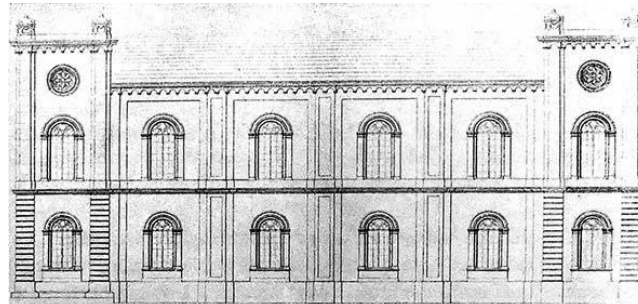
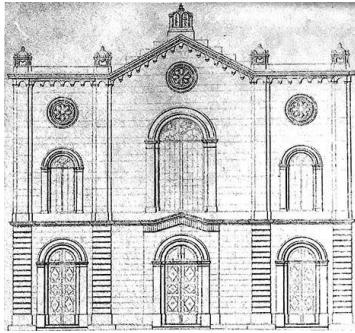


How to write plausibly about Architecture and architectural History, according to A. Rosengarten (1809-1893)

Stefan Muthesius



Figures 1 and 2 Kassel Synagoge by A. Rosengarten (official architect Landesbaumeister August Schuchardt) 1832 – 1839, front, *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* [Vienna], vol. 5, 1840, 205-0207, plates cccl and cccli.

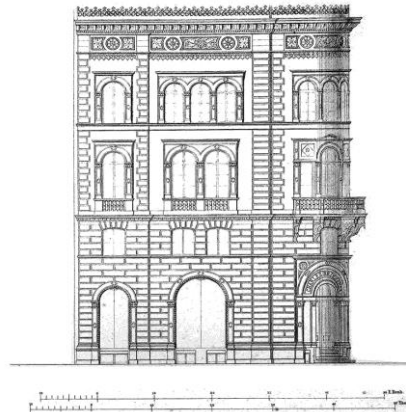
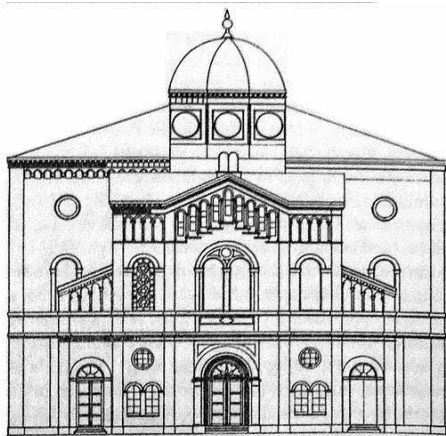


Figure 3 Hamburg Synagoge an den Kohlhfen by A. Rosengarten 1857 – 1859 (reconstruction drawing Saskia Rohde).

Figure 4 Wohnhaus [dwelling house] in Hamburg, by A. Rosengarten, *Zeitschrift für Bauwesen*, vol. III, Nos. III, IV, Bl. 13.

On the whole the career of architect A. Rosengarten must be rated as rather a modest one, but it was certainly also a very unusual one. Apart from Albert, Rosengarten used for first names also Albrecht and Abraham. His initial rise to fame lay with the claim of being the first Jewish architect to design a major synagogue, in Kassel, completed in 1839 (figs. 1 & 2). In Hamburg, where he settled after the great fire of 1842, he kept himself busy with diverse secular commissions, as well as with two relatively modest synagogues in the 1850s (figs. 3 & 4). Very few of his buildings made it into the professional journals of the time. His synagogues were

soon to be vastly outdone in other German towns. Their destruction has contributed further to the architect's oblivion.¹

A new tone in architectural writing



Figure 5 *Die Architektonische Stylarten* 'The architectonic kinds of styles. A short generally understandable presentation of the characteristic differences of the architectural kinds of styles for the correct use in art and crafts/trades, for architects, painters, sculptors, plasterers, building schools, higher schools of building, building tradesmen, modellers, workers in metal etc. etc. as well as for the instruction of well-educated friends of art and architecture'.

If asked for his own assessment of his career, Rosengarten would most likely have given priority to his publications. In the longer term the significance of the Synagogue in Kassel lay chiefly with the way it started off the architect's activity of writing on architecture, and in particular his foregrounding of issues of style, and more especially the question of a style suitable for synagogues. A number of very diverse kinds of publications followed, culminating in his major work in 1857, *Architektonische Stylarten*, a global history of architecture (figs. 5 & 6). Though a compact and very well illustrated volume, it had to compete with a number of very similar works, brought out by the new group of German art historians, Kugler, Schnaase and Lübke. Thus, all in all, as a writer, Rosengarten never achieved much fame either. Rather late in the day and rather unexpectedly, the 1876 English version of *Stylarten*, now with a more accessible title, *Handbook of architectural Styles*, enjoyed a long sequence of reprints well into the 20th century.

¹ Saskia Rohde, 'Albert Rosengarten. Die Anfänge des Synagogenbaues jüdischer Architekten in Deutschland', in: *Menora Jahrbuch für Deutsch-Jüdische Geschichte*, publ. Munich: Piper, 1993, 228-258; Saskia Rohde, *Die Synagoge an der Elbstrasse und die Synagoge an den Kohlhöfen. Eine Rekonstruktion in Zeichnungen*, Hamburg: Dölling & Galitz, 1991.

§. 254. Das Würfelcapital (Fig. 217), dessen vermuthlich auf byzantinische Kunst gegründete Bildung den harmonischen Uebergang

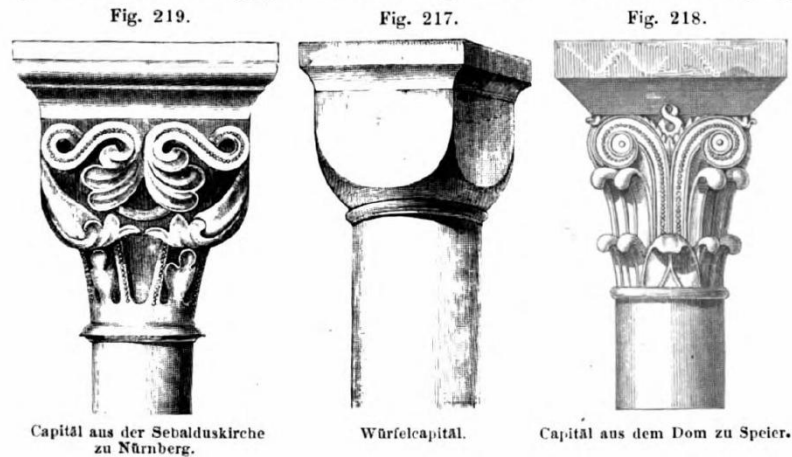


Figure 6 Romanesque capitals, including cushion capital (centre), from *Stylarten*, 1857 ed., p 199

What is remarkable about Rosengarten's writings is that they belong to a specific category, one that had hardly been met with before. Almost from the start Rosengarten must have decided not to join in with the then customary genres of architectural writing, on technology or on architectural theory or aesthetics; nor did he undertake work for historical monographs. His writings did not serve, except in the case of Kassel, as an explication of his own built work. Crucial was for him the reflection on his audiences, i.e. to ask: what was their socio-cultural and educational status, and would they be classified as lay people or as professionals? How would they receive his texts; how could he make his texts more palatable? Rosengarten seems to have lived in constant fear that he was too long.

