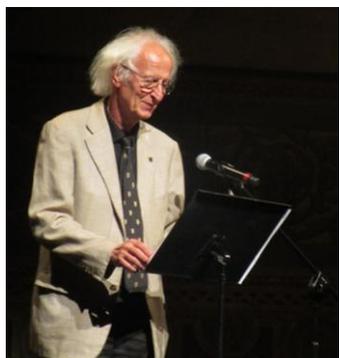


## Report on the Humboldt Conference “Limits of Knowledge”

I was pleased to be able to represent the AAvHF at the “Limits of Knowledge” Humboldt-Kolleg, in Krakow, Poland over June 22-25. The conference was held in memory of Dr Heinrich Pfeiffer, a longtime Secretary-General of the AvHF who was responsible in no small part for the latter’s development and international impact, and who died late last year.



Professor Helmut Schwarz, President of AvHF, at the opening ceremony.

The theme, limits of knowledge, was explored by Humboldt Fellows from very varied backgrounds, including experts in linguistics, mathematics, philosophy, law, and many fields of science. Highlights included hearing about recent work in gravitational waves, neuroscience and Zen meditation, heritage preservation in invaded countries, linguistic barriers to cognition, archaeology in the Sudan, morality vs law, and serendipitous drug discoveries.

Many acknowledgments were made to the contributions of Dr Pfeiffer, and I prefaced my own talk (on the limits of knowledge in quantum mechanics) by recalling the truly outstanding support he gave to Australian scholars and Australian-German initiatives, recognised in part by the award of an honorary Doctor of Law degree by Monash University. I also shared some personal reminiscences of our Fellows.



Alma Mater of Nicholas Copernicus (housing of one of the first globes showing ‘America.’”

with spectacular fireworks over the Vistula.

I close this brief report by paying tribute to the Polish Humboldt Society for organizing an excellent conference, and thanking the AAvHF for providing \$200 towards the expenses of attendance.

*Michael Hall*

(14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017)



The Academic Choir at the Symposium Opening Ceremony (picture courtesy Professor Hans Bachor (ANU).



Reception venue – Julisz Slowacki Theater

As well as the chance to hear about diverse topics, there were also opportunities to socialise with Fellows from more than 30 countries, in the best tradition of Humboldt meetings, and to experience Polish history culture. The latter included a display of Polish mediaeval dancing, a tour of the old city (including the original university building attended by Nicolas Copernicus), an organ recital in the 770 year old cathedral, and a midsummer night festival



Cracovia Danza – mediaeval Polish dance group