Lambert
Rosenbusch

Introduction

Conference Report

The Pantheon: “Symbol of the universe” and “The Interpretation in Northern Europe”

Pantheon, Rome, in the rooms of the Accademia di San Luca

23 September 2001 and 21 March 2002

On the autumn equinox in 2001, when day and night are equal in length, members of several European countries gathered in Rome for a first scientific colloquy about the interior of the Pantheon. The purpose of this event was to gather friends and specialists to exchange experiences and investigate unsolved questions. An important event on the program was a visit to the main central building, to the vestibule, the rotunda and a variety of side rooms.

Fig. 1. Pantheon meeting participants, left to right: Venanzio Pengo, Francesco Giuseppe Panozzo, Lambert Rosenbusch, Roberto Giannerini, Giovanni Belardi, Peter Wilkens, Priscilla Paolini, Fredrich Rakob, Gert Sperling, Riccardo Migliari

Half a year later, in the spring of 2002, again at the equinox, we met once more in the vestibule (Fig. 1). The group discretely avoided the public in the western side-niche. As in 2001, all members came well equipped. Some questions had been prepared, together with some answers to topics already raised, especially with regards to the rotunda of Leibniz in Wolfenbüttel. Virtually christened a sacred monument (in a travel report of 1907, Alfred Lichtwarck describes the atmosphere of the library as “basilica-like”¹) by the admiring intellectual world until its demolition in 1887, its aura of ancient magnificence earned it the honorary title of “Pantheon of Books” and “eighth Wonder of the World.”² In order to trace the reasons for the apparently successful solution of this Pantheon-like recreation in Wolfenbüttel, it was therefore necessary to

analyze its relationship to the original Pantheon in Rome, in terms of architectural and conceptual relationships, as well as effect and function. The existing, if minimal, evidence indicates that also in the Roman Pantheon there existed a research library of Alexandrian design. Research into the relationships between the rotundas of Rome and Wolfenbüttel was the basis for the theme of 2002: "The Interpretation in Northern Europe."

What follows are three reports from the two meetings in Rome:

"Early Orchestration: The Pantheon as a Resonance Element" by Gert Sperling;

"The Pantheon as a Globe-Shaped Concept" by Peter Wilkins;

"The Pantheon as an Image of the Universe" by Lambert Rosenbusch.

These should give an impression of the three partial experimental study issues relating to the theme of the colloquies.

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Notes

1. Alfred Lichtwarck, Reisebericht 1907, Wellenhausen/Celle, Hellmut Saucke-Verlag, 2000.
2. Friedrich Matthisson, Erinnerungen Bd. 1, Zürich, 1810 p 347, cited in Paul Raabe, "Das achte Weltwunder" in *Wolfenbütteler Beiträge* 1/1972, 3.