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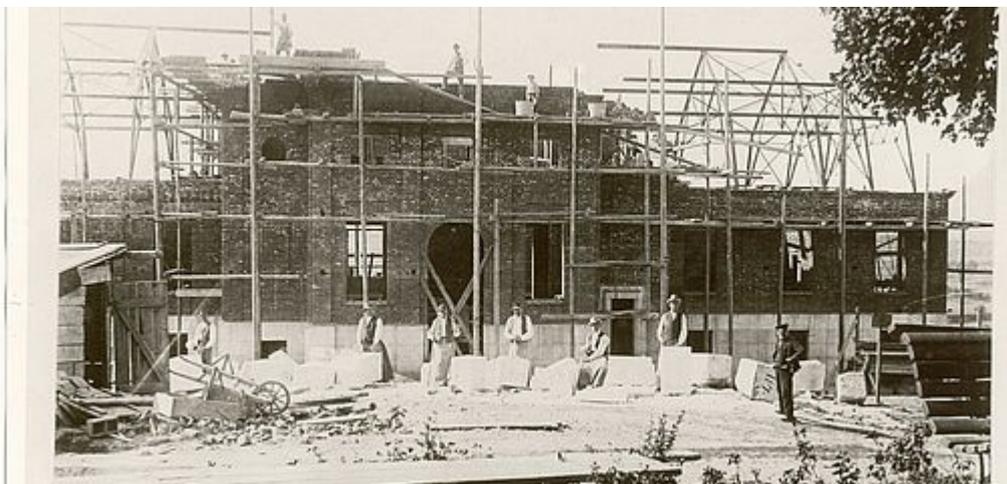
On the Architectural Design of the Schiller National Museum

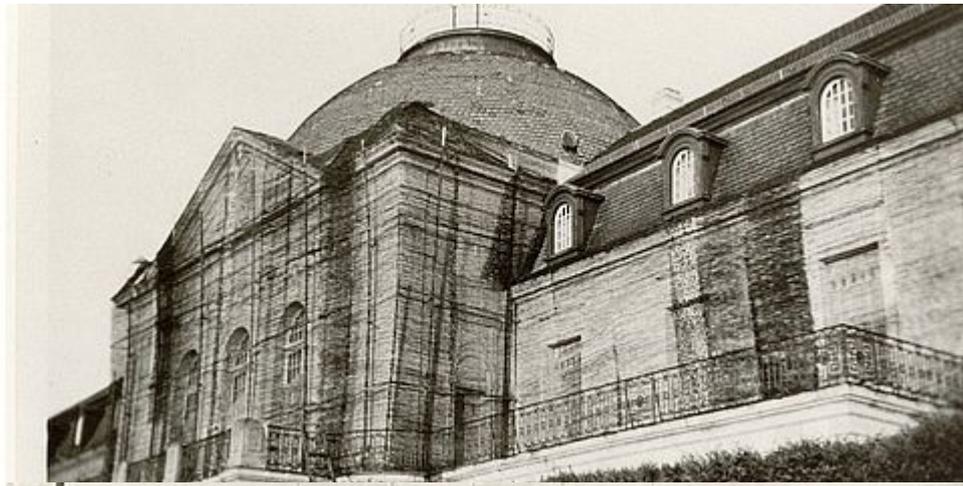


The architectural design for the Schiller National Museum (SNM), designed by Ludwig Eisenlohr and Carl Weigle and opened in 1903, reflects its original use as an archive, library, museum, a place for celebration and research, through openness in the definition, form and furnishing of the individual rooms and through clarity in the architectural rhetoric of the building as a whole. The exposed positioning on a cliff overlooking a river, in the middle of a small forest of plane trees, has been a sign since antiquity for those unusual places that are close to the gods: Parnassus, Arcadia, the sacred grove.

The domed building alludes to the Pantheon in Rome and suggests meanings such as elevation, inspiration, proximity to heaven, eternity - much like in late-Baroque hunting lodges such as Solitude Palace in Stuttgart. The central hall, dedicated to Schiller himself, is outfitted as a hall of celebration with its floor mosaic, its reliefs of Schiller's ballads, and its highly elevated, coffered ceilings. The other rooms in the side wings, with linoleum floors, are less grandiose in their decoration. Urns, lowered torches, palm branches, a lyre and symbols of infinity and immortality (meanders, running dogs, garlands, rosettes, suns and stars) set the tone for the museum's ornamentation.

The museum is located in a landscape that is evocative of objects and places of significance for Swabian poetry. A sight line connects the oversized bust of Schiller in the foyer with the Schiller memorial on the grounds in front of the museum to the east. The memorial is reflected in the museum's windows and casts its shadow before its doors. To the west, the view extends towards the mountains Hohenasperg and Michaelsberg, two central places for literature from Württemberg. The ideal earthly home for a poet-prince, albeit without an elevated portal, without long staircases inside and out - from the outside like a pantheon, the Schiller National Museum manifests itself from the inside as a darkened firmament - relic worship with a wink.





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