

Victoria & Albert Art & Love

Vision and duty: Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia and the arts in the early Victorian era

Samuel Wittwer

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Vision and duty: Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia and the arts in the early Victorian era

Samuel Wittwer

The following text is based on a lecture given during the National Gallery and Royal Collection Study Days on Victoria and Albert: Art and Love on 5–6 June 2010. Its aim is to provide some background to the situation in Prussia in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as to highlight the differences between the Prussian and in English courts. Consequently, it does not dwell on matters to do with Prussian political, cultural or social history, but focuses instead on the figure of the King himself and on the atmosphere of the period.

In 1824, while in Rome, Ludwig, the Crown Prince of Bavaria (1786–1868), became known for the unusually close relations he enjoyed with various members of the artistic community (fig. 1). He not only visited the resident German artists in their workshops, but also joined them on excursions, even socialising with them in local taverns. It was in this environment so conducive to easy intercourse between



Fig. 1
Franz Ludwig Catel (1778–1856),
Ludwig I with German Artists in Rome, 1824
Oil on canvas, 63.2 x 75.5 cm, Inv. WAF 142
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen,
Neue Pinakothek, Munich



different social classes, nations and professions that Ludwig seems to have developed his ideology of a state where arts and politics could be combined to form the basis of a new kind of society. After becoming king in 1825 he encouraged some leading artists, notably Leo von Klenze and Peter von Cornelius, to return to his court. He ennobled them and subsequently used them as ambassadors, sending them on important political missions, rather as Peter Paul Rubens had been employed two centuries before (fig. 2).

The year before his happy sojourn in Rome, Ludwig's sister Elisabeth had married the Prussian Crown Prince, Friedrich Wilhelm, who was known as a sensible and artistically gifted man (fig. 3). The latter had been born in 1795 and had grown up in uncertain times, when Napoleon was spreading his influence across Europe in the wake of countless invasions. One consequence was that the Prussian royal family had been forced to leave Berlin, and as a young teenager the Crown Prince had seen Prussia almost disappear from the map. This may explain why, when he was first given his own household, he chose Frederick the Great's apartment in the Berlin Schloss. This choice of residence was motivated not so much by a love of the rococo style of its apartments as by a strong desire to live somewhere redolent of the former glorious times of Prussia, when the State had enjoyed its first peak of power.

Fig. 2 (above left)
Max Haider (1807–73) after Joseph Stieler
(1781–1858), *Ludwig I of Bavaria*, 1826
Oil on canvas, 244 x 171 cm, Inv. 1062
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Neue
Pinakothek, Munich

Fig. 3 (above)
Franz Krüger (1797–1857),
Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, 1844
Oil on canvas, 275 x 188 cm, Inv. GK 1 896
Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten
Berlin-Brandenburg



For much the same reason, after their marriage in 1823 the young couple, Friedrich and Elisabeth, asked King Friedrich Wilhelm III for permission to use Sanssouci Palace as their summer residence (figs 4, 5). They adorned it with antique furniture, combining it in some rooms with contemporary pieces and, in the case of one special former guest room now serving as the Princess' boudoir, recreating furniture in a matching antique style. Interestingly, Friedrich Wilhelm produced many drawings, which were important to him as ways of capturing and developing his architectural and fantastical visions. He would draw these designs at every opportunity on any scrap of paper that was to hand, including menu cards, invitations and the margins of letters. His intense interest in architecture allowed him to engage in serious discussions on the subject with the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel. His father responded to this evident passion for architecture by allowing his son an ever greater say in important public building projects, not least the ambitious Lustgarten scheme in Berlin in which it was conceived that the castle, cathedral and museum (the Prussian answer to the Musée Napoléon; figs 6, 7) should all be connected. In fact it is possible to find the basic concept of today's Museum Quarter in many of the 7,000 extant sketches produced by the Crown Prince many decades before the scheme was developed into what it is today.