The fact was that by the 1850s a new category of cheaper instructional texts in all branches of architecture and building had established itself, addressed primarily to a middling and lower class of professionals. Rosengarten's principal intended addressees belonged to the strata of the (culturally) educated classes. It seems that this was a completely new group, as yet difficult to characterise plausibly. When, in 1844, the architect and academic Thomas Leverton Donaldson introduced the English version of the illustrated book on architectural history by Jules Gailhabaud he claimed that they presented their material in a new way, namely 'without encumbering it with those elaborate details appreciable only by the scientific man' to a newly categorised audience, 'the general reader' or 'the public.'² For Rosengarten these problems of how to write, whom to address, were constantly on his mind and were elaborately expressed in the prefaces of almost every one of his contributions.

Rosengarten's writings deal with both architectural history and with contemporary buildings. Commentary on current architecture had, by 1840, hardly

² Jules Gailhabaud, *Ancient and Modern Architecture, First Series ...*, Preface, London: Firmin Didot, 1846.

begun. Fully-fledged, professional architectural journals with substantial texts and suitable plates had only just got going. Their principal contents were large buildings and undertakings with a technical side, such as canals and railway work. But the Vienna *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* was broad-minded enough to give Rosengarten space for a number of very diverse contributions, beginning with his report on Kassel in 1840.

Very likely Rosengarten was also the author of a critical article signed only with the Star of David in the *Kunstblatt* of 1847, discussing certain aspects of new buildings in London. Here the author begins by regretting what he saw as a lack of a critical approach in the English art and architectural press. At the end of the article he refers to the anonymously published book *Newleafs Discourses on the Fine Art Architecture of 1846* (written by Robert Kerr), an unprecedentedly sharpish satire of contemporary British architecture and the institutions that served it. The *Kunstblatt* author welcomes this approach, but at the same time warns of extremes. This could also sum up Rosengarten's own writing, taking a strong, explicitly personal-sounding stand but appearing conciliatory at the same time.³

An outcome of a stay with Henri Labrouste in Paris in the 1840s was his closely detailed analysis of the construction and the functions of the Bibliothèque Ste Geneviève in 1851.⁴ Of a somewhat different character is his report of the same year on new buildings in Berlin, Munich and Paris. It is more freely written and contains a multitude of evaluations, often boldly formulated. Rosengarten wants to convey a specific freshness of approach: and he begins his title with a '*flüchtige Rundschau*', a 'momentary look around'. The stress on the 'fleeting impression' he repeated later on, claiming that it could help with revealing 'some of the essentials'. Crucial is Rosengarten's definition of his audience here as '*meine Kollegen*', his fellow architects, who might easily entertain a 'different view'. 'Fleetingly'? What follows is anything but casual, amounting to two dozen pages of the most detailed observations of many of the newest buildings. Much attention and praise is devoted to the newest railway stations, especially in Paris. Rosengarten clearly belongs to those fascinated with the newest methods of construction. His analysis of the new station in Munich may also be taken as typical of his way of thinking. Regarding its main façade, '(...) it appears to me that the character of the building is not sufficiently expressed in that the great station hall, as the principal and essential aim, is not adequately perceived'. When dealing with new Gothic churches he reveals a sceptical attitude throughout. The new Petrikirche in Berlin lacks small-scale décor, while the red colouring applied to the brick facades of the Italian Gothic Wittelsbacher Palais in Munich gives a 'repulsive and disturbing impression'. Finally and more generally Rosengarten joins the critics of nineteenth century copyism. On Munich's Feldherrnhalle, a close copy of the Loggia dei Lanzi in Florence, he writes 'in spite of great financial effort and artistic forces [it] only

³ 'Architektonische Kunstmitteilungen aus London', *Kunstblatt* [published as part of *Morgenblatt*], No. 59, 2 December 1847, 233-235.

⁴ Rosengarten, 'Die Bibliothek St. Geneviève in Paris', *Allgemeine Bauzeitung*, vol. 16, 1851, 66-8.

demonstrates the distance between a time when architecture was self-created and today's imitation which shows only small traces of a creative activity'.⁵

Rosengarten's most daring attempt at a critical style of writing were his lengthy observations on the architecture of the Veneto in 1849. He began by stressing that the aim was to provide 'a compressed overview', whereby he offers to the non-professional the benefit of the 'fresh eye if the architect'. In this case the buildings were deemed to be known already to many and thus his criticisms could be seen as the principal *raison d'être* of the article. Hallowed names of the past came in for fundamental reproach, such as Palladio, whose buildings are judged to suffer from a 'lack of imagination', from 'timid imitation of the monuments of antiquity'.⁶

As an all-round journalistic success one must rate his contribution, in 1854, to one of Germany's principal intellectual serials, the multidisciplinary *Deutsche Vierteljahrs Schriften*, published by the country's top literary publisher, Cotta, who had also been the publisher of the *Kunstblatt*. Rosengarten begins his '*Architektonische Briefe*', or letters, with the contention that while architecture surrounds everybody everywhere, even the well-educated person normally lacks real understanding. His aim is to inform the 'younger architects', but more importantly, to serve also the 'lay person as an aid to a better understanding of an existing building or a building yet to be built'. Essentially, the thirteen '*Briefe*' present a potted architectural theory, as well as a short architectural history, basically Vitruvian in outlook, but with a sharpened rationalist emphasis on the determining factor of the material. Aesthetic value judgments are distributed cautiously.⁷ Rosengarten's last book, *Architekturbilder aus Paris und London*, of 1860, follows in the same vein as his long article of 1851. Once again he writes of 'fleeting impressions', 'sketches', which help with identifying 'some of the essentials'.

⁵ A. Rosengarten, 'Flüchtige Rundschau der neuesten architektonischen Leistungen in Berlin, München und Paris', *Allgemeine Bauzeitung Notizblatt*, Vol. 16, No. 3, August 1851, 17-42; '[...] einiges wesentliche', A. Rosengarten, *Architekturbilder aus Paris und London*, Hamburg Perthes 1860, vii; 'meine Kollegen', Berlin München, 42; 'leicht dürfte ein anderer dieselben verschieden auffassen', Berlin München, 17; '...scheint mir das Charakteristische nicht genuegend ausgedrückt in dem jene grosse dahinetriegedne Unterfahrtshalle als Haupt- und wesentliches Ziel nicht in angemessener Weise zu erkennen ist', Berlin München, 22; 'widrigen störenden Eindruck', Berlin München, 23; '...trotz des grossen Aufwandes an Mitteln und künstlerischen Kräften ... nur Zeugnis von dem Abstand ablegt zwischen Werken jener Zeit, in der man mit Bewusstsein dem Zeitgeist und einer allgemeinen Kunstrichtung entsprechend selbstständig schuf in und der heutigen Nachahmung derselben, die nur geringe Spuren einer einer schöpferischen Tätigkeit zeigen'. Berlin München, 22.

⁶ A. Rosengarten, 'Die Architektur und die Architekten Venedigs', *Allgemeine Bauzeitung*, Vol. 14, 1849, 66-90; 'Frische Auge des Architekten', 68; 'gedrängten Übersicht zusammengefasst', 66; 'ängstliche Nachahmung der antiken Denkmäler', 'Mangel an Phantasie', 84.

⁷ 'Laien als Hilfsmittel zum besseren Verständnis eines bestehenden oder zu errichtenden Bauwerks', A. Rosengarten, '*Architektonische Briefe*', *Deutsche Vierteljahrs Schrift* (Stuttgart-Tübingen, Cotta) 1854, 3. Heft, 221-279 (279).

