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**Rossi, Paolo [Rossi, Paolo 2]** (I-FRNZ-HQ)

**Logic and the art of memory. (English. English summary)**

The quest for a universal language.

Translated from the second (1983) Italian edition and with an introduction by Stephen Clucas.

*University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 2000. xxviii+333 pp. \$32.00. ISBN 0-226-72826-9*

This valuable work on the art of memory and combinatory logic was first published in Italian in 1960. The book under review is a translation into English of the second Italian edition of 1983, which was extensively revised by the author and included a new preface (xxi–xxviii) updating some of the scholarship produced in the meantime. Now, eighteen years later, a substantial introduction by the translator in English (vii–xiv) provides the more recent scholarship on the field. Besides, this introduction explains well the purpose of this translation in order to consolidate and extend this area of intellectual historical research in the Anglo-American scholarly world: “Scholarship on the intertwined themes of Lullism, encyclopaedism, mnemo-techniques, universal languages, and rhetorical and dialectical concepts of ‘method’ and ‘order’ has been a pan-European preoccupation, and I hope that this translation of Rossi’s important contribution to this field will stimulate new research on these traditions in the English-speaking world” (xiii).

The volume consists of a scholarly history of the art of memory and combinatory logic which flourished between the fourteenth and sixteenth century, and finally disappeared in the late seventeenth century, transformed by the symbolic logic of Leibniz. The volume is arranged in eight chapters and is complemented by nine appendices of texts (195–238) in their original languages (Latin, Italian, French) and eighty-one pages of notes (239–320). Throughout the book the author traces the development of the idea of a universal language that would capture the essence of all things from Ramon Lull through Giordano Bruno, Francis Bacon, Descartes and Leibniz. “With Leibniz, and his works, an entire world disappeared: not only a certain way of understanding the function of images and symbols, but also a way of understanding the function of logic and its relation to metaphysics” (xix).

This translation should be welcomed by people interested in the history of ideas in the period from the early Renaissance to the age of Leibniz.

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