Although not all of Friedrich Wilhelm's projects were actually realised, he did succeed in adding more than 15 buildings (as well as many more in Berlin and other parts of Prussia) to the existing royal gardens in and around Potsdam. None of them were meant to serve as a princely or royal residence; there was no need for this as he lived in Sanssouci. Instead, some of these buildings were architectural landmarks in the cultural landscape which connected Berlin and Potsdam, while others housed apartments for guests and staff. Despite their different functions, what unites all these buildings is a display of sophisticated planning, not only in terms of architectural details, but also in terms of their symbolic meaning. What also becomes clear is that year by year the architectural landscape became increasingly Italianate in nature.

Figs 4, 5 (left)
"Voltairezimmer", Sanssouci Palace,
c.1870, Inv. F0004216
Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und
Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg



Fig. 6
Vase with image of the Altes Museum, 1832
Berlin KPM porcelain, height 63.5cm
The Twilight Collection, New York



Fig. 7
Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia
(1795–1861), Design for the Lustgarten,
c.1830 Pen and ink, 16.5 x 18.8 cm, Inv.
FWIVI-2-D-17 Stiftung Preußische Schlösser
und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg



One of the first of Friedrich Wilhelm's building projects was Schloss Charlottenhof, a lodge in the grounds of the palace at Sanssouci (**fig. 8**). Schinkel, the designated architect, was required to follow Friedrich Wilhelm's preliminary ideas very closely. Charlottenhof, although completely furnished, was never intended to be inhabited. Rather, it was intended as Friedrich Wilhelm's contemporary adaptation of a Roman villa, which he regarded as an anti-bourgeois home for a royal couple. Close by, a building complex that included a pavilion, houses and a roman baths complex connected with pergolas and loggias imitated an idealised City of Rome, with its architectural features drawn from an inspiring mixture of different historic eras (**fig. 9**).

Fig. 8
Schloss Charlottenhof

Fig. 9
Pavilion, houses and roman bath complex

Fig. 10
Stolzenfels

Of course the Crown Prince was familiar with the Eternal City and its antiquities, for history, mythology and the classical authors had formed the core of his education. But as well as studying the works of Cicero he had also studied the publications of Martin Luther. This led him to an interest in the Middle Ages, as well as in the Nibelungen saga. In 1814, aged 19, as part of his cultural education Friedrich Wilhelm was allowed to travel with his father to Paris. On the way he visited the cathedrals of Limburg, Aachen and the Ile de France. Only three years later in 1817 the Kreuzbergdenkmal, a memorial celebrating the victory of the German nation over Napoleon, was unveiled in Berlin in a pointedly Gothic style – the style which was fast becoming identified with the recent wave of patriotic fervour sweeping the country. This rivalry with France was also a major reason why the Crown Prince, serving as Governor of the Prussian Rhine provinces, concentrated his Gothic visions along the French border. When in 1823 the city of Koblenz presented him with the ruins of a medieval castle, determined to recreate an appropriate Gothic palace there, he turned it into the highly romanticised Gothic castle, Stolzenfels (**fig. 10**). Furthermore, he emphasised the Gothic origins of Cologne Cathedral by adding towers to it in an appropriate style, a project he started soon after becoming King of Prussia (**fig. 11**).



Fig. 11
Cologne Cathedral

The third artistic style to inspire Friedrich Wilhelm's romantic imagination was that of the Orient. He knew the Nagari script, although he had not studied Sanskrit, and used this alphabet to write texts from Latin, German and other languages to create his own quasi-oriental secret language. Being very familiar with the European literature on orientalism, such as Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, Friedrich Wilhelm

went on to invent his own exotic fairy tales. A sense of his catholic taste can be seen from the fact that he called Charlottenhof, his ideal of a roman villa, 'my little Siam', and signed his drawings of fanciful mosques with the equally fanciful signature, 'Frederico Siamese, Architetto'. In one case his oriental visions became a reality: in a small engine-house that he had had built by Ludwig Persius in Potsdam in 1841–2. This was built in the shape of a mosque and the steam engine, adorned with a chimney in the form of a minaret, pumped water from the local River Havel to a basin on a nearby hill, which in turn fed the fountains in gardens at Sanssouci (fig. 12).

