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LEOPOLDINA LECTURE HALL - A MONOGRAPHIC ARTICLE ON THE ILLUSIONISTIC VAULT PAINTING OF THE LATE BAROQUE

The author in his work presents an analysis of the causes of many misunderstandings and controversies existing in the commentaries, studies and analyses of art historians and theoreticians. They refer to the treatises concerning the perspective existing in Renaissance and Baroque art. The treatises discussed are both theoretical and of practical value referring to the patterns of perspective layouts worked out by the authors of those treatises.

The author points out the notional and methodological errors committed by the creators of those studies and explains what they consisted in. It is possible only after defining perspective transformation on the basis of geometry, and if we determine such notions as perspective, geometric method or the conditions and layout of the perspective. Summing up his work, the author comes to a conclusion parallel with those achieved by the practitioners of anamorphic art, especially in the case of vault anamorphoses (the illusionistic art of the late Baroque).

It is surprising that the Andrea Pozzo and his followers' vague geometrical schemas and patterns were of practical value. It is reflected in many excellent works of vault painting dating from the late Baroque. It all refers also to Leopoldina Lecture Hall vault paintings.

Availing himself of this opportunity, Pozzo proved that it is possible to reach the nature of physical phenomena (here perspective) by means of intuitive cognition which is not the only form of cognition used by artists but it prevails in the art of any period (perhaps with the exception of ancient Greek art, especially of Hellenic period, which was based to a great extent on the achievements of science). It is also an adequate and effective method of reality perception. The giants of Renaissance and Baroque coped with this burden. However, it is impossible to state that the learned commentators of their works and achievements did the same.

The author points out that the division or dispute in the field of methods of defining perspective on the basis of geometry, optics, psychophysiology and the theory of cognition result from various interpretations and understanding of the phenomenon called central projection. It does not

matter if we examine it in geometrical space or in the human visual one. The perspective image of the objects of geometrical (for a specific point, the projection centre) or physical space (for their viewer at this point) is always the same and does not depend on the surface (the perspective background) where the images of those objects came into existence (also on the retina of the human eye). In order to see in the same way various images of the same objects executed on various surfaces (e.g. vaults) it is enough to meet just one condition (the perspective practitioners knew it when they projected light as well as the creators of vault anamorphoses, the illusionistic painting of the late Baroque). The eye of the viewer needs to be in the centre of the perspective projection for which the anaphoric painting of space layouts was created. The history of perspective proves that has never been quite clear for many perspective historians, theoreticians and commentators!