Indeed, the language is looser and the value judgments more decisive and in the case of new buildings, mostly negative.⁸

Rosengarten's 'popular' handbook of architectural history

In his *'Briefe'* of 1854 Rosengarten mentioned what he had already set his sights on, namely a comprehensive work on the history of architecture, of the new handbook type of publication. At that moment he could hardly have known about the number of similar books that were being written or brought out by a new group of writers, the art historians, Franz Kugler, Carl Schnaase, Wilhelm Lübke and Jacob Burckhardt. Indeed, one may claim that in those years the new genre was already reaching an early peak of its production. In its general shape and contents Rosengarten's *Stylarten* appears much the same as those works, using, in particular, the main divisions of Kugler's *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* of 1842. In contrast with most of his competitors Rosengarten brought out his work of 1857 not in parts or instalments, but in one complete volume. But then it amounted to a fraction of the texts by Kugler and Schnaase and only to about half of Lübke's book. Hardly based on the author's own research, one could not expect *Stylarten* to match Kugler's infinite care and precision, nor the measured, elevated prose of Schnaase, to whom Rosengarten paid tribute by quoting a passage as the motto at the beginning of his book, nor was Lübke's often gushing rhetoric to Rosengarten's taste.

First and foremost the term *'Handbuch'* suggests simply a widening of outlook. But the issues brought up by the new genre from the late 1830s onwards had the widest methodological and epistemological implications. These works were authored not by artists or architects, or teachers of architecture, nor by writers on the theory of architecture or aesthetics; instead, one may best class them, at least in the case of Kugler and Lübke, as academic teachers, who increasingly called their subject art history, whereby it was taken for granted that architectural history was also included and integrated into a broader art historical narrative. All the authors were also capable of a clear, even a stylish prose. According to Dan Karlholm, the handbooks marked a momentous phase in the history of art history, the very establishment as a discipline in its own right,⁹ the principal milestone being the 800

⁸ A. Rosengarten, *Architekturbilder aus Paris und London*, Hamburg: Perthes 1860, vii.

⁹ Dan Karlholm, *Handbökernas Konsthistoria. Om Skapandet av "allmän konsthistoria" Tyskland under 1800-talet*, Stockholm: Brutus Östlings, 1996, 24; Hubert Locher, 'Das "Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte": Die Vermittlung kunsthistorischen Wissens als Anleitung zum ästhetischen Urteil', in: Wessel Reininck, Jeroen Stumpel (eds.), *Memory & Oblivion Proceedings of the XXIX International Congress of the History of Art Amsterdam 1996*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, no date, 69-88. See also Stefan Muthesius, 'Towards an "exakte Kunstwissenschaft" (?)', A report on some recent German books on the progress of mid-19th century art history. Part I: Work by German art historians on nineteenth-century art-historiography since 2000', *Journal of Art Historiography*, no 9, December 2013; S. Muthesius, 'Towards an "exakte Kunstwissenschaft" (?)'. Part II: 'The new German art history in the nineteenth-century: a summary of some problems', *Journal of Art Historiography* [online], no 9 December 2013; Eric Garberson, 'Architectural history in the architecture academy: Wilhelm Stier (1799-1856) at

plus pages of Franz Kugler's *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* of 1842. But was the essential achievement of the new discipline of art and architectural history not the rigour of the empirically collected detail in monographs? Friedrich Theodor Vischer, the respected philosopher of aesthetics, addressed the issue head-on. The general aim is 'the rigorous research into the object, a principal trait of the cultural/scientific efforts of our time, the strictest objectivity, but just as much our outlook strives towards all-roundedness, the comprehensive organic idea', in one word, '*das Ganze*' ('the whole', Kugler).¹⁰ However, there was much that the two kinds of pursuits shared, at least initially. The promise of completeness may itself be taken as an empirical ideal; moreover; the pioneering surveys were written by much the same researchers who were producing the pioneering monographs and, according to Lübke, the handbooks could even serve as the place where differing interpretations could be cited side-by-side.¹¹

At the same time building-up the new academic field of *Kunstgeschichte* meant a narrowing of the approaches. The new architectural history aimed to leave aside everything 'exclusively technical' as well as 'archaeology as such', that is, the science of excavation.¹² Bolder even was the new art history's intent to concentrate on art's 'very own development' and to give up aims to provide any kind of a general 'history of the human race',¹³ though how rigorously such an exclusion could be practised remained unclear. Controversies arose from the very start, namely between the two main protagonists, the empiricist Kugler and Schnaase, who believed precisely in that wider cultural remit.¹⁴ The most decisive exclusion was that of aesthetics, in the sense of a 'comprehensive presentation of aesthetic principles', which, so Kugler again, 'would have led me away from my proper task',¹⁵ namely the historical presentation of art. Aesthetics was now held to be the domain of the philosopher and not the art historian, even though the term aesthetic could still be used loosely, as it is today, whenever referring to an art historian's more formal kind of appreciation of a work of art.

A further and overriding question that now emerged concerned statements of artistic value, which would include any statements regarding the absence of such

the Bauakademie and Allgemeine Bauschule in Berlin', *Journal of Art Historiography*, No 21, December 2019.

¹⁰ 'Das Ganze,' Franz Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1842, xi.

¹¹ Wilhelm Lübke, *Geschichte der Architektur*, Leipzig: Graul, 1855, vii.

¹² '... ausschliesslich technischen', 'Archäologische als solches', Franz Kugler, *Geschichte der Baukunst*, Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1856, v.

¹³ '... ihrer eigentümlichen Entwicklung ... eine Geschichte des Menschengeschlechts zu schreiben ...', Franz Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1842, 5.

¹⁴ Karl Schnaase, *Geschichte der bildenden Künste ...* (subsequent titles varied), vol. 1, Düsseldorf: Buddens, 1843; see Henrik Karge, 'Franz Kugler und Karl Schnaase. Zwei Projekte zur Etablierung der allgemeinen Kunstgeschichte', in: Michel Espagne and oth. (eds.), *Franz Theodor Kugler. Deutscher Kunsthistoriker und Berliner Dichter*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010, 83-104.

¹⁵ 'Eine umfassende Darstellung der ästhetischen Principien würde mich ... von meiner eigentlichen Aufgabe abgeführt haben', Franz Kugler, *Geschichte der Baukunst*, Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1856, v -vi.

values. By the 1870s specialised academic art history indeed began to demand the purging of the word *schön* altogether.¹⁶ Kugler already cautiously indicated, in this case with the practising architect in mind, a new plurality: 'one-sided aesthetic rules are now insufficient, ...we are today decisively relying on a freer point of view'.¹⁷ A handbook on the history of architecture would, by its very nature, deal with as many different kinds of periods and countries as possible, but it would only describe, not prescribe. On the other hand, such a work also operates with a narrative of evolution, which implied a strong sense of progression, using implicit value judgments. The master of a string of evolutionary assessments was Wilhelm Lübke, for the following sixty years the most successful producer of the handbook genre.

Distinguished by the highest academic ranking, *sui generis* and *bona fide*, the new genre of books did not seem to need any further legitimation. But, of course, there was the commercial aspect, during a period when printing was taking on more industrial methods of production. Inevitably a wider audience had to be considered. One major use of all the handbooks, shared by specialists and non-specialists alike, was to serve as travel guides. In this context, value judgments about individual artefacts appeared indispensable, whether made explicitly or implicitly, through selection and weighting. But all these aspects would still not have to be spelt out explicitly. At the very beginning Kugler did write, in his very first *Handbuch* of 1837, that his work should provide 'an easily comprehensible thread', aimed 'to introduce the unexperienced'.¹⁸ But this did not amount to a sociological classification. It was understood that the reader, any reader of the book would be placed in a position to aspire to, and possibly eventually reach, the highest academic level of understanding.

