



**Review: BAUER, Hermann; BÜTTNER, Frank; RUPPRECHT, Bernhard. *Corpus der barocken Deckenmalerei in Deutschland: Freistaat Bayern, Regierungsbezirk Oberbayern, Stadt und Landkreis Freising. Band 6. München: Hirmer Verlag, 1998.***

Baroque in perspective: the sixth volume of the *Corpus der Barocken Deckenmalerei* and the history of German art

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### **Abstract**

This review analyzes the sixth volume of the collection *Corpus der barocken Deckenmalerei in Deutschland*, published by Hirmer Verlag in 1998, dedicated to the city and district of Freising in Bavaria. Edited by Hermann Bauer, Frank

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Büttner, and Bernhard Rupprecht, the book combines cataloging rigor with contextual analysis of Baroque ceiling painting, situating itself within the German art-historical tradition. The contribution of Wolf Christian von der Mülbe's photographs is particularly noteworthy, as they expand the understanding of the spatial and chromatic dimensions of the works. The review discusses the relevance of the volume to the field of Art History in dialogue with the theories of Erwin Panofsky, Aby Warburg, and Ernst Gombrich, highlighting the symbolic and perceptual dimensions of ceiling painting as a form of visual thought.

**Keywords:** Baroque; Ceiling painting; Bavaria; Iconology; Art History.

### **Zusammenfassung**

Diese Rezension untersucht den sechsten Band der Reihe *Corpus der barocken Deckenmalerei in Deutschland*, herausgegeben vom Hirmer Verlag im Jahr 1998 und der Stadt sowie dem Landkreis Freising in Bayern gewidmet. Herausgegeben von Hermann Bauer, Frank Büttner und Bernhard Rupprecht, verbindet das Buch inventarische Genauigkeit mit einer kontextuellen Analyse der barocken Deckenmalerei und steht in der Tradition der deutschen kunsthistorischen Forschung. Besonders hervorzuheben ist der Beitrag der Fotografien von Wolf Christian von der Mülbe, die das Verständnis der räumlichen und farblichen Dimensionen der Werke erweitern. Die Rezension erörtert die Bedeutung des Bandes für die Kunstgeschichte im Dialog mit den Theorien von Erwin Panofsky, Aby Warburg und Ernst Gombrich und betont die symbolische und wahrnehmungsbezogene Dimension der Deckenmalerei als Form des visuellen Denkens.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Barock; Deckenmalerei; Bayern; Ikonologie; Kunstgeschichte.

### **1. The Corpus der barocken Deckenmalerei and the German Historiographical Tradition**

The *Corpus der barocken Deckenmalerei in Deutschland* constitutes one of the most comprehensive editorial initiatives in twentieth-century German art historiography. Inspired by scholarly undertakings such as the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi*—dedicated to the systematic study of medieval stained glass—the project combines rigorous documentation with interpretative analysis, integrating empirical methodologies and iconological approaches.

It is important to emphasise that, although the original aim of the *Corpus* did not include engagement with theorists such as Panofsky, Warburg, and Gombrich, this review opts to incorporate these theoretical frameworks to broaden the understanding of the ceiling paintings of Freising. This choice is justified by the need to situate the works within a wider interpretative perspective capable of highlighting symbolic, perceptual, and performative dimensions that go beyond the formal and documentary description presented in the volume. Panofsky allows for an understanding of perspective as a symbolic construction; Warburg evidences the circulation and survival of gestures and signs; and Gombrich emphasises the active participation of the viewer's mind. This theoretical dialogue provides an unprecedented interpretation of the works, underscoring their pedagogical, emotional, and intellectual functions within the Baroque culture of Freising, thus enriching the German historiographical tradition that underpins the *Corpus*.

The sixth volume, published by Hirmer Verlag in 1998 and devoted to Freising, exemplifies this tradition with precision, articulating technical inventory, symbolic reading, and historical contextualisation. This tripartite approach directly reflects Erwin Panofsky's methodology (1979), which distinguishes three levels of analysis: the pre-iconographical (formal description), the iconographical (thematic identification), and the iconological (cultural interpretation). Each ceiling documented in Freising is presented according to this logic, revealing how form, content, and context constitute a system of meaning that extends beyond the aesthetic, engaging with both the spiritual and the social.