With such divergent ideas developing in his mind, he was finally permitted to travel to Rome in 1828. He had hoped to go there many years earlier; but it was the Secretary of the German Embassy in Rome, Christian Carl Josias Bunsen, who finally convinced Friedrich Wilhelm's father of the validity of such an undertaking. Bunsen was married to Frances Waddington, an English lady, and was famed for celebrating the first Protestant service in Rome in the German Embassy, the Palazzo Caffarelli on the Capitol Hill in the jubilee year of the Reformation, 1817. Not surprisingly, it was under Bunsen's auspices that a Protestant chapel was subsequently established. Bunsen's house was a meeting point for German artists with whom he discussed art as well as matters of liturgy. In 1825 he had had travelled to Berlin to tell King Friedrich Wilhelm III of his ideas to create a new Protestant liturgy that was much closer to that of the early Christians. It was there that he met the Crown Prince, who showed immediate enthusiasm for Bunsen's vision.

When the Prince finally arrived in Rome three years later; he and Bunsen became close friends. Together they undertook a study of the early basilicas; Bunsen was interested in their liturgical aspect whereas the Crown Prince studied their architectural form. For the latter the Basilica acted as a bridge between Roman antiquity and early Christianity, and seemed to the Prince to be the perfect architectural form in which to express the concept of the Divine Right of Kings. In 1832 Bunsen proved that the Roman temple of Jupiter lay directly beneath the German Embassy. In acknowledgement of this fact, the sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen created a font for the Protestant chapel in the shape of an antique altar (fig. 13). He decorated it with Christian reliefs in an antique style and around its bowl he copied an inscription taken from the Baptistery in the Laterano. Friedrich Wilhelm was enormously encouraged by this, and confirmed his ideas concerning the existence of an ancient Christian Apostolic church, a point to which we shall return.

Once back in Berlin, Friedrich Wilhelm continued with related projects. For example, following up an idea of Bunsen's, in 1829 he founded the German Archaeological Institute in Rome. As a counterpart to this institution of research on the Antique world, in 1840 he created another institute for research into and maintenance of German patriotic memorials.

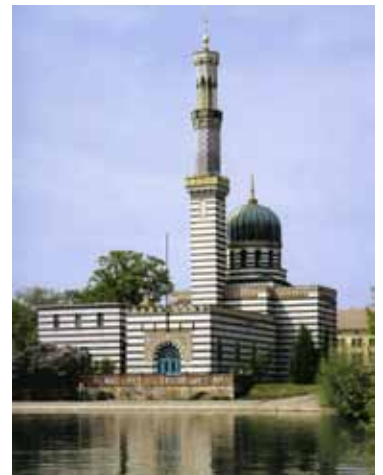


Fig. 12
Ludwig Persius (1803–1845), *The Engine House at Potsdam*, 1841–2



Fig. 13
Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844), altar; Wilhelm Hopfgarten (1779–1860), bowl: font from the Protestant chapel, Palazzo Caffarelli, Rome, 1832 Terracotta, 64 cm high
Rome, Chiesa Evangelica Luterana, Palazzo Caffarelli



Fig. 14
August Wilhelm Ferdinand Schirmer (1802–66),
The Garden of Villa d'Este, 1833
Oil on canvas, 94 x 140 cm, Inv. GK I 5885
Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten
Berlin-Brandenburg

As an art collector, the Crown Prince seems to have been hindered by a lack of money as well as by a lack of genuine interest. The closer the arts were to architecture, however, the more his attention was captured. Not surprisingly, then, whilst he and his wife were good friends of the architect Schinkel and the sculptor Christian Daniel Rauch, Friedrich Wilhelm did not have a strong passion for painting or for the decorative arts, nor did any painters number among his intimate circle. The paintings he bought were mainly Italian landscapes or those which documented his own environment in some way (figs 14, 15).

In 1840 this romantic and liberal prince, full of visions and ideals, succeeded to the Prussian throne. Like his two advisers, Bunsen and Alexander von Humboldt, many artists hoped that the arrival of a king who believed in patriotic patronage – and enabled the arts to support politics – would herald the dawning of a new age for the arts. Exactly a century earlier, Frederick the Great had ascended the throne as the embodiment of European hopes for a 'Prince of Peace'. Much as that earlier vision had not been fully realised in 1740, so the later one in 1840, as we shall see, would founder. However, in the early days of his reign, Friedrich Wilhelm – now King Friedrich IV – began with determination and passion to turn his visions into reality. While his father had relied on a society of nobles and military leaders, the new king became obsessed by a pre-revolutionary model of monarchy based on the notion of the Divine Right of Kings and he employed the arts to this end.