It was Lübke who mentioned the key word 'popular' in the foreword for his book in 1855. But it was Rosengarten who took the issue head on (fig. 5). With the now enormous numbers of 'handbooks' reaching into all spheres of life, it had become customary to enlist the long numbers of professions the book was hoping to sell to. From about the 1860 onwards more explicit attempts at popularisation of art history were proceeding apace, with many handbooks of a purposely reduced scope, and a much reduced price, often aimed specially at the 'middling' level.¹⁹ The academics, Kugler and his colleagues, however, would have considered it

¹⁶ See the writings of Moritz Thausing; see Matthew Rampley, *The Vienna School of Art History. Empire and the Politics of Scholarship*, Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013.

¹⁷ 'Einseitige ästhetische Regeln wollen ... nicht mehr zureichen... wir sind heute mit Entschiedenheit auf einen freieren Standpunkt hingewiesen', Franz Kugler, review of J. Gailhabaud, *Denkmäler der Baukunst...*, publ. in F. Kugler, *Kleine Schriften und Studien zur Kunstgeschichte*, Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1853-4, vol. 2, 408-9; see Johannes Rössler, 'Franz Kugler als Architekturhistoriker', in: Michel Espagne *et al.* (eds.), *Franz Theodor Kugler. Deutscher Kunsthistoriker und Berliner Dichter*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010, pp. 123-141.

¹⁸ 'Kurzen, leicht verständlichen Faden, der den Unerfahrenen ...einführt', Franz Kugler, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei in Italien*, Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1837, v.

¹⁹ 'Mittleren Bildungsanstalten', [by J.Kuss], *Leitfaden für den Unterricht in der Kunstgeschichte* ..., 3rd ed. Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1874, iv.

degrading to advertise themselves explicitly to their potential customers. By stark contrast Rosengarten begins on his very title page with a list of nine professions to whom his book could be of use. He then used all six pages of his Preface to explain his approach vis à vis his potential readers, as he saw them. Overall, there were, for him two very different constituencies for an architectural book, the professionals in '*Kunst und Handwerk*' and the amateurs, whom, he addressed, still on the title page, as the '*gebildeten Freunde der Kunst und Architektur*', as the '[well] educated friends of art and architecture'. He then, sounding more educational, wants the reader to form, 'instead of an instinctually felt pleasure or displeasure, a judgment that is based on knowledge, for both those who have been naturally blessed with good sense and taste, and those less gifted (...)'.²⁰ On balance it is the groups of non-specialised readers, whom Rosengarten favours most. He even goes so far to stress this by saying that the book should present a 'general perception, but not thorough knowledge'.²¹ In the 1874 edition he plainly stated again that readers could derive benefits from his book 'without [having to undertake] historic studies that go too deeply' and he recommended the handbooks by Kugler and Schnaase for that purpose.²² In a review of 1870 *Stylarten* was classified plainly as '*ein populäres Buch*', a work of the kind that 'cannot be written according to strictly scholarly methods'.²³

One may call all this popular as a new architectural journalism, but it was journalism *avant-la-lettre*, as there was, as yet, no proper outlet for this genre of writing. Much broader research is needed to establish what kinds of architectural writing can be found in non-specialised serial publications, how exactly journalism and criticism are to be defined, how it applied to historical and to new buildings, respectively.²⁴ In any case, Rosengarten's constant concern with how to address the readers cannot be taken as just rhetoric, or as mere publicity-speak, but must also be seen as a bona-fide search for the proper characterisation of a new class of audience.

A major closely related problem for the new handbooks was the provision of illustrations, which was tightly linked with both popularisation and epistemological issues, too. Seroux d'Agincourt's *Histoire d'art par les monuments*, a title published from 1823, meant an empiricist admonition, and quite provocatively so: use your eyes!²⁵ However, the problem was cost. And so it came that the celebrated first 'complete' handbook, Kugler's *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, in its first and second editions during the 1840s, appeared with no illustrations at all. One may interpret this as a successful interim stage of the new academic subject, foregrounding the

²⁰ 'Statt eines instinktartig gefühlten Wohlgefallens oder Missfallens ein auf Motive gegründetes Urteil über den Wert eines Bauwerkes. ... sowohl [für den] ... von Natur mit gutem Sinn und Geschmack begabten, als den weniger begünstigten ...', *Stylarten*, vi.

²¹ 'Indem aber dieses Buch dazu dienen soll, eine allgemeine Anschauung, nicht aber gründliche Kenntnisse zu geben ...', *Stylarten*, ix.

²² '...Ohne zu tief eingehendes geschichtliches Studium', *Stylarten*, 1874 edition, Vorwort.

²³ 'ein populäres Buch, das sich nicht nach streng wissenschaftlicher Methode schreiben lässt', 'Literarisches', *Westermanns deutsche Monatshefte*, May 1870, 220.

²⁴ See e. g. Mari Hvattum and Anne Hultsch, *The Printed and the Built. Architecture, Print Culture and the Public Debate in the 19th century*, London: Bloomsbury, 2018.

²⁵ See Gabriele Bickendorf, *Die ersten Überblickswerke zur Kunstgeschichte, Seroux d'Agincourt, Luigi Lanci, J.D.Fiorillo, Leopoldo Cicognara*, Heidelberg: Universität, 2007.

history of art as a self-sufficient textual discourse. But, clearly, this could not suffice for long. What d'Agincourt was offering was a new way of depicting many objects or buildings together on one large plate. From 1851 Kugler, with others, undertook a similar series of large composites, under various titles (*Bildatlas, Denkmäler der Architektur*) but publication was still painfully slow – a bibliographer's nightmare. It was at that time that the old/new methods of wood engraving began to accommodate illustrations on the same pages as the text. From 1850 Schnaase's volumes contained images, very sparingly at first; Kugler's *Baukunst* followed from 1854/5 and in 1855 Lübke supplied 174 images. In 1857 Rosengarten's book scored with 426 mostly small images.²⁶ His was probably also the first handbook in which the mention of a building was accompanied by an illustration number and with the illustration mostly placed right next to the relevant text (fig. 6). With regard to their provenance there was at first anarchy, copies of copies, taken from any available source. Moreover many illustrations were actually not of specific old buildings, but were newly drawn schematic views, of a Classical capital or a Gothic window. Many of Rosengarten's images were still of that kind. As was to be expected, the new empiricist credo would phase out such *Lehrbuch*, such style-manual procedures. Kugler's illustrations consisted exclusively of actual, authentic works, with the source of the illustration also being given.²⁷

Styl; architectural History and architectural Practice

The first quality of any *Handbuch* is comprehensiveness. The new kind of art historical handbook was indeed meant to cover the whole world, all periods of human existence, and all known styles, no less. But naturally, there was no firm agreement what exactly 'all' should comprise: Rosengarten dropped more distant areas such as Oceania and Old-America. Where should one begin: Egypt or Old-India? Rosengarten chose the latter. A major problem was also when and where to start the Middle Ages, as well as finding the overall label for that period. Rosengarten followed Kugler (and with that Hegel) in choosing '*romantische Kunst*', as a contrast with the previous major heading '*classische Kunst*'. Sandwiched between the Romanesque and the Gothic were '*die muhamedanischen Baustyle*', which Rosengarten held to be a major inspiration for Gothic. While in other writings he did not hide his scepticism towards that style, the handbook devotes the most detailed analysis to it. Rather less intense were the handbooks' accounts of the 'Modern Style', by then increasingly also called Renaissance, usually proceeding with the names of a number of Italian architects; from the later seventeenth century Rosengarten's text literally falls away so that the eighteenth century was practically non-existent.

The second task of every handbook was to create coherence. Chief instrument was, naturally, to call it all a 'history'. Rosengarten's decision not to choose the term on the title page was probably an attempt to bypass the

²⁶ See Rosengarten's own praise, *Stylarten*, ix.