This volume presents several ceiling paintings located in churches across various towns, organised in the following order: Aich, Allershausen, Eching, Freising, Altstadt, Neustift, Weihenstephan, Wies, Fürholzen, Giggerhausen, Grosseisenbach, Günzhausen, Haag, Hörgertshausen, Hohenkammer, Jonhanneck, Neufahrn, Pfrombach, Schlipps, Thalhausen, and Tünzhausen. However, the city of Freising receives special attention, spanning pages 49 to 159, with a meticulous study that emphasises not only the iconographic details of the ceiling and wall paintings but also their symbolic meaning and integration with architectural plans, allowing for a deeper understanding of the relationship between space, form, and liturgical function.

This perspective situates the Corpus within the lineage of Aby Warburg, for whom images function as vehicles of memory and survival (*Nachleben der Antike*). In the ceilings of Freising, the gestural rhetoric of Antiquity reappears transfigured: ascending figures, twisting bodies, and gestures of ecstasy compose a grammar of the Baroque sacred. The works thus become expressions of the symbolic energy Warburg termed *Pathosformel*—emotional formulas that traverse historical time.

Alongside this Warburgian inheritance, the influence of Ernst Gombrich's perceptual theory (1986) is evident, with its hermeneutics of the image conceiving all representation as a culturally mediated construction through visual schemata. The attention that the Corpus devotes to the relationship between observer and artwork—particularly how the Baroque viewer experiences pictorial space—reflects this understanding of art as a cognitive phenomenon.

The fresco *The Virtue of Saint Corbinian the Shepherd* (p.65), in tympana 1–3 and 15–10, exemplifies the richness of ceiling painting in Freising. According to Meichelbeck (*Chronica*, 1724, p. 356), it depicts the saint's five cardinal virtues as the foundation of his holiness and of his Church. Facing west, the fresco presents Wisdom (*Prudentia*) in soft blue and pink tones, holding the sun of Christian doctrine, illuminating Faith (*Religio*), represented as a nun lighting a candle. The Shepherd's Love (*Amor Ovium*) attracts the flock, while

Mary's love and the Zeal to punish evil (*Zelus in puniendo*) interact in the visual narrative, casting rays that strike vices—heresy, witchcraft, simony, and avarice—represented by falling bodies and specific symbols, in a composition reminiscent of Rubens' *The Fall into Hell*. The fresco breaks the boundaries of the painting, particularly in the figures of Zeal, which advance over the architectural quadrature, creating interaction between the work and the church space.

Complementarily, the panel *The Adoration of the Lamb* (p.77), facing east, depicts the Lamb of God radiating light over angels and twenty-four elders in worship (Revelation 5:6–8; 21:23), emphasising that, as in heaven, the true light in the temple resides in the sacrificed Lamb, while the medallions of the lancet covers (9–12) engage in dialogue with the painted ceiling.

Thus, the sixth volume of the *Corpus* combines documentary rigour and iconological interpretation, providing analytical tools that engage with Panofsky, Warburg, and Gombrich. The study demonstrates ceiling painting as a form of visual thought capable of conveying complex theological, symbolic, and cultural narratives, consolidating itself as an essential reference in twentieth-century German art historiography. At the same time, the volume highlights the experience of the Baroque viewer, the integration of image and architecture, and the heritage value of sacred art in Freising, reaffirming the *Corpus*'s role as a fundamental work for understanding the aesthetics, spirituality, and visual memory of the Baroque.

## **2. Freising as an Artistic, Political, and Spiritual Centre**

Freising, an episcopal see since 739, established itself as an important artistic and spiritual centre, reaching its zenith in the eighteenth century under Prince-Bishop Johann Franz Eckher von Kapfing und Liechtenstein. The remodelling of the Cathedral of St Mary by the brothers Cosmas Damian and

Egid Quirin Asam (1724) materialises the Baroque ideal of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*: the integration of painting, sculpture, architecture, and faith.

