again behind the gigantic sphinx‹<sup>65</sup>.

The ideas of Romanticism reflected in the paintings are masterfully formulated in a splendid description by Smirnovskii: ›When looking at this marvellous painting, a viewer sees something like a magnificent graveyard with several colossal monuments in the foreground; between them are bent palms, poetically sad, embodying eternal dolefulness. To the right from the greenery of wild plants, one sees drowsing waters slightly glittering and reflecting the silver disc of the rising crescent; semi-darkness enveloping the monuments reminds us that it's night, but what a night! The night of poetry and ineffably delightful thoughts... Behind the monuments are pyramids in an orderly row sharply silhouetted against the violet sky, their tops gilded with delicate reddish rays of the set sun, and the closer to the ground, the darker become their lower parts and, finally, in the foundation blend with the shades of the green. That whole sublime picture of half-dead nature is full of sweet melancholy, and if one looks at it for a long time, miraculous sadness

64 Birgit Verwiebe, *Lichtspiele: vom Mondscheintransparent zum Diorama*, Stuttgart 1997, p. 45.

65 ›So waren die ägyptischen Pyramiden, ihre schlichten Colossität sehr angemessen in dem Dämmerlicht des Mondes gehalten, aus dem im Vorgrunde, zur Seite und halb von Palmen verdeckt, die riesige Gestalt einer Sphinx auftauchte.‹ Kugler, like note 4, p. 149.



15 Karl Friedrich Schinkel. The Garden Sarastros with Sphinx in the Moonlight (7th decoration for ›Die Zauberflöte‹). Circa 1815. Gouache, pencil, paper. 51 × 59.9 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett. Inv. no. SM 22b.102. Photo: J. P. Anders

comes to the soul and it is as pitiful to part from it as from a passionately-loved woman... The whole area with its semi-darkness, in some places illuminated with dim moonlight, strangely contradicting the sunlight, dominating the tops of the pyramids, deeply astounds us. You hear a slight, hardly noticeable breath of wind, streaming through the wide leaves of the palms and whispering to you a dream of love and death; in the meanwhile the giant pyramids with their conical highness are pointing to the eternity of the starry holy sky... And beneath again, luxurious greenery and tremulous phosphoric glitters of the moon reflected in the water beckon and enchant us with the earthly life<sup>66</sup>. (Translated from Russian by Ekaterina Skvortcova.)

All the paintings of the ›The Seven Wonders‹ series show transitional moments of the time of the day, when light struggles with darkness (despite ›The Statue of Jupiter of Olympia‹ depicting the monument at noon – it was the pinnacle of the series finishing it). The most overwhelming and mystical depiction of this struggle is certainly revealed in ›Egyptian pyramids‹. This is also suggestive of the Romantic way of thinking which would find its most powerful embodiment in Schinkel's art in the famed sketch for ›Die Zauberflöte‹ – ›Königin der Nacht‹ (›Die Zauberflöte‹, a sketch for the 2<sup>nd</sup> decoration, SM 22c.121) with its spirited dramatic interpretation of the struggle between light

and dark, with its deep-blue sky, flaming crimson clouds and shining-white crescent.

By way of conclusion, I would like to stress that ›The Seven Wonders of World‹ are a unique series of paintings. This is the only surviving painted cycle dedicated to this particular topic which, moreover, vividly reconstructs accurate, specific archaeological locations by convincingly fitting them into landscape (initially the effect was reinforced by a performance of mechanical figures). It was highly regarded by contemporaries, who emphasised the Romantic qualities of the series. The very fact that the paintings were purchased by the Russian Academy of Fine Arts testifies to their superb artistic quality. Above all, the paintings now discovered in Saint Petersburg, speak for themselves. The works now need restoration. This is partly a result of a complicated and fragile technique that underpins the works. Taking into account that the original Schinkel paintings, twice restored by Gropius, ultimately met with destruction, it is now imperative to attract attention to these subtle works that so closely replicate the lost originals.

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66 P. Smirnovskii, Sem' chudes drevnego mira [Seven Wonders of the World], in: ›Vedomosti Sankt-Peterburgskoi gorodskoi politsii‹ [›News of Saint Petersburg City Police‹], 1848, no. 87 (22nd April – 4th May), p. 1.