²⁷ See Katharina Krause & Klaus Nier (eds.), *Kunstwerk – Abbild – Buch. Das illustrierte Kunstbuch von 1730-1930*, Munich-Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2007.

competition. Likewise, avoiding *Handbuch* might have helped to save the book being submerged in the mass of eponymous works at the time. However, there was no question that *Styl* was a term that was constantly on the mind of any thinking architect, over the period 1830 to 1900 at the very least, whereas the amateur, according to Rosengarten's contention cited above, was still in need of being enlightened about it. Most generally, 'style' has been said to be 'one of the most difficult concepts in the lexicon of art',²⁸ but one does not always have to see it that way, at least not during the period under discussion. Firstly, the term should be taken to be a servant to 'art; for Rosengarten it was basic that talking about architecture in terms of styles meant treating architecture as art, and vice-versa, talking about art could not be done without using the word style. But unlike art, style cannot, should not, be valorised in itself. It must, in this context, be taken as a completely abstract term, it has nothing to do with defining the genres of art as such, but it can be linked to all of them, singly or in groups. It can be prefixed with any adjective, as in, for example, 'Mackintosh's early Scottish folksy style'. Naturally, one may have arguments with any of those qualities individually, or collectively, but that does not affect the role of the term 'style' itself. Without using the noun style such a statement could lose much of its coherence, even professionalism. One way of understanding the word, its use, has been to link it to the procedures of taxonomy in the natural sciences, supposedly value-free. As regards Rosengarten's main title, '*Stylarten*', clumsily translated as 'kinds of style', one may note that his second component, '*Arten*' / 'kinds', is actually superfluous, but it adds just that bit of extra emphasis.

Rosengarten really went to town with the term. Every heading ends with the word '*Baustyl*'. The desire to present as succinct a picture of each style as possible led to a rigidly systematic division within the chapters, explaining each style from several different angles. After a short summary of the general historical background of a period follows a major section presenting a thoroughgoing and well-illustrated morphology, strongest with the Greek Classical and the Gothic styles. This is followed by a short chronological sketch, and finally by a section ordering the same buildings geographically. All this differs markedly from most of the art historians' mode of presentation, which used a seemingly straightforward narrative which carefully interwove factors of chronology and location.

Altogether Rosengarten's analyses stay close to the artefacts. A comparison between Rosengarten's and Kugler's passages on the essence of Gothic may reveal that further: in 1859 Kugler wrote: 'The basics of the design of the Gothic system receive through the shaping, articulation and the treatment of the individual parts a more vivid expression. The ecstatic moment of building upwards through it gains

²⁸ Grove [Macmillan] *Dictionary of Art* (Jane Turner, ed.), London: Macmillan, 1996. See H.U. Gumbrecht and K.L. Pfeiffer (eds.), *Stil. Geschichte und Funktionen eines kulturwissenschaftlichen Diskurselementes*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1986; Caecilie Weissert (ed.), *Stil in der Kunstgeschichte. Neue Wege der Forschung*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 2009; Tobias Möllmer (ed.), *Stil und Charakter. Beiträge zur Architekturgeschichte und Denkmalpflege des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Basel: Birkhäuser 2015.

an all-fulfilling force.'²⁹ Rosengarten put it his way: 'The organism of the building (...) in the way it relies on a system of many vertical pillars, linked by pointed arches, through it, and through the architectural decorations which correspond to this system; the upwards-striving movement unfolds which constitutes the specific dominant characteristic of the pointed arch style.'³⁰

A more abstract as well as a more emotional kind of musing reveals the new approach from the art historians, while Rosengarten's more artefactual descriptions locate him somewhat closer to the style manuals of the period, such as, for example, Carl Busch's contemporary publication *Die Baustyle. Praktische Anleitung ...*.³¹

At this point one needs to examine once again what one can call the 'independence' of the new art history. The new handbooks were meant to rise 'above' the traditional righteousness of architectural treatises and above the abrasive tone of the newer kinds of manifestoes, as well as reaching beyond mere fact-finding antiquarianism. Basically, modern art history should refrain from all judgments of value, meaning that no period, no group of works or styles can be set 'above', or 'below' the others. Nothing can be left out because of being considered of lower value; a handbook presents description, not prescription. A detailed examination of many texts would again be necessary at this point to clarify these issues more fully. Kugler's writings appear of a remarkable evenness, only occasionally one notes a gently positive or negative remark, usually applied to the individual works. Lübke's approach was somewhat different: taking as his starting point the claim that he always concentrates on 'das wesentlichste, bedeutendste', the most essential and the most important this led to a strong and constant rhetoric of claiming the importance of a building, or a period, any period.³²

Rosengarten's approach differed from both. At pivotal points there comes a short, but strong praise, somewhat *recherché* in its words. Classical Greece excels in 'that mild, but also magnificent grace'.³³ Early Christian architecture pleases with its 'solemn, quiet effect and magnificent simplicity'.³⁴ For Gothic, in spite of having given it the most detailed investigation, Rosengarten uses more common words of praise, writing of the 'magnificent, and picturesque effects'.³⁵ With the perpendicular style one enters a negative sphere, the period of 'deterioration':³⁶ The

²⁹ 'Die Grundzüge der baulichen Gestaltung des gothischen Systems empfangen durch die Fassung, die Gliederung, die Behandlung der Einzelteile ihren belebteren Ausdruck. Das ecstatische Moment des Aufbaus gewinnt durch sie eine völlig bewältigende Kraft', Franz Kugler. *Geschichte der Baukunst* 3rd. Vol. Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert 1859, 12.

³⁰ [Relating to the] 'Organismus des Bauwerkes ... indem dieser also auf einem System von lauter vertikalen mittels Spitzbogen verbundenen Pfeilern beruht, entfaltet sich dadurch - und auch durch die architektonische Dekoraiton welche diesem System entspricht - die aufwärtsstrebende Bewegung als eigentümlich vorwaltende Eigenschaft des Spitzbogenstils'. *Stylarten*, 245.

³¹ Carl Busch, *Die Baustyle. Praktische Anleitung zur Kenntnis derselben und ihres Werthes für das künstlerische Schaffen des Architekten und Bauhandwerkers*, Leipzig: Spamer 1864.

³² Wilhelm Lübke, *Geschichte der Architektur*, Leipzig: Graul, 1855, eg. viii.

³³ 'Jene milde, aber auch grossartige Anmut', *Stylarten*, 65.

³⁴ 'Erhabene ruhige Wirkung und grossartige Einfachheit', *Stylarten*, 128.

³⁵ 'Prachtvollen und malerischen Effecten', *Stylarten*, 246.

³⁶ 'Verfallszeit', *Stylarten*, 277.

section headed with '*der moderne Styl*' is largely taken up with 'Renaissance (*gute Zeit*)'. Rosengarten pronounces a clear preference for the Roman High Renaissance palazzo: 'simplicity paired with dignity.'³⁷ Taking the remarks on various Classical styles together, he reveals a strong penchant for that style.

Yet again, it can be argued that Rosengarten stays within the new 'rules' of the new type of art-historical handbook, namely that it cannot tell the practitioner what to do, or what not to do. It is not possible to deduce directly the style of his buildings from the text of his handbook. Looking ahead to the later nineteenth century, one could follow up correspondences between the ever richer and more diverse contents of the handbooks with the ever-growing and widening stylistic diversity of new buildings. No doubt designers availed themselves of the visual 'material' in the handbooks, but, once again, the handbook authors themselves could not take sides.