The Asam frescoes transfigure the ceiling into a space of theatricality and ecstasy. The observer is called to participate in the celestial scene, whose light and movement produce a sensory experience that transcends the merely visible. From Warburg's perspective, this theatricality can be understood as a manifestation of collective pathos: the fresco operates as a field of symbolic energy that activates the emotional memory of the Bavarian Counter-Reformation.

Through a Panofskian lens, the paintings of Freising express a symbolic form of Tridentine theology: the iconography of saints and virtues does not merely illustrate but visually contemplates the cosmic hierarchy of the Church. Gombrich (1986), in his treatment of Baroque illusionism, posits that the observer's mind actively participates in the construction of the image—explaining the effects of movement and ascension in the Asams' compositions.

Since the eighth century, Freising had been consolidated as an episcopal seat, with Saint Corbinian as the spiritual founder and patron of the diocese. The translation of his relics by Bishop Arbeo and the institutionalisation of his cult in the Cathedral of St Mary established Freising not only as a religious centre but also as a symbolic and politico-spiritual landmark for Upper Bavaria. The presence of chapels, such as those dedicated to Saint John Nepomuk and Saint Maximilian, as well as spaces like the Domberg—the historic core of the city—reinforces the sacred and monumental character of the episcopal territory.

In the eighteenth century, under the governance of Prince-Bishop Johann Franz Eckher von Kapfing und Liechtenstein, the city reached its cultural apogee. The remodelling of the Cathedral by Cosmas Damian and Egid Quirin Asam in 1724 exemplifies the Baroque ideal of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, integrating painting, sculpture, and architecture in a project designed to impress and engage the faithful. The frescoes, with their strong theatricality, transform the ceiling into a space of sensory experience, mobilising the observer in a manner

consonant with Gombrich's theory of illusionism and perceptual construction of the image.

Beyond the Cathedral, other religious and secular buildings highlight the city's artistic and political significance. The Chapel of All Saints, the Sebutiam Chapel, the Church of St Benedict on the Cathedral Hill, and the former cathedral rectory—today the chapel of the district court—reflect the density of religious structures that consolidate Freising as a centre of worship, learning, and episcopal authority. Each building functions as a support of memory, in line with Warburg's perspective on the survival of images and the transmission of symbolic meaning across time.

The city's cultural domain extends to the districts of Neustift and Weihestephan, where former monasteries and churches were transformed into educational institutions and pilgrimage sites, such as the Church of Wies. These locations demonstrate the interplay between spiritual power and urban development, reinforcing Freising's character as a political and religious centre whose influence transcended the city limits, also reflecting networks of episcopal patronage and ties to imperial politics.

From a Panofskian perspective, the city's rich iconography reveals a carefully constructed symbolic hierarchy. Painted ceilings, chapels, and the Asam brothers' decorative cycles articulate form, content, and context, conveying theological and social concepts in a visually intelligible manner. The observer's sensory experience, guided by light, colour, and movement, demonstrates how Freising served as a stage for Baroque visual thought, where art and ideology are intertwined.

In sum, Freising emerges as a European centre of artistic, political, and spiritual significance, integrating Italian and German influences in the late Baroque while combining technical virtuosity with pedagogical and symbolic intent. The city, its monuments, and artworks function as testimonies to episcopal power and Baroque culture, while the frescoes and chapels exemplify the

observer's perceptive experience and the role of images as mediators of memory, emotion, and devotion, in dialogue with Panofsky, Warburg, and Gombrich.

### **3. Methodology and Structure of the Volume**

The structure of the volume combines inventory, formal analysis, and graphic apparatus, compiling data on authorship, chronology, technique, and patronage, as well as plans and diagrams indicating the location of the paintings within the buildings. This approach reveals the spatial dimension of the image, a central aspect in the German tradition since Heinrich Wölfflin, whose theory of formal categories (linear/painterly, closed/open, multiplicity/unity) aids in understanding the plasticity of Bavarian Baroque.

