

# Clamp-holes and marble veneers: the Pantheon's lost original facing

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The Pantheon counts among the best-preserved monuments surviving from antiquity, yet close examination of both earlier documentation and the building itself still brings lost elements of its original appearance to light. Long-forgotten ancient clamp-holes preserved in the rotunda's brick faces attest to an extensive revetment system that once covered much of the building's exterior. Initially with the aid of measured drawings by the 19th-c. French architect Achille Leclère, dozens of these holes were rediscovered, confirming the enduring value for archaeologists of the architectural studies made by students of the *École des Beaux-Arts* (Académie de France). Subsequent visual inspection of the building, supplemented by the use of archival sources, yielded convincing evidence that large areas of the rotunda's outer faces were revetted in antiquity with stone veneers, and that certain minor decoration was of stucco. Although these surface treatments were some of the last elements installed and the first to be stripped away and forgotten, they were carefully-planned features of the overall design by which the Roman architect(s) mediated the juncture of the brick rotunda and the marble-clad pronaos to achieve an architectural unity. The intent of this note is not to document fully the vestiges of the exterior ornamental program of the Pantheon (which would require full, close autopsy of its outer wall faces), but to direct attention to original elements that are missing from our current vision of the building, yet have the potential to demystify this "Sphinx of the Campus Martius".<sup>1</sup>

## Leclère's Pantheon: documentation and interpretation

The detailed studies and reconstructions of ancient monuments created by the *pensionnaires* of the *École des Beaux-Arts* from the 18th to 19th c. are still valued as accomplished

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### Frequently cited abbreviations:

Adam	J.-P. Adam, <i>Roman building materials and techniques</i> (transl. A. Mathews; Bloomington, IN 1994).
Ball	L. F. Ball, "How did the Romans install revetments?," <i>AJA</i> 106 (2002) 551-73.
Crucianelli	P. Crucianelli, "I restauri al Pantheon dall'unità al secondo dopoguerra," <i>Bull Com</i> 108 (2007) 247-89.
De Fine Licht	K. de Fine Licht, <i>The rotunda in Rome: a study of Hadrian's Pantheon</i> (Copenhagen 1968).
Drawings	M. David (ed.), <i>Ruins of ancient Rome. The drawings of French architects who won the Prix de Rome 1786-1924</i> (transl. T. M. Hartmann; Los Angeles, CA 2002).
MacDonald	W. L. MacDonald, <i>The Pantheon: design, meaning and progeny</i> (Cambridge 1976).
Monuments antiques	H. d'Espouy (ed.), <i>Monuments antiques relevés et restaurés par les architectes pensionnaires de l'Académie de France à Rome</i> , vol. 2 (Paris 1910).
Pantheon conference	G. Graßhoff et al. (edd.), <i>The Pantheon in Rome: contributions to the conference, Bern, November 9-12, 2006</i> (Bern 2009).
Roma Antiqua	P. Ciancio Rossetto et al. (edd.), <i>Roma Antiqua: "Envois" degli architetti francesi (1786-1901): Grandi edifici pubblici</i> (Rome 1992).
Trajansthermen	K. de Fine Licht, <i>Untersuchungen an den Trajansthermen zu Rom</i> (AnalRom VII Suppl. 1974).
Wilson Jones	M. Wilson Jones, <i>Principles of Roman architecture</i> (New Haven, CT 2000).

1 R. Lanciani, *The ruins and excavations of ancient Rome* (Boston 1897) 473.