Both Bunsen and Humboldt were eager that Friedrich Wilhelm should attract artists of international importance such as Peter von Cornelius, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdi and Giacomo Meyerbeer to the Prussian court. In fact, all of them came



Fig. 15
Carl Daniel Freydanck (1811–87),
View of Potsdam via Glienicke, 1838
Oil on canvas, 28 x 36 cm, Inv. KPM G 87
Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-
Brandenburg, KPM-Archiv (Land Berlin)



in the hope of meeting the perfect patron. But Mendelssohn, on realising that the King was interested mainly in oratorios and church music, left Berlin in 1844 after a sojourn of only three years. Other artists who shared the King's vision, or at least were not at odds with it, had more luck. The architects Friedrich August Stüler and Ludwig Persius built many buildings for him, including basilica-style churches, as the perfect background to his understanding of monarchy (figs 16, 17, 18). In 1847 the King sent another architect, Wilhelm Salzenberg, to Istanbul, one result of which was the publication of a book on Byzantine churches which is still of interest today. Similarly, in 1855, the painter Eduard Hildebrandt was sent to Jerusalem, where he produced landscapes and depictions of biblical scenes, many of which the King acquired (figs 19, 20). But most of Friedrich Wilhelm IV's acquisition of art

Fig. 16 (above left)
Design for the painting in the dome's apse, 1845
Pen and brown ink, 22.5 x 18.5 cm,
Inv. FWVI-2-A-29
Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und
Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg

Fig. 17 (above middle)
'Friedenskirche', Potsdam

Fig. 18 (above right)
'Heilandskirche', Sacrow



during his reign was on the advice that, as monarch, he should extend his patronage to certain German artists. Consequently he purchased both at the annual exhibitions of the Berlin Academy and at German craft exhibitions, the first of which was held in 1844. But throughout his life his great passion remained architecture. So when he approached the museum in Berlin to request the return to Potsdam of the paintings lent by his father, this did not so much indicate a love of pictures as represent a wish to restore the art collection to the form it had had under his most admired ancestor, Frederick the Great.

Fig. 19 (above left)
Eduard Hildebrandt (1818–68),
View of Jerusalem, 1855
Oil on canvas, 115 x 153 cm, Inv. GK I 5854
Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten
Berlin-Brandenburg

Fig. 20 (above)
Eduard Hildebrandt (1818–68), *Windsor*, 1848
Watercolour, 31.4 x 26.6 cm, Inv. GK II (5) 1299
Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten
Berlin-Brandenburg



Fig. 21
Christian Daniel Rauch (1777–1857),
Faith and Charity, 1842
Marble, Royal Collection

It was also Bunsen who encouraged the Crown Prince to become involved in the institution of an Anglican-Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem to support Christians living under the Ottoman Empire. Bunsen had been appointed Ambassador to the Vatican but was forced out of the role, suggesting that his plan of establishing an evangelical bishopric in Jerusalem had met with significant resistance from the Roman Catholic authorities. But to install a bishopric meant accepting the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession, which was something that did not sit easily with the tradition of the Lutheran Church. Therefore Bunsen turned to Prince Albert for help, who, having married Queen Victoria, Head of the Church of England, was in a position to be more supportive. Thanks to a collaborative effort between the Prussian and English crowns the bishopric was eventually founded in 1841. By the end of that year Friedrich Wilhelm IV had been invited to become godfather to Victoria and Albert's first son, Edward, who was christened in January 1842. All the other godparents were close relatives and although Friedrich Wilhelm's grandfather was the brother of Victoria's grandmother, the founding of a joint bishopric was more likely than any family connection to be the reason for this honour. Arguably, a clear political signal was being given by the Queen's wish that the Prussian King be present on this important occasion.