The Corpus therefore adopts an integrated methodology that combines documentary rigour with interpretative sensitivity. In dialogue with Panofsky, it is recognised that the iconological method rests upon empirical analysis of form; and with Gombrich, that all form is constructed in relation to a historically conditioned visual expectation.

Moreover, the project fulfils a Warburgian function as an atlas: by bringing together hundreds of works, it reconstructs networks of circulation of gestures and symbols between Italy and southern Germany, revealing Freising as a nodal point in the European visual culture of the eighteenth century.

The sixth volume of the *Corpus der barocken Deckenmalerei in Deutschland* presents a rigorous and detailed methodology, combining inventory, formal analysis, and graphic apparatus. In addition to central towns such as Freising, Acht, Allershausen, Eching, Neustift, Weihenstephan, and Wies, the volume includes records of ceilings, walls, murals, and balustrade images, aiming to provide a comprehensive view of Baroque ceiling painting. Chronological boundaries are determined by the end of the Thirty Years' War

and the period of imperial recess, establishing flexible markers that guide the analysis of the conception and visual content of the works.

The classification of the paintings follows administrative criteria in force at the time of publication, involving states, districts, and counties. Within each county, the objects are listed alphabetically according to the historical names of localities, while the sequence within a larger complex is defined by historical or spatial classification. Each entry provides information on the building's purpose, administrative affiliation, legal status, patronage, construction history, spatial configuration, and any deviations from an eastward orientation, allowing the object to be situated within its political, religious, and social context.

The volume provides detailed documentary data on clients, coats of arms, contracts, and furnishings, as well as authorship and creation dates, indicating uncertain or stylistic attributions where relevant. Sketches, drafts, and preliminary drawings, when available, are included with dimensions and location, and some are illustrated. The distinction between frescoes and a *secco* paintings, along with information on dimensions, height, length, width, and viewing direction relative to architectural space, reflects the technical precision underpinning iconographic and formal analysis.

The description of the paintings seeks to capture their specific characteristics, separating visual narrative from iconographic explanation. The bibliography is organised by building and section, including abbreviated references for larger complexes, groups of rooms, and phases of furnishing. Photographic documentation, carried out by Wolf Christian von der Mülbe, highlights the spatial breadth and iconographic details of the paintings, allowing the reader to partially experience the pictorial space. As Bauer, Büttner, and Rupprecht (1998) observe, colour fidelity and spatial accuracy are indispensable conditions for understanding ceiling painting.

From a methodological perspective, the volume engages with Panofsky by applying the iconological method, grounded in empirical analysis of form, and with Gombrich, by recognising that historically conditioned visual perception

influences the construction of the observer's experience. Simultaneously, it fulfils a Warburgian atlas function, gathering hundreds of works that allow the reconstruction of networks of gesture and symbol circulation between Italy and southern Germany, positioning Freising as a nodal point in eighteenth-century European visual culture. The work demonstrates that ceiling paintings are not merely decorative but function as instruments of visual communication, articulating emotion, memory, and religious instruction.

Thus, the methodology adopted by the volume demonstrates the integration of documentary rigour and interpretative sensitivity. The combination of stylistic analysis, iconographic recording, construction data, viewing direction, and photographic documentation ensures a comprehensive understanding of ceiling painting. By considering not only the artistic materiality but also the cultural and pedagogical function of the works, the Corpus reinforces the centrality of Freising and other Bavarian towns in the reception of Italian influences, the development of *trompe-l'œil*, and the Baroque sensory experience, reaffirming the importance of painting as a mediator of memory, devotion, and collective identity.

#### **4. Wolf Christian von der Mülbe: Photography as Historiographical Mediation**

The photographs of Wolf Christian von der Mülbe (1941–1997) transcend mere documentary recording: they constitute interpretative mediations that recreate the Baroque visual experience. His framing and luminous contrasts simulate the gaze of the faithful—those who raise their eyes and allow themselves to be absorbed by the celestial space.

