

EVIL IGNORANT JUDGES

On Restorations and Preservations in Architecture

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And those judges condemned Hadrian. For daring to completely rebuild the Pantheon. History tells us that, when Agrippa's Pantheon in Rome was destroyed by fire, Hadrian's great love of the gods, inspired him to do something more than just restore it.

He completely rebuilt it, giving it the depth, supplied by culture, which goes beyond erudition. How fortunate we are that the foolish emperor decided to do that.

Those judges gathered, urged on by corrupt senators and advised by eminent historians and archaeologists. And they laid traps. The judges decided that the remains, after the fire, extoned by their abettors and advisers, had been magnificent. They then praised the beauty of the architectural corpse which the foolish Hadrian had dared to resurrect. He had erected to the gods the finest architecture even built by man. What is more, he had used new materials.

They thought that the emperor, like his predecessors, should build basilicas to impart justice - justice for the judges. They felt affronted by the insulting beauty of Hadrian's imposing edifice. Those judges, however, held the keys of the law in their hands. And they certainly knew how to use them. Not to open up anything, but to prevent anyone from crossing the threshold of their all-embracing power. How adept they were at giving their dogmatic opinion, with pedantic erudition, on all manner of things about which they knew practically nothing. But they were always clever enough to wrap it up in the letter of the law.

Thus, everything they did was nice and legal. Although it was also nice and immoral. Or, what is worse, unjust, for injustice is the fruit of ignorance. And so they decided to ensnare Hadrian.

The emperor, in his great wisdom, withdrew in an eloquent silence. He sought help from the gods. And the gods, in whose honour Hadrian had erected that most beautiful temple, decided that they had to act. Chronos, filled with divine anger, shook his hourglass so that the sands ran unusually fast. In a flash, time had passed so quickly that, before their evil sentence could be carried out, the judges had died and passed into oblivion.

Everyone knows that, in time, justice will always prevail despite the judges. And so the Pantheon stands there, its insulting beauty, for the glory of the gods and the pleasure of mankind.

However, those judges, evil and ignorant as they were, have reappeared through the course of history, for evil never seems to die.

In Córdoba, their descendants were shocked to see a cathedral, built with new materials, on the petrified Omeya palm wood. The judges, full of their affected orthodoxies, condemned Hernán Ruiz for daring to combine the Great Mosque with his fantastic cathedral. They might just as well have extended their judgement to include Abd ar-Rabman I, who had erected the beautiful mosque over the Visigothic shrine of St. Vincent, rebuilding it with new materials.

Then, in Granada. their descendants were dumbfounded at the sight of a Renaissance palace, built with new materials, on the site of the lamented Alhambra. The judges, innated with their nationalistic conceits, condemned Pedro Machuca for daring to erect the incredible Palace of Charles V over the Nasrid paradise of the Alhambra. Their judgement did not include the mannerist Giulio Romano, because there had not yet been bom a Tafuri to think up the presumed Italian paternity of the renascent jewel of Granada.

And there came to pass many other things, some of them very recent, which prudence prevents us from referring to here. However, neither those ignorant, evil judges, nor their descendants, ever came to know that time, history and justice eventually acclaimed Hadrian, Hemán Rui, and Machuca, and all those other fine architects, who, like them, built for history, who built and are building history itself.

And the serene cathedral of Cordova proudly proclaims that, if it had not been built, the perfect preservation of the impressive Great Mosque, which is the envy of the unrestored ruins of Medina Zahara, would not have been possible. And the exquisitely beautiful Palace of Charles V in Granada, the most splendid renaissance jewel ever built in Spain, today appears so radiant that, Tafuri, who has now been born, is not satisfied with the paternity of Pedro Machuca and endeavours to attribute it to Giulio Romano, the disciple and friend of Raphael.

And each morning the sun continues to shine on the Pantheon, the pride of Rome and the entire world. Each day the celestial king walks around inside it, in his golden mantle, to enjoy the sight of the people who come to contemplate its magnificence and splendour.

They come to admire the marvellous building, erected with new materials by Hadrian, the emperor who was condemned by the judges. Each day, people experience there the tremendous emotion that can only be evoked by the finest of the Fine Arts: architecture.