Friedrich Wilhelm travelled to Windsor for this event carrying with him six Berlin porcelain vases as gifts for Victoria and Albert, as well as two marble figures by the sculptor Christian Daniel Rauch (**fig. 21**), originally destined for the church of Arolsen but now intended as christening presents for his godson. But during the festivities in Windsor the Prussian King was so impressed by the silverware on display (and perhaps also after discussion with Victoria and Albert) that he changed his mind and decided instead to present the two figures to the Queen and promised a new piece of silver for the young prince: this was to be a Glaubensschild (Shield of Faith), to act



Fig. 22
Friedrich August Stuler; *Glaubensschild*
(*Shield of Faith*), 1847, RCIN 31605

as a symbol of protection for the child and of the new ecclesiastical alliance between Britain and Prussia (fig. 22). Back in Berlin, Peter von Cornelius was commissioned to design this shield, which was executed by the court silversmith, Johann George Hossauer. The highly sophisticated and significant work of art was finally presented in 1847. Hossauer acted as courier and brought his creation to London, where he took the opportunity of studying the Elgin marbles in the British Museum. (For more information on this episode, see J. Marsden (ed.), *Victoria and Albert: Art and Love*, exh. cat., Buckingham Palace, The Queen's Gallery, London, p. 272.)

The year 1842 witnessed the decision to make the *Glaubensschild*. It also saw the King of Prussia's initial measures to 'finish' Cologne Cathedral, involving the construction of two towers planned but never built during the initial phase, as well as the installation of the first incumbent to the Anglican-Protestant bishopric at Jerusalem – two more significant expressions of the King's thinking on religious matters. 1842 also saw the completion of Schloss Stolzenfels, the celebrated neo-Gothic vision on the Rhine, which in its re-creation of the past expressed so well the patriotism prevalent at the time, and which has always been seen as a symbol of Prussian power. Nor should it be forgotten that Friedrich Wilhelm IV added a

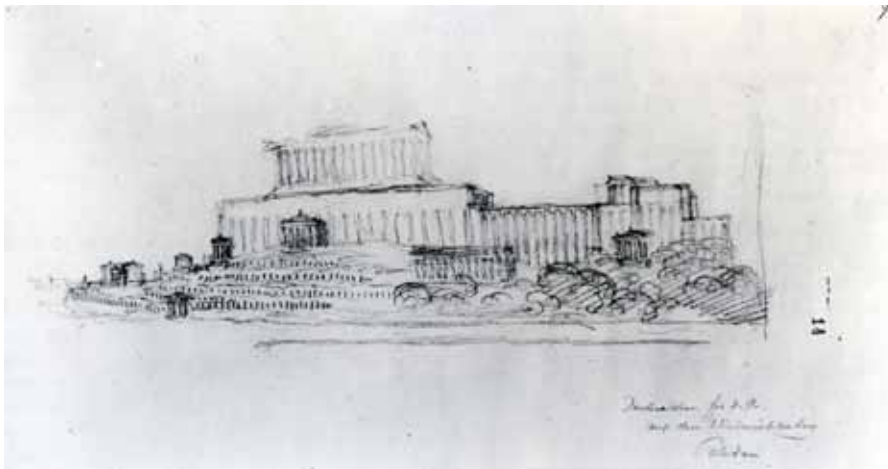


Fig. 23 (left)
Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1795–1861), Design for a monument to Frederick the Great or 'The Walk of Triumph' c. 1840
Pen and ink, 44.5 x 36.7 cm, Inv. FWIV.111-2-A-14
Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten
Berlin-Brandenburg

new civil section to the Prussian Order of Merit, which up to this point had been exclusively a military order. The so-called 'Class of Peace' permitted artists and scientists to become royal knights. So the creation of the *Glaubensschild* occurred at the precise moment when religious matters, patriotism, politics and the arts were clearly dominating and converging in the mind of the young King.

