means things that have been combined without any rhyme or reason; or, as the German word goes, things whose relationship to one another is ungeriemt, as arbitrary and incomprehensible as in a dream. Sulzer's definition puts a fine point on the oneric quality of things that appear to be abenteuerlich—rather than intending the more familiar current meaning of "exploratory" or "adventurous." The case only goes to show that we do need a dictionary when reading a text that is two centuries old, although it is written in a familiar language and an apparently spontaneous fashion. But scrutiny of Schinkel's language with the help of Sulzer's dictionary of aesthetic terms also draws attention to Schinkel's way of observing Soane's collections: it is their dreamlike disarray rather than their poetic assemblage that struck Schinkel at Lincoln's Inn Fields. What better purpose could a Lexikon have than that of providing a handrail for our exploration of things both adventurous and abenteuerlich.

It comes as no surprise that the familiar tools of textual editions, even when not based on a modern critical edition but simply on the text as originally published, offers a good deal of scholarly value. Instead of tiresome searches through often inadequate tables of contents and indices, word searches speed up the process and may prove more comprehensive. What is lacking, though, in Sulzer's Allgemeine Theorie as we leaf through its pages on the CD-ROM, is its original typography. To be sure, not every book is a model of the font-designer's art and typesetter's craft, and to read an eighteenth-century treatise in a modern, somewhat taeniform font (though not in modernized spelling) may smooth our way, but it may also cause a text to assume a strangely anamorphic appearance.

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Notes

2. The pertinent passage in Schinkel's entry reads: "Dieses Haus ist wie alle Londoner Privathäuser klein, in demselben ist aber auf die abenteuerlichste Weise eine grosse Masse von Abgüssen, Bruchstücken antiker Statuen, Architekturstücken, Vasen, Sarkophage, Tuerchen, Bronzen auf das abenteuerlichste in engen, von oben und seitwärts beleuchteten Raümen, die oft nur 3 Fuss breit sind," quoted in Gottfried Riemann, ed., Carl Friedrich Schinkel, Reise nach England, Schottland and Paris im Jahre 1826 (Berlin, 1986), 172. Note that Schinkel uses the term abenteuerlich twice in the same sentence in order to characterize the nature of the display and its impact in accordance with Sulzer's definition, which derives the "specific character of the Abenteuerliche...from the fact that it descends from a world without adequate causes as is the case in dreams" (I:3). This and all other translations are by Kurt Forster.

Thomas Gronegger, director
Monument in Motion: San Pietro in Vaticano / Palazzo dei Conservatori, Roma

Monument in Motion, a box set of two DVDs by Thomas Gronegger, contains insightful and sophisticated videos generated from three-dimensional computer models of Michelangelo's Palazzo dei Conservatori and the Basilica di San Pietro. The videos include carefully choreographed experiential animations that explore important aspects of the architectural forms and spaces; they also contain dynamic diagrammatic models that analyze specific compositional and tectonic conditions to illuminate underlying conceptual ideas.

In the past decade, sophisticated computer programs have revolutionized architectural graphics and the architectural design process, and Monument in Motion demonstrates how effectively CAD programs can be used to represent and analyze important works of architectural history. Gronegger exploits the potential of the computer to produce dynamic representational walk-through videos and analyze and explain complex spatial and formal architectonic conditions. Gronegger's team built models that could be dissected, disassembled, and reassembled. However, the DVD segments consist of videos; viewers cannot control views and movement, as in computer video games. Nonetheless, the models suggest the experiential phenomenon of moving though space and time, which is vital to any understanding of Michelangelo's architecture. While many of the video segments are long and occasionally repetitive, they provide a thorough formal understanding of the two monuments.

In Palazzo dei Conservatori, Gronegger thoroughly analyzes all of the architectonic components of the building's façade, loggia, entry corridor, and cortile, and he clearly explains Michelangelo's complex yet coherent systemic design. The depth of Gronegger's analysis is especially evident in the sections on the palazzo's loggia and entry corridor, where components of the color-coded diagrammatic model are dynamically reconstructed to illustrate various architectonic relationships. Initially, Gronegger studies the loggia's morphology—in particular, what he refers to as the "primary principle" of the design: the four-columned baldachino-like "column canopy units," which alternate with wide piers connected overhead by broad beams (called here the "wall pier units"). He then examines the morphology of the entrance corridor that connects the loggia to the courtyard and how the articulation between the column canopy units and wall pier units differs from that of the loggia.

