The Role of Projective Geometry in Italian Education and Institutions at the End of the 19th Century

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Abstract

At the end of the 19th century, projective geometry was at the basis of most geometric research in Italy, and of much other research work in Europe. Furthermore, through its close connection with descriptive geometry, it seemed particularly responsive to social and educational needs of the time. In Italy, a reform of the Technical Institutes brought projective geometry into the syllabuses; and Cremona’s book Elementi di Geometria Proiettiva helped to spread the synthetic method in Italy and in Europe.

In this paper we will examine the link between projective geometry and education, from the personal point of view of Luigi Cremona, and from the institutional point of view of technical instruction in schools and universities. Information about the reception of Cremona’s book in Europe and some letters from Cremona’s estate will help us to understand the scientific climate of that period.

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