This perceptual dimension aligns von der Mülbe with Gombrich's theory of representation, according to which every image requires the collaboration of

the mind in reconstructing the visible. Here, photography becomes an extension of the Baroque gaze, preserving its theatricality and its pathos.

At the same time, his technical rigour—control of light, scale, and perspective—situates his work within Warburg's tradition of *Kulturwissenschaft*: a science of visual culture founded upon meticulous observation and iconographic comparison. Like the art historian, the photographer acts as a mediator between past and present, between the Baroque experience and the contemporary gaze.

To understand the significance of this photographer, the book opens on page 6 with an obituary, followed on the next page by acknowledgements. Wolf Christian von der Mülbe (1941–1997) surpassed the function of mere documentation, producing true interpretative mediations that recreate the Baroque visual experience. His framing and contrasts simulate the gaze of the faithful, who lift their eyes before the painted ceiling and become absorbed by the celestial space, transforming observation into a sensory experience. This approach highlights von der Mülbe's concern with preserving the theatricality and pathos of the frescoes, respecting the artists' intentionality and the original Baroque perception.

Through Gombrich's theoretical lens, von der Mülbe's photography can be understood as an extension of the Baroque gaze, since every image requires the spectator's mental collaboration to reconstruct the visible. By capturing not only form but also the spatial dynamics and dramatic lighting of the ceilings, he transforms technical recording into cognitive mediation, enabling the contemporary observer to apprehend the plasticity and ascensional effect sought by the Asam brothers and other Baroque painters.

The photographer's technical rigour—control of light, scale, and perspective—places his work within Warburg's *Kulturwissenschaft* tradition, in which meticulous observation and iconographic comparison become instruments for cultural and historical interpretation. Von der Mülbe thus acts as a mediator between past and present, bringing the Baroque experience closer to the

contemporary gaze and highlighting the relationship between image, architecture, and ritual, in accordance with Warburg's conception of collective pathos.

Von der Mülbe's professional trajectory reflects his dedication to cultural heritage. After graduating from the Munich Academy of Photography, he was employed by the German Research Foundation (DFG), applying his skills and inventiveness to photograph ceiling paintings under challenging conditions. His early work quickly gained recognition, establishing standards of documentation that combined technical precision with interpretative sensitivity, ensuring the intelligibility of the works.

Later, as a freelance collaborator, he consolidated his reputation as one of Germany's most accomplished photographers of architecture, sculpture, and sacred imagery. His practice went beyond documentation: he allowed the subject to speak for itself, avoiding artificial manipulation. This commitment to faithful representation, combined with the patience and rigour demanded by the process of recording ceilings, gave his work an irreplaceable character, both for the institution and for Baroque art historiography (Bauer; Büttner; Rupprecht, 1998, p. 7).

In November 1997, von der Mülbe suffered a fatal work accident, causing profound consternation. His loss affected not only the continuity of the project but also represented the absence of a friend and collaborator whose gaze and sensitivity had become integral to the visual research on German Baroque art. The impact of his death emphasises the human and affective dimension of scholarly work, reminding us that historical photography often relies on the individual sensitivity of the mediator.

Nevertheless, the photographic oeuvre of Wolf Christian von der Mülbe constitutes a fundamental link between Baroque artistic practice and contemporary art historiography. His images allow for an understanding of the spatial and emotional experience of the original observer, engaging in dialogue with Panofsky, Warburg, and Gombrich by transforming documentation into interpretative mediation. By recording the theatricality, light, movement, and

pathos of the frescoes, he makes a decisive contribution to the preservation of the visual and cultural memory of Bavarian towns, especially Freising, where ceiling painting forms the core of the religious, pedagogical, and communal experience.

## **5. Ceiling Painting and Visual Experience**

The Corpus reveals that ceiling painting in Freising is more than mere decoration: it is a symbolic and perceptual device. The technique of *trompe-l'œil* dissolves the boundaries between architecture and painting, establishing what Panofsky (1991) called the symbolic form of perspective—a construction of vision that conveys a theocentric and hierarchical worldview.