However, not all the artists approached were to espouse their royal patron's ideology. This was a time when artists were becoming increasingly free from royal patronage and were able to enjoy significant independent commissions as much as those issued by the Court. Having said that, the grander the King's ideas grew, the more often independent artists were squeezed out of the equation. Perhaps the most ambitious vision of Friedrich Wilhelm was to establish a 'Walk of Triumph' (**fig. 23**) to celebrate the house of Hohenzollern and the legacy of Frederick the Great in particular. A series of buildings – memorials of various sizes, temples and palaces – was planned along the northern border of the Sanssouci gardens, with an acropolis-like memorial to his great ancestor as its climax (**fig. 24**). Only a few of these projects were executed, among them the Orangery Palace (**fig. 25**), which is a modernised version of Sanssouci itself. In the centre of the building was a picture gallery displaying copies of all Raphael's masterpieces. When we remember that the leading Nazarene painter Peter von Cornelius suggested, in Vasari-like terms, that Raphael was the pinnacle of painting, this collection can be seen as the King's attempt to gather together what he regarded as the very best of Western European art.

When Friedrich Wilhelm became king, his level of involvement in the arts significantly changed. Through pressure of time he increasingly delegated official and representative duties to his capable wife, Queen Elisabeth. Indeed, it is most likely thanks to her commitment and abilities that the informal evening tea-circles continued – occasions when members of the royal family met with leading figures of the day such as Alexander von Humboldt. While the King and Queen both commissioned works of art from local workshops, neither was what one would call



Fig. 24
Walhalla memorial, Regensburg, 1830–42



Fig. 25
Orangery Palace, Potsdam, 1856



a great collector. This explains the numerous letters requesting new commissions that the royal couple received from the state porcelain manufactory, established in Berlin in 1763 and which depended heavily on royal commissions from the start.

Interestingly, some of Friedrich Wilhelm IV's commissions became gifts to the English Crown. As presents for the parents of his royal godchild in 1842 Friedrich Wilhelm IV, as noted earlier, chose two garnitures of three vases each (figs 26, 27). Queen Victoria was given a large vase depicting the goddess of Victory, which of course was a play on her name; the two other vases showed battle scenes from the Napoleonic Wars. None of the designs was made especially for this commission: August von Kloeber's front view of the goddess of Victory dated from 1833; the designs for the ornamental decorations had been executed by Hermann Looschen in 1837 (figs 28, 29); and the battle scenes had been used on earlier porcelain vases. The garniture for Prince Albert showed a less 'official' programme. The models of the so-called Persian vases were introduced to the Berlin porcelain manufactory in the early 1820s and their decoration showed oriental scenes, including a wedding ceremony (figs 30, 31, 32). As the current locations of these vases is not known, it is impossible to say how personalised their designs were or whether they illustrated one of the oriental fairy tales written by Friedrich Wilhelm.

Fig. 26
Royal Berlin Porcelain Manufactory (KPM)
(1763-1918), Garniture of vases, 1839,
RCIN 98236, 98236.1-2

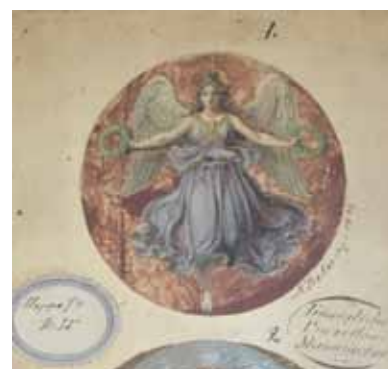


Fig. 27
August von Kloeber, *Victory with laurel wreaths*,
Gouache on board, 22.4 x 14 cm, SPSG, KPM-
Archive (Land Berlin), inv.no. Mapped 74 No 35



In 1845, on the occasion of a visit by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to the Schloss Augustusburg at Brühl, near Cologne, Friedrich Wilhelm IV once more presented them with two significant pieces of porcelain. Prince Albert received a large tazza on a stand decorated with dolphins, the bowl itself painted with a design after Thorvaldsen and adorned with an ornamental border of figures and leaves. This design had been created by the court architect Friedrich August Stüler in 1835 and had been used originally to decorate the top of a table presented to the Grand Duchess of Weimar in 1838. Queen Victoria, by contrast, again received a more official gift. While her earlier gift of 1842 had seemed appropriate, with its depiction of recent battle scenes, in 1845 she received a large vase (fig. 33) that matched one previously presented to her uncle, King William IV (fig. 34), in 1836, when he in turn had presented Friedrich Wilhelm III with a small frigate. William IV's vase had shown a boat, while Queen Victoria's depicted a harvest scene. Both vases were based on a design by Schinkel and have matching ornaments, although in slightly different colours.