Next Gronegger introduces the category of elements comprising his "second principle": the brick infill walls between the bays of the loggia, the concave “coupling units” behind the columns, and the infill walls between the piers and columns of the central corridor. From there we move to his "modular system hypothesis," illustrating the potential of the systemic units of Michelangelo's design to be multiplied exponentially along axes parallel to both the loggia and the entry corridor to produce a multibayed structure. In the following segment, Gronegger adds the
focuses on the spatial design of the Palazzo dei Conservatori. Despite these limitations, Michelangelo’s unrealized design for the nave annex. Gronegger constructed two models of San Pietro: a “spatial-shell model” to represent the architectural envelope defining the basilica’s interior spaces, and a more detailed “reconstruction model” to illustrate the final project. The spatial-shell model introduces the interior spaces of Michelangelo’s central construction and Maderno’s nave annex. Rather than representing the true exterior contours of the basilica, the walls of this model have a consistent depth of a few meters such that the outer surface closely corresponds to the negative space contained within. For illustrating the spatial composition from the exterior, it might have been clearer to model the interior space as a slightly translucent solid, which could have dissolved to the spatial-shell model for viewing the interior. In the segment introducing Maderno’s nave, Gronegger postulates that a Roman triumphal arch may have been the source of inspiration and illustrates this by morphing a triumphal arch into Maderno’s nave through a series of dynamic transformations. There is no mention of more significant ancient precedents for the basilica, such as the Pantheon and the Basilica of Maxentius. More immediate precedents were probably the many late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century churches built in Rome that incorporate wide, barrel-vaulted naves and domed, connected side chapels, such as Il Gesu and San Andrea della Valle.

In subsequent segments, Gronegger effectively uses the reconstruction model to simulate how the spatial sequences of Maderno’s nave and Michelangelo’s central construction experimentally unfold. He then switches to the spatial-shell model to examine more closely the spatial composition of the same circuit, using both his reconstruction and the spatial-shell models to analyze in detail spatial and architectonic intersections. Next Gronegger focuses on Maderno’s side aisles, employing the reconstruction model to simulate a walk-through and the spatial-shell model to disassemble and analyze the side aisles’ formal structure. A very interesting analysis shows how the portals between the oval-domed bays of the side aisles are hollowed-out variations on the existing aediculae that terminate these axes on the eastern faces of the crossing piers.

The final section focuses on the spatial and architectonic relationship between Michelangelo’s central construction and Maderno’s nave annex. Gronegger effectively shows how the slight expansion of the nave’s width results in a rectangular space that is subtly distinct from the eastern arm of the crossing and necessarily produces a corresponding contraction of the side-aisle bays’ width and oval domes, which in turn accentuate the linear axes of the side aisles. Although these segments are rather long and sometimes repetitive, Gronegger demonstrates how respectfully and harmoniously Maderno’s nave annex blends with Michelangelo’s central construction. The DVD concludes with a spectacular fly-through of the Basilica of San Pietro.

While Monument in Motion provides an excellent spatial and formal analysis of San Pietro, it is a pity that Michelangelo’s design is not understood within the context of what was designed and built by his predecessors. One might have expected a discussion of how the design and construction evolved from Bramante’s famous Parchment Plan through the schemes of subsequent architects in order to understand the problems Michelangelo faced when he took over the project in 1546. One interesting aspect of the reconstruction model is its suggestion of how the basilica interior appeared before the application of baroque ornamentation in the mid-seventeenth century.

Despite the absence of material on the history, cultural meaning, and significance of these projects, these DVDs are a valuable teaching and learning resource. Using twenty-first-century computer-modeling technology to carry out formal, spatial, and experiential analyses, Monument in Motion effectively communicates the degree of spatial and
architectonic sophistication achieved in these late sixteenth-century projects.

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Note

Ruby Ofori and Edward Scott, directors
City of Dreams

Ruby Ofori and Edward Scott’s 2005 film, City of Dreams, treats modern architecture built during the colonization of Eritrea, Italy’s “first-born colony” in northeast Africa. In a 1938 book describing public works in the Italian colonies, Davide Fossa contends that Asmara, the capital, was simply a trading center before 1935 and worthy of mention only for its parallels with the Italian campagna.1 The filmmakers also begin their history of Asmara soon after 1935, the year in which the largest deployment of Italian army personnel moved through the country en route to subterfuge and later occupation in Ethiopia. City of Dreams follows this problematic account while engaging the contentious terrain of Italian colonialism, modern architecture and urbanism, and race.

