Raynaud, Dominique
The aerial perspective of Leonardo da Vinci and its origins in the Optics of Ibn al-Haytham (De aspectibus, III, 7). (La perspective aérienne de Léonard de Vinci et ses origines dans l’Optique d’Ibn al-Haytham (De aspectibus, III, 7).) (French) [Zbl 1184.01011]

The term “aerial perspective”, introduced by Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) in his notebooks, involves three interdependent aspects: the estimation of distances (belonging to physiological or psychological optics); atmospheric extinction (physical optics); and pictorial restitution. By giving a central role to the phenomenon of “lunar illusion” (the moon appears much larger when it is near the horizon), this article argues that da Vinci’s concept emanated from Ibn al-Haytham’s Optics, which must have been available to him both in Latin and Italian translations and through various commentaries. A thorough analysis of Ibn al-Haytham’s theory shows that it was the combination of physical and psychological factors that made possible its application to the problem of perspective in painting.

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MSC:
01A40 History of mathematics in the 15th and 16th centuries, Renaissance
01A30 History of mathematics in the Golden Age of Islam

Keywords:
Renaissance; Islam; Leonardo da Vinci; Ibn al-Haytham; Ptolemy; Optics; perspective; aerial perspective

Biographic references:
Leonardo da Vinci

Full Text: DOI