Events

Representing Time. Architecture, Geometry and Astronomy International Study Day

Marco Fasolo

The International Study Day entitled *Representing Time. Architecture, Geometry and Astronomy* was held on March 23, 2022, at the palazzo Spada in Rome, Italy.
Organized by Laura Farroni (Department of Architecture, Roma Tre University), Manuela Incerti (Department of Architecture, University of Ferrara) and Alessandra Pagliano (Department of Architecture, University of Naples 'Federico II'), the meeting was aimed at bringing together a wide range of knowledge dealing with the theme of the relationships between astronomy, geometry and architecture.
The interesting debate was developed in two sessions: the morning session, addressed to astronomers, and the afternoon session, addressed to scholars of Drawing. Although for organizational reasons, the speakers were divided into two distinct groups, it was possible to observe how the peculiarities of the competencies of the former could merge into the latter and vice versa, in a continuous osmosis where the semi-permeable membrane increasingly loses its characteristic of being a tenuous boundary and the two souls converge towards a single direction, that of knowledge.
The conventional institutional greetings were extended: those of the host, the Council of State represented by Councilor Solveig Cogliani, as well as those of Pasquale Basilicata, Director General of the Roma Tre University, Adolfo Baratta representing the Department of Architecture of the Roma Tre University and Francesca Fatta, President of the *Unione Italiana per il Disegno*, all of whom agreed on the importance of these cultural exchanges. What's more, pervading throughout was the common desire to continue these meetings by promoting, even in the future, activities focused on scientific research applied to the vast cultural heritage present in the prestigious palace.
Wanting to identify a common thread in the topics covered by the speakers, this can be found precisely in the protagonist of the title: *Time*, lived and represented in the various eras, from archaeological to ancient, medieval, and Renaissance, only to end with the contemporary era by passing, of course, through the Baroque. In short, a journey through time with Time.
Therefore, the speeches that followed showed particular attention to this common theme starting from the history of time, to the concept of space and time and the relationship between Astronomy and Art and between Astronomy and Architecture, as Fabrizio Bònoli (University of Bologna, Director of the *Giornale di Astronomia*, SAI) clearly outlined in his speech.
Another theme dealt with throughout the day was related to instruments. Elio Antonello (President of the Italian Society of Archaeoastronomy SIA, INAF) focused on the observation of the sky performed by ancient cultures without today's telescopes and instruments. He emphasized how this activity also had a practical purpose: to define a calendar in order to develop agriculture and the agricultural culture at a time when writing did not yet exist nor, consequently, written calendars.
Again, dealing with the union of the history of Time and its instruments, Mario Arnaldi (former Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Gnomonica Italiana*) began by criticizing the current abandonment of studies on the chronometry of ancient cultures. He then dwelt on the *Geometrie intuitive della percezione oraria* (Intuitive geometries of time perception) underlying the creation of the very first sundials. An international contribution was brought to us by Angélique Ferrand (ATER History of Medieval Art, University of Nantes), who in her study *Penser le temps dans l'espace: les signes du Zodiaque et les Occupations des mois rythmant l'architecture ecclésiale (XI^{e}-XIII^{e} siècles)* posed the problem of the relationship between the Zodiac and architectural space.
The morning's talks were closed by Nicoletta Lanciano (Sapienza University of Rome), who reflected on how, alongside works of architecture, in the evolution of scientific-astronomical thought there are works born in the sphere of teaching and didactic research. Paolo Giulierini (Director

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Fig. 1. Flyer of the event

of MANN–National Archaeological Museum of Naples) focused his intervention on the Alexander Mosaic. In recent years, this museum has attempted to convey the message that the ancient world was not only composed of artists, but also strongly centered on technology. To support this conviction, he illustrated the work in which it is possible to recognize a testimony of the union between art and science.

The event, attended not only by those present but also by some 80 online participants, resumed work, still in the fascinating Hall of Pompey so magnificently frescoed by Michele Colonna and Agostino Mitelli, after having had the opportunity to enjoy the direct vision, in the adjacent gallery, of the famous catoptric-gnomonic astrolabe designed by Emmanuel Maignan, explained to the visitors by Giulia Tarei, a PhD student at Sapienza University.

Cristina Càndito (University of Genoa) opened the afternoon session with a speech that reviewed her studies on gnomonics as evidence of the fertile field of inquiry that such research can offer to scholars of Drawing. Returning to the theme of the instruments of gnomonics, Filippo Camerota (Scientific Director of the Museo Galileo, Florence) presented to the participants, with effective and clear digital images, personal reconstructions of instruments found in the pages of several 16th-century treatises.

Two interesting speeches dealt with gnomonics and astronomy incorporated into architectural projects. The first by Alessio Bortot, dedicated to Maignan's gnomonic marvels in the project for Borromini's villa Pamphilj, illustrated, with effective digital images, the project of the villa, which was conceived by its authors as a great machine for observing astronomical phenomena. The second speech, presented by Agostino De Rosa with a leap in time of five hundred years, brought the auditorium to experience, thanks to his intervention, the experiential project conceived and already partially realized by James Turrell at Roden Crater. The project features complex astronomical alignments to be set in the hypogeum of an extinct volcano with the obvious attempt to correlate terrestrial space with celestial space.

A significant review of studies on palazzo Spada was presented by Laura Farroni and Matteo Flavio Mancini (Roma Tre University); a research activity that posed as a foundational basis the temporal and spatial dimension of the figurative episodes present in the palace.

The speeches of this very interesting day were concluded by Alessandra Pagliano, who aimed not only to retrace the history of sundials but, above all, to raise a cry of alarm about the severe state of degradation in which some of these instruments are currently found, calling for restoration work carried out with awareness and knowledge of their identity. In her contribution, Manuela Incerti underlined the importance of interdisciplinarity in these studies. She presented the evolution of the field of research both in Italy and abroad, recalling the many initiatives of academies, scientific societies, institutions, universities, and distinguished scholars who have dedicated themselves to these studies.

At the end of the day, a reflection on how to continue these studies could not be missing, and the answer was offered precisely by the three organizers of the Study Day, who announced the launch of the series *Architettura Geometria Astronomia*, Edizioni libreriauniversitaria.it., which sees them in the role of Editors. The Series is intended as a place for ongoing reflection, where the exchange of knowledge on the topics addressed in today's event can continue.

Ornella Zerlenga concluded the Study Day by highlighting the enthusiasm and expertise of the speakers who had addressed very complex issues, in a rich multiplicity of studies. Finally, she extended sincere congratulations to the curators for the excellent organization of this seminar filled with so many rich insights and reflections.

Author

Marco Fasolo, Department of History, Representation and Restoration of Architecture, Sapienza University of Rome, marco.fasolo@uniroma1.it