However, this was not the end of the matter. For completeness' sake most handbooks included a sketch of contemporary art. The reader who had so far not come to the end of *Stylarten* was in for a shock. In Rosengarten's sketch '*Die Baukunst der Gegenwart*', value judgements come thick and fast. But now they apply not to individual buildings, nor to the historical styles as such, but to the question which of them should be revived for the present. To Rosengarten virtually none of them appear suitable. By the 1850s Western Neo-Classicism was being condemned by most, but what Rosengarten writes amounts to an almost complete rejection of European architecture since 1800. There was only the unassailable Schinkel and some mild praise for the sober Classical rationalism of Labrouste's, with whom Rosengarten had studied. There was no chance for Neo-Gothic, not even 'Schinkel, the genius, succeeded in it with his attempts'.³⁸ Clearly the realm of academic art history has been left behind and its place is taken up by architectural criticism and debate, and a very distinct phase of the debate, namely the nineteenth century 'battle of styles'.

The 'Style question' and the Jewish dimension

Whatever the art historians' or architectural historians' neutral position, for all those undertaking actual design the choice of style could appear a massive problem. For Rosengarten, in 1840, it all seemed specially pressing: 'When, in our days, the question is posed, in which style one ought to build, in general, there is the least agreement regarding the style one ought to give a synagogue'.³⁹ The matters had already been discussed at the early design stage of the Kassel Synagogue (figs. 1 & 2), when two of the principality's official architects, Conrad Bromeis and Julius Eugen Ruhl, had been proposing designs in a range of styles.⁴⁰ A key nineteenth

³⁷ 'Mit Würde gepaarten Einfachheit', *Stylarten*, 316.

³⁸ 'Solche Versuche selbst dem genialen Schinkel nicht gelungen ...', *Stylarten*, 348.

³⁹ 'Wenn es in unseren Tagen in Frage gestellt worden ist, in welchem Styl man überhaupt bauen sollte, so ist man am wenigsten einig über den Stil, den man einer Synagoge zu geben habe', *Allgemeine Bauzeitung*, vol. 5, 1840, 205-7.

⁴⁰ Rachel Wischnitzer, *The Architecture of the European Synagogue*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1994, 194-8.

century contribution, following Winckelmann and Hegel, was to hold a style, any style, as historically and geographically specific, and that also meant belonging to a specific group of people, a civilisation, even a race. For many, 'style' became an ideological issue. It was not just stressing that styles differ, but, more strongly, the differences could even be understood antagonistically ('*Stilgegensätze*').⁴¹

Geographical-historical knowledge of architecture was then expanding ever more rapidly. All this entailed admiration for a great number of styles, which in turn meant that they all appeared usable for the present. Apart from the Classical tradition it was the argument for the Gothic style that seemed to come across ever more strongly. And so it came, by the 1820s and 30s, to the direct and burning question; '*In welchem Style sollen wir bauen?*'⁴² In which style should we build? It seemed to apply to all building projects. One solution was to assign certain styles to certain types of buildings. But what about some of the Gothicists who demanded Gothic not only for churches, but for all types of buildings; did that not also mean returning altogether to the primitive civilisation of those Dark Ages?

With his questioning attitude in 1840, Rosengarten proved to be dead right: synagogues, that is, major examples, were to come in almost all known styles. Knoblauch/Stüler's Neue Synagoge in Berlin (Oranienstrasse) was showing a pronounced Oriental style while Oppler's Synagoge in Hanover sported a full-blooded Romanesque. The latter justified this by arguing that the German Jewry should accommodate to the German architectural scene, in this case in all its splendour.⁴³ By contrast, Rosengarten's own intent was to postulate the unsuitability of most of those major styles, which he did with great lucidity: neither Egyptian, nor Arabic, nor Greek, nor Gothic should ever be used for synagogues. What about Solomon's Temple? In his *Stylarten* he goes into much detail about that building, however, its architectural style, he states, has remained entirely unknown.⁴⁴ Rosengarten's solution for Kassel (figs. 1 & 2) was the *Rundbogenstil*, combining features from Late Antiquity and Early Medieval periods, as well as with an early Italian Renaissance smoothness. With its rather limited set of features it differed from the later Neo-Romanesque and also from more ornate Neo-Byzantine modes. For Rosengarten this style excelled precisely through not sending out strong national or temporal, or ideological messages; and thus one could tolerate, for instance, situations where a *Rundbogenstil* synagogue and an early-Christian-styled church adopted similar forms. It may here be noted that the principal German

⁴¹ 'Stilgegensätze', Friedrich Theodor Vischer, Vorwort in A[nton]. H. Springer, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, Stuttgart: Rieger. 1855, vi.

⁴² Heinrich Hübsch, *In welchem Style sollen wir bauen?* Karlsruhe: Müller, 1828; see also: Heinrich Hübsch, *In what Style should we build? The German Debate on architectural Style*, translated and edited by Wolfgang Hermann, Sta. Monica: Getty 1992; Silke Walther, *In welchem Style sollen wir bauen. Studien zu den Schriften und Bauten des Architekten Heinrich Hübsch*, Dissertation: Stuttgart, 2003.

⁴³ On Oppler see: Saskia Rohde, 'Architekten und die Modernisierung des Judentums', in: Arno Herzig, Hans Otto Horch, Robert Jütte (eds.), *Judentum und Aufklärung. Jüdisches Selbstverständnis in der bürgerlichen Öffentlichkeit*, Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2002, 193 ff.

⁴⁴ *Stylarten*, 37-39.

supporters of the *Rundbogenstil* movement in the 1830s to 1850s, in Munich and Berlin, also stressed a conciliatory outlook, for a style that style could conveniently serve both Protestants and Catholics.⁴⁵ In his Hamburg Synagogues of the 1850s (fig. 3), Rosengarten continued with his mild Romanesque / *Rundbogenstil* and round arches appear in his other Hamburg buildings, too (fig. 4).

However, there is no evidence of all this still being of fervent concern to him. Late in the day, in 1874, Rosengarten felt compelled to address the issue once more in the third edition of *Stylarten*, as well as in the English editions, near the very end, in the section on contemporary architecture. He still does not want to tie himself down. After vague remarks on the Temple of Jerusalem he states that after expulsion the dispersed Jews adopted whatever style they found in their respective new localities. He then firmly states again that Moorish styles should not be used. To conclude, he vaguely points to 'architectural form' as the decisive factor, as against 'mere splendour (...) of gilding ornamentation ...'.⁴⁶ Rosengarten here reveals a basic kind of rationalism that he owed principally to France, a legacy, once again, to his earlier studies with Labrouste.

Nevertheless, the problems of the right style for the Jewish faith has remained on the agenda. In a recent short account of Rosengarten's architecture by Saskia Rohde these arguments have also been interpreted as indicative of that phase of emancipation in which Jews sought closer integration with the rest of society. But at the same time Rohde stresses 'what was lost [in Rosengarten's outlook] was any special Jewish architectural identity'.⁴⁷ In this way Rohde seems to desire exactly that which Rosengarten was striving against.

And yet, one must return to stress that in all of Rosengarten's writings '*Styl*', by itself, or in connexion with other factors, formed the dominant word, the dominant issue. In the very title page of his book, Rosengarten argued, plainly, that what was needed was a good knowledge of the styles so as to achieve altogether the '*richtige Verwirklichung in Kunst und Handwerk* / the correct realisation in art and craft / trade'. For special emphasis he adds a formulation that is, strictly speaking, superfluous: 'style' as it must be defined, is an independent signifier to which values are being attached; but Rosengarten now presents style as a value in itself,

⁴⁵ See Kathleen Curran, *The Romanesque Revival. Religion, Politics, Transnational Exchange*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002.

⁴⁶ *Stylarten*, 3rd ed. 1874, and all English editions, here 1876 ed., 484-6.