Almost 140 architects built Asmara during Italian colonial rule, which commenced in 1889 and ended in 1947. Its territory stretched from Somaliland (now Somalia) through Ethiopia to Eritrea and also included Libya to the northwest. These architects sought a visual language that was Italian in character and yet reconfigured a regional idiom. City of Dreams is an abbreviated gloss of architecture constructed in the latter half of the colonial period, from 1925 until 1941; it omits the myriad distinctive works built prior to this period and demonizes the Italian colonial mission. With the exception of Edoardo Cavagnari, architetto integrale (architect, engineer, and artist), no other architects are named in the film. The innovative works of Cesare Valé, Giuseppe Petazzi, and Guido Ferrazza appear briefly, but the buildings of Asmara are presented as clandestine trophies whose association with a culpable regime rendered them peripheral to discussions of European modernism.

In City of Dreams, visitors arrive in Asmara by train, through the precipitous Hamasien highlands, as many a latter-day Italian traveler might. This movement soon is replaced by a tour of Harret Avenue (formerly Viale Mussolini) by Naigzy Gebremedhin, director of the Cultural Assets Rehabilitation Project (CARP). We follow him onto the sidewalks and into the courtyards of downtown Asmara, Eritreans brushing our shoulders. The film juxtaposes the aesthetics of Asmara’s architecture with lacuster commentary by Eritrean architects and designers now working in and around the city. Modern architecture is incidental to the story that Ofori and Scott tell; they interrogate the antecedents of colonialism and the racial divide that cordoned off much of the colonial urban realm. As Gebremedhin laments, “Asmara [is] so special despite that it was created by an odious regime . . . a very, very racist regime.”

City of Dreams suggests that Italians were complicit in the moral subjugation of Eritreans, but we do not come face to face with any of the Italo-Eritreans living in Asmara today.2 Rather, the former colonial presence is summarized in the guise of the Italian ambassador Emanuele Pignatelli and his house, the Villa Roma, an early example of Italian construction in the “villa quarter.” Ironically, Pignatelli at times speaks far more precisely about the history of Asmara’s built environment than the architects who are interviewed. The ambassador challenges the generalization that “real Roman buildings” were transposed onto the colonial landscape. He advocates “respect for the modern tendencies” seen in Asmara, “which do not necessarily have a legacy from the Roman style.”

Although the colonial architecture of Eritrea did not assume the technocratic or touristic agency of Libya, the Mediterranean mystique of the Aegean Dodecanese, or the monumental plunder valued in Ethiopia, Pignatelli implies that the architecture in Asmara was fundamentally linked to the aesthetic debates of the period concerning modernism in Italy, Western Europe, and the United States.

In a second segment entitled “A City Divided,” we linger in doorways, staircases, and liminal zones that some were forbidden to enter during the colonial period. The film is careful not to only document architecture but also to include the voices of those imprinted with the memory of colonial spaces. We are shown an apartment in the centrally located Palazzo Falletta, which, according to Gebremedhin, “represents one of the most finest [sic] buildings of Asmara.” With the din of community close at hand, Ofori and Scott have the opportunity to explore the complexities of occupying modern Italian architecture today; instead they heroize one Eritrean resident’s appropriation of the Palazzo Falletta. We look from the windows and balcony to hear Tesfahunei Woldu declare, “it is one of the noblest buildings in Asmara . . . . That is why I am proud . . . because my grandparents were not allowed to pass through here.”

Several newsreel images by Istituto Luce in the late 1930s punctuate “A City Divided” and personalize the combined effects of urbanism and sanctioned racism. However, much of the footage we see is of Libya and Ethiopia, not Asmara. In an effort to contextualize the place of Asmara today, the film includes recent footage from the nearly thirty-year civil war fought between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Against this bloody background, we meet an elderly gentleman, Yisehak Yosief, whose story of being taken to prison for walking in the “zona nazionale” remains hollow until he bemoans that, in Asmara, “the whites were always the masters.” The filmmakers here choose to lend superficial intimacy to their footage by toning it black