Fig. 28 (above left)
Hermann Looschen, 'Design for the middle section of a vase' (Modell französische Vase nr. 7"), dat. 6. Dez. 1837, pen, watercolour, guache, gold bronze and black ink on paper
71.7 x 44.9 cm, SPSG, KPM-Archive (Land Berlin), inv.no. Mappe 146 No 133

Fig. 29
Hermann Looschen, 'Design for the upper section of a vase' (Modell französische Vase nr. 7")
Gouache, gold paint and black ink on paper;
43 x 45 cm, SPSG, KPM-Archive (Land Berlin), inv.no. Mappe 146 No 132

Fig. 30
Details of KPM vase given to the Russian ambassador in 1840
Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Fig. 31
Royal Berlin Porcelain Manufactory (KPM) (1763-1918), Persian Vases, gift to the Tsar of Russia, 1843
Heights 82 and 91 cm
Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Fig. 32
Design for a 'Persian vase', c.1842
Oil on canvas, 20 x 27.1 cm, Inv. KPM G 145
Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg, KPM-Archiv (Land Berlin)





Thus Victoria's gift transformed a single vase she had inherited from her uncle into a sumptuous pair, and signified the long-lasting friendship between the two royal houses. Yet even if these gifts were impressive and important, their decorations were not newly commissioned to mark the occasion, having been created during the previous monarch's reign. As mentioned earlier, Friedrich Wilhelm IV himself did not show much interest in the Royal porcelain manufactory in Berlin and, in contrast to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, he was not a patron of the decorative arts.

Friedrich Wilhelm IV, constantly struggled with his sense of history and his position within it. If the first building he constructed, the Schloss Charlottenhof, can be seen as a visionary model of progress – with a double bedroom flanked by two studies – his last big project, the Orangery Palace, is arguably little more than a retrogressive oriental symbol of restoration: to both sides of the central hall (picture gallery) there were two apartments arranged in the manner of the pre-revolutionary eighteenth century palaces. At this point it is perhaps worth mentioning Friedrich Wilhelm's second trip to Rome, in 1858. Theoretically at least this would have given him the perfect opportunity to buy paintings and commission sculptures for the Orangery Palace. Yet several of his entourage criticised him for buying relatively few works of

Fig. 33
Royal Berlin Porcelain Manufactory (KPM)
(1763-1918), *Vase of Campana Form*, 1845,
91 x 43 x 43 cm, RCIN 41306

Fig. 34
Royal Berlin Porcelain Manufactory (KPM)
(1763-1918), *Vase of Campana Form*, 1836,
88 x 62 x 59 cm, RCIN 59183

art, exclusively from German artists, and for obtaining sculptures that were almost without exception copies of antique originals. The revolutions of 1848 showed that Friedrich Wilhelm's ideal of a unity between art, religion and politics was unsustainable. Towards the end of the 1850s he went mad and had to be replaced by his brother Wilhelm. A few years later, in 1857, his nephew Friedrich would marry Victoria and Albert's eldest daughter, the Princess Royal. She and her husband were great lovers of the arts – but that is another story.

And here our own tale ends. This brief overview of the 'early Victorian era' in Prussia nevertheless reveals how very different were the intentions of the sovereigns in artistic matters, even if their tastes were ultimately rather similar. A short note in *The Times* of 3 February 1842 reported Friedrich Wilhelm's visit to the British Museum the previous day and compared this foreign visitor's behaviour on walking around the galleries with that of his host, Queen Victoria. The report described the different approaches of the two monarchs when looking at art; arguably, their different reactions are a revealing expression of their distinct attitudes; in the case of Friedrich Wilhelm art as an expression of a personal vision, and in the case of Queen Victoria art as royal entertainment. The Prussian King stayed for three hours, not interested in British art but spending most of his time in the antiquities rooms, asking his entourage to keep close and discuss their impressions with him, while the English Queen allowed her entourage to go and see what they liked and to report back to her in a much more informal way.