⁴⁷ Rohde asks whether Rosengarten's synagogues marked a specifically Jewish identity and she affirms that his Romanesque-Rundbogenstil imparted to the synagogues of the more or less emancipated Jews the character of a public building and he thereby placed the Jewish faith as a religion next to the Christian confessions of the surrounding society. 'However, in that way what was dropped was a specifically Jewish identity of architecture, leaving aside small features of style.' Rhode (note 1), 253. See also Saskia Rohde, 'Architekten und die Modernisierung des Judentums', in: Arno Herzig, Hans Otto Horch, Robert Jütte (eds.), *Judentum und Aufklärung. Jüdisches Selbstverständnis in der bürgerlichen Öffentlichkeit*, Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2002, 193 ff.

where he writes: 'when one is claiming architectural and artistic values (...), the style-value [*der stylistische Wert*] of a building ... has to be noted with preference'.⁴⁸

Perhaps sensing the paradoxical situation in his pursuit of 'style', or perhaps while he was feeling in a particularly joking mood, Rosengarten produced, in his '*architektonische Briefe*' in 1854, the following '*Styltabelle*' from which an extract is given here:

Old Indian style: Childlike helplessness (...); Grecian style: Nobility of Expression (...); Chinese style: Punchinello; (...) Early Christian Basilica Style: Expression of independence, with the struggles for freedom from foreign influences; (...) Moorish style: ... overwrought fancy (...); Pointed Arch (gothic) style expression of absorbing faith reaching hyper-tensioned rapture, eyeing the beyond; English Late Gothic (Elizabethan) style : (...) practical worldly wisdom (...).

There was nothing like this in his handbook of 1857, but the later editions did include the text and the English edition brought it, too.⁴⁹

England

Quite unexpectedly, Rosengarten's book was to enjoy a late estimation with a great number of reprints in an English translation from 1876 onwards, entitled plainly as *A Handbook of Architectural Styles*. Regarding the author's relationship with England more generally knowledge is extremely patchy. He had absorbed much 'Western' liberal thinking during his stay in Paris in the 1840s. In a pamphlet of 1848 on the rights and methods of crafts' organisations he argued that a stronger voice should be given to the modern industrial worker.⁵⁰ Rosengarten is said to have sent in a design for the competition for the 1851 Great Exhibition building. He later used the plan of the London Crystal Palace as the illustration for the last chapter of the second edition of his book. On the other hand, he reported that his long-intended visit to Britain had had to wait until the late 1850s, and that this was partly due to the fact that he had entertained a 'prejudice for a small architectonic gain'.⁵¹ Predictably, his report on what he saw of the major new buildings in London was

⁴⁸ 'dass der stylistische Werth bei einem Bauwerke, wenn es auf architektonischen und Kunstwert Anspruch machen soll, vorzugsweise zu berücksichtigen sei', '*Architektonische Briefe*' (note 7), 223.

⁴⁹ 'Altindischer Styl: Kindische Unbeholfenheit; Griechischer Styl: Adel des Ausdrucks ...; Chinesischer Styl: Polichinelle; Altchristlicher Basilikenstyl: Ausdruck der Unselbstständigkeit mit dem Bestreben, sich von fremden Einflüssen zu befreien; Maurischer Styl: aufgeregte Phantasie...; Spitzbogen (Gothischer) Styl: Ausdruck der Glaubensinnigkeit bis zur überspannten Schwärmerei, mit dem Blick nach jenseits; Englischer spätgotischer (Elisabeth) Styl: praktische Lebensweisheit ...', '*Briefe*' (note 7), 268-70.

⁵⁰ A Rosengarten, *Mangel und Vortheile des Entwurfs einer allgemeinen Handwerker- und Gewebeordnung für Deutschland*, Hamburg: Meissner, 1848.

⁵¹ A. Rosengarten, *Architekturbilder aus Paris und London*, Hamburg: Perthes Besser 1860.

intensely critical; probably of greater interest today is what the book contains about ordinary London building customs.

For top-class researchers there had long been a European community of publications for many decades, occasionally leading to translations between the major languages. Most generally speaking, British researchers were ahead, simply by being the most widely travelled. On the other hand, what was lacking in England was the new German link with the new and rigorous academic art history which brought with it such a large amount of architectural history writing in the 1840s and 50s. In Britain it was written by architects or art critics, and if there was any overt pedagogic intent this was aimed at architects, too. A new term in the 1840s appears to have been 'architectural history', it principally meant aiming for greater precision of observation; Alexandra Buchanan has investigated these developments recently, especially in the work of Robert Willis.⁵² English books devoted to a reasonably structured architectural history (and not coming as an architectural theory with history added on) can be said to have begun in 1849. Edward Augustus Freeman's *A History of Architecture* was lengthy,⁵³ but also unusually self-reflexive - though a comparison with Kugler regarding methods might be interesting. Lacking illustrations completely, the book's influence must have been very limited. A very different venture in 1849 was a smallish book of the multi-volume *Weale's Popular Series*, a 'complete' history, even though 'history' and 'styles' only occur in the subtitle, by the little-known architect Thomas Talbot Bury, remarkable for comprehensiveness and brevity. Illustrations were few, but costing only a few shillings, the book appeared to be worth buying, at least until the time of its 13th edition in 1906.⁵⁴

The major, decisive work came in 1855, the architect James Fergusson's massive history, his *Illustrated Handbook of Architecture*. It was superior to its German equivalents in many respects, with its length, with the breadth of coverage, especially of non-European buildings, even with its careful introduction, discussing the scope and the approaches to the subject. Fergusson scored highly – by contrast, Kugler, in his *Geschichte der Baukunst* had written that introductory considerations were not necessary⁵⁵ – above all Fergusson excelled with the number and quality of its illustrations; after all the new methods of wood engraving had first developed in England. Fergusson brought out several more substantial volumes and thus dominated the market until the 1890s. A very small number of other contemporary

⁵² See Alexandra Buchanan, *Robert Willis 1800-1873 and the Foundation of Architectural History*, Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2003.

⁵³ Edward Augustus Freeman, *A History of Architecture*, London: Joseph Masters 1849; see also G. A. Bremner and Jonathan Conlin, *Making History. E.A. Freeman and Victorian Cultural Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015. Cf. also earlier Thomas Hope, *An historical Essay on Architecture*, London: Murray 1835.

⁵⁴ T. Talbot Bury FRIBA, *Rudimentary Architecture for the use of beginners. The history and description of the styles of architecture of various countries from the earliest to the present period with illustrative engravings* (title varied slightly in later eds.), London Weale 1849; the book is usually bound together with a volume in the same format, W. H. Leeds, *Rudimentary Architecture ... The Orders ...*

⁵⁵ 'Bedarf keiner ausführlichen Bevorwortung' Kugler, *Geschichte der Baukunst* (note 12), v.

titles played virtually no role at all.⁵⁶ Only the year 1896 saw a new major contender, the Banister Fletchers' *A History of Architecture*.⁵⁷

Thus on the face of it, there did seem to be a niche for Rosengarten, for a medium-sized book with copious illustrations. Why it was the respected legal writer William Collett Sandars who translated it, is not known.⁵⁸ Some important changes, simplifications in fact, were now introduced regarding the very beginning of the book. Rosengarten's detailed stipulations on his German title page were completely eliminated. Even History was dropped from the title, 'styles' was deemed to convey that sense. Rosengarten's foreword about how to address the reader was not translated either, although the very short new foreword by the architect and architectural educationalist, T. Roger Smith did put in a mild plea for a popular approach.

