does not exactly correspond to one’s intellectual understanding of the organisation of the building, in what way dominates is the U-shaped gallery block.

Whatever the convolutions the building presents in its frontal view, its basic scheme is radial, and is clearly related to Schinkels’s Altus Museum. As in the Altus Museum there is a rectangular block consisting of a peripheral sequence of rooms with a rotunda in the centre. The Staatsgalerie, however, differs from the Altus Museum in two crucial respects. First, its front range, which, like the Altus Museum, contains a foyer and an external, lateral staircase, is lowered in relation to the main body of the building and does not present a frontal surface of any substance to the street. The rotunda, which one might expect to be at gallery level, is in fact just above the level of the foyer. These vertical displacements and distortions have wide-ranging implications and lead to the second difference from the Altus Museum. In the Altus Museum (as in numerous Beau Arts plans of the period), the rotunda sits at the main orienting space. An alternative move along its axis establishes firmly in the visitor’s memory the spatial arrangement of the whole building. In the Staatsgalerie this alternative movement system does not exist, and it is impossible to penetrate into the rotunda on the central axis of the building. Instead there is a ramp (comprising part of the public footpath) which crosses over the foyer on axis, starts the circumferential of the rotunda, and returns to the central axis at the back of the building, in a slick linear fashion. Under this ramp there is another ramp leading from the foyer to the back range of galleries and archives. Both ramps have views down into the rotunda. The only access to the rotunda is along its transverse axis, down from the galleries or up from the temporary exhibition hall.

The rotunda, instead of being the primary space of the building, becomes an event along a promenade architecture—a part of a thematic and picturesque sequence, which one ‘discovers’ as one might the central core of a labyrinth. The geometrical centre of the building has become a kind of negation—an absence rather than a presence. The rotunda is a solid which forms an obstruction to the circulation. This has all the elements of a scandal, given the building’s overall Classical parti.

It is clear that one is confronted here with a complicated reinterpretation of a Classical paradigm in terms of another paradigm—the Corbusian free plan—and that an extreme distortion of tension exists between the two. And there is no doubt that the rotunda, in the ‘Romantische’ interpretation given it by Stirling, is a wonderfully effective space, magical precisely to the extent that the relation to the building as a whole is unexpected and the foyers form a central space, the foyer fans out from a central construction. Events tend to be dispersed towards the periphery; movement is

has vaguely Kiemian overtones, (the Hefteburgstube at Krebke?) while there are suggestions of Radugogestalt in the solitary arched window which lights the main staircase. The flat arch which depresses the space at the foot of this stair seems to have a Gothic provenance. In the temporary exhibition gallery the lecture theatre seating ‘floats’ laminously over the majestic mushroom columns in a way that is reminiscent of the Johnson Wax building. Some of these references are jokes, like

the door into the garage-cum-crypt and the other two ‘improvised’ ventilation openings with their rather literal evocation of Gothic Romano. Most of them belong comfortably to the language of the building and have been thoroughly appropriated by the architect for his own purposes. There even appear to be some local references—to the variegated sandstone walls, massive cylindrical towers and iron bar doors of the medieval Residents, and to recent steel and glass canopies used outside Bonatz’s

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