One could certainly have expected detailed reviews of the book in the architectural press. To the reviewers in London's three main architectural journals it was rather the detail that mattered. Much of their discussion centres around the merits of individual styles and buildings. Naturally, the British wanted to know what the foreigner had to say about their medieval architecture. Here Rosengarten's text, being relatively brief and more than twenty years old, was bound to disappoint. Rosengarten's underplaying of Gothic in general appeared unwelcome and it was also predictable that the emphasis on German Gothic was found to be overdone. Much discussed were the headings 'Romanesque' and 'romantic', the latter appeared puzzling, sounding, to *The Builder*, 'very broad and philosophical ... (as might be expected from a German critic)'. Rosengarten's list of styles near the end, the '*Styltabelle*', was copied in full by *The Architect*, while *The Building News* characterised Rosengarten's approach as stemming from 'psychological influences'. Thus the summaries were not favourable: *The Builder*: 'it is impossible to regard the Handbook of architectural Styles as really filling a gap.'⁵⁹ Some of the issues were also taken up by the respected magazine *The Athenaeum*, but in a very much more hostile way, full of statements, less than helpful, such as: 'there are a dozen better books in English ...', or '... the delightful simplicity of the German mind.'⁶⁰

In his very short 'Editor's Preface' T. Roger Smith drew a contrast between Rosengarten's text and the major architectural writings of those decades published

⁵⁶ Cf. Thomas Mitchell, *A rudimentary Manual of Architecture being a History and Explanation of the principal Styles of European Architecture*, London: Longman Green & Co. 1870; Edward J Tarver, *A Guide to the Study of the History of Architecture*, London: Petit & Co. 1888.

⁵⁷ [Father and son] Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture for the Student, Craftsman and Amateur being a comparative View of the historical Styles from the earliest Period*, London: Batsford, 1896. Reminiscent of Rosengarten's German front page, these details were omitted in later editions.

⁵⁸ There is some bibliographical imprecision with regard to the publishers, Chapman & Hall, Chatto and Windus and in New York Appleton. There were also later reprints, e.g. by Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2004.

⁵⁹ [Anon.], 'Reviews', *The Architect*, 1 July 1876, 14-15. [Anon.], 'Architectural Styles', *Building News*, 21 July 1876, 43-44. [Anon.], *The Builder*, 24 June 1876, 605-6. Cf. obituary Ferguson, *The Builder*, 16 January 1886, 113-15; 'Books for architectural Students', *The Builder*, 21 November 1885, 706-8.

⁶⁰ [Anon.], [heading: 'Fine Arts'], *The Athenaeum*, no. 2542, 15 July 1876, 87-8.

in Britain, by the 'now widely known and read' Ruskin, Street, Gilbert Scott, and Viollet le Duc, as 'breathing a totally different inspiration'. By saying that Smith was probably aiming critically at their Gothic absolutism, voicing a feeling that Rosengarten would have shared. Smith also refers to Fergusson's writings as 'too cosmopolitan in range and impartial in tone' but he is not clear as to whether he wants to contrast both kinds of writing, Ferguson's and Ruskin's, to Rosengarten's manner of handbook writing. Smith then goes on to Rosengarten's partiality for the Classical and some Italian Renaissance, styles which he says are 'asserting their predominance one more', though Smith does not go further to mention that this involved a very novel and peculiarly vernacularized interpretation of the Classical, the 'Queen Anne Style', something one doubts Rosengarten the rationalist would have appreciated.

British antiquarians were unhappy with many details of *Styles* and attempts to bring the book into a wider framework of architectural thought of the time did not get very far. It may help at this point to go back to the most basic uses and qualities of Rosengarten's handbook, indeed of any good, normal handbook: mid-price, handy size, copious illustrations, 639 to be precise, many of them large, and above all a kind of (German?) systematicity that helps the beginner to learn and the more advanced user to search efficiently. That was what many buyers of the quite unparalleled number re-issues, a dozen on a rough count, until 1927, must have thought.

Afterthoughts

The double intent in all of Rosengarten's writings was to appear 'popular' and to explain architectural style'. A basic characterisation of the popular was that it differed from the scholarly, the purely academic. Rosengarten himself indicated that to follow his writings should not require undue effort. One way of render texts on architecture more lively was to launch into the criticism of buildings, whether old or new, and this included negative criticism. What greatly complicated the situation was that just at that time academic art historians had begun to give up making aesthetic value judgments, whether positive or negative. This is a conundrum which needs further investigation; possibly Rosengarten was not quite aware of it himself.

With his overriding concern for architectural style, or, rather, styles, Rosengarten positioned himself right into the centre of the architectural debate of the day, which was dominated, one may say, with a struggle for styles. The principal aim of his *Stylarten* was to demonstrate, to emphasise, the strong differences between all known architectural styles and to enable the readers to find the 'right style' for their projects. However this panacea was oddly at variance with the way Rosengarten dealt with the 'style question' in his own designs. The choice for his Synagogue in Kassel in the late 1830s was a 'mild' and arguably conciliatory style with the ideologically, and even historically unspecific name *Rundbogen* style. In contrast many other major synagogues that were to be envisaged at that time in Continental European lands which adopted 'strong' stylistic languages, such as Arab or German Romanesque, Rosengarten had opted for a restrained, for precisely a non-symbolical language for the Jewish house of worship.

This brings one to an issue that one may place at the heart of the story, Rosengarten's Jewishness. As a personal factor it remained unspoken, it was never voiced by the architect himself. Clearly, a proper biography would be needed here. But one can go back to the issue of the audience once again. The term 'popular' provides only a limited characterisation. Rosengarten's principal aimed-for audience was that of the 'Gebildeten', of the educated, the knowledgeable and, one may add, the liberal-minded. The way he kept emphasising this suggests that he was always conscious of his own social situation, his particular position as the first 'official' Jewish architect, within the changing circumstances of Jewish life in Central Europe. Can one surmise that his search for a specific readership and his ardent desire to address it, was also a reflection of his very own trajectory, namely, to become fully integrated into this class?

The concept of architectural style' as a mode of explanation continued well beyond the nineteenth century. One may cite just one prominent later twentieth century manifestation, the multi-volume *Belser Stilgeschichte*, a handbook-type work of the 1990s. The cover of the first volume defines the term once again: 'The thousands of years-old works of art make clear that 'style' as the unity of contents, form and purpose marks the fundamental character of artistic design'.⁶¹ Although Rosengarten would probably not have expressed it quite in that way himself: 'style' and the 'popular' had, once again, truly come together.

At the very end of the day what Rosengarten could hardly have foreseen was how specifically his notion of the '*richtigen Stil*' continued well beyond the nineteenth century. If anything, it really came into its own during the twentieth century, when the 'Modern' style was declared to be the absolute '*richtige*' style by most, or at least by a great many. It was often given the additional label 'International Modern'. This was of course meant as a battle cry against the pluralist set-up in the nineteenth century, which the Moderns saw as a total absurdity. The gulf between this 'right' Modern style and all other styles could now appear unbridgeable. It was only from the very late twentieth century onwards when Modernism receded and with it any compulsion to choose the 'right' style abated. Rosengarten had certainly hit the right tone for a long time to come.

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Stefan Muthesius taught at the University of East Anglia. His recent publications include *The Poetic Home. Designing the 19th century domestic interior*; *Towers for the Welfare State. An Architectural History of British Multi-storey Housing 1945-1970 (with Miles Glendinning)*. He has also previously published articles in this journal.

s.muthesius@uea.ac.uk

⁶¹ 'Die jahrtausendealten Kunstwerke verdeutlichen, dass "Stil" als Einheit von Inhalt, Form und Zweck das grundlegende Merkmal der künstlerischen Gestaltung bildet', Christoph Wetzels (ed.), *Belser Stilgeschichte*, vol. I, *Frühe Hochkulturen* (2nd ed.), Stuttgart: Belser, 1993.

Stefan Muthesius How to write plausibly about Architecture and architectural
History, according to A. Rosengarten (1809-1893)



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