This theatricality also echoes Gombrich's analysis, which understands the Baroque as an art of persuasion: a visual rhetoric directed towards emotion and faith. Illusion, far from deception, serves as a means of spiritual persuasion.

Warburg, in turn, would identify in these compositions the survival of ancient gestures—the flight, the swoon, the ecstatic gaze—transformed into signs of Christian redemption. The ceiling, therefore, is not merely narrative but a visual performance, inviting the observer to participate in the drama of the sacred.

The Corpus demonstrates that ceiling painting in Freising transcends decorative function, configuring itself as a symbolic and perceptual device. The use of *trompe-l'œil* dissolves the boundaries between architecture and painting, creating a sense of spatial continuity and ascensional movement. For Panofsky (1991), this practice exemplifies the “symbolic form of perspective,” in which the spectator's gaze is guided to visually apprehend a cosmic, theocentric, and ordered hierarchy, typical of the Bavarian Counter-Reformation.

The theatricality of the Asam brothers' frescoes transforms the ceiling into a space of sensory and emotional experience. The illusion of depth, dramatic lighting, and the movement of figures serve not merely aesthetic purposes: they are instruments of spiritual persuasion, in accordance with Gombrich's analysis of the Baroque as an art of conviction. The observer is not passive; the mind actively participates in reconstructing the scene, allowing the religious experience to become vivid and immediate.

Warburg, meanwhile, would emphasise the survival of ancient gestures and postures—such as flight, swooning, or the ecstatic gaze—which, reinterpreted in a Christian context, become signs of redemption and contemplation. Ceiling painting, therefore, articulates cultural memory, emotion, and ritual, functioning as a visual performance. The pictorial space not only narrates stories but calls the spectator to participate in the sacred drama, transforming contemplation into lived experience.

Beyond the perceptual dimension, the Corpus shows how the iconography of the ceilings interacts with the architectural and liturgical structure of the city. Churches such as the Cathedral of St Mary and smaller chapels are arranged so that the orientation of images follows the flow of worship and the position of the faithful, reinforcing the relationship between space, narrative, and perception. This intertwining of form and function highlights the pedagogical and social character of the paintings, in line with the Counter-Reformation intention to instruct and emotionally engage the audience.

The materiality of the paintings—frescoes or *al secco*, vibrant colours, and contrasting light—enhances the immersive experience. Forced perspective and dynamic figures produce effects of ascension and depth, intensified when viewed from strategic points defined by the architectural design. Thus, the ceiling becomes a platform for a controlled visual experience, where artistic technique and iconographic meaning intertwine to create a symbolic and emotive narrative.

In sum, ceiling painting in Freising constitutes a link between art, theology, and perception. The Corpus demonstrates that these works cannot be

read merely as ornament; they function as instruments of Baroque visual communication, integrating aesthetic experience with religious instruction and collective memory. Analyses by Panofsky, Gombrich, and Warburg allow us to understand that the painted ceiling operates simultaneously as symbolic form, visual rhetoric, and cultural performance, consolidating Freising as a central hub of visual and religious culture in the late Bavarian Baroque.

### **Final Considerations**

The sixth volume of the *Corpus der barocken Deckenmalerei in Deutschland* establishes itself once again as a reference work in European art historiography. Its significance lies in the integration of systematic documentation, photographic apparatus, and theoretical analysis, which updates the German tradition of iconological investigation.

By incorporating the contributions of Panofsky, Warburg, and Gombrich, the volume demonstrates that Baroque ceiling painting constitutes a form of visual thought: a means of reflecting on the invisible through form. Von der Mülbe's work, in turn, translates this thought into contemporary imagery, preserving the link between historical gaze and aesthetic experience.

Thus, the *Corpus* transcends a purely cataloguing function and asserts itself as a hermeneutical instrument, reaffirming the ceiling painting of Freising as a document of European visual culture and as an expression of the Baroque spirit in its entirety.

This work, *Corpus der barocken Deckenmalerei in Deutschland, Band 6*, consolidates its position as an indispensable reference in European art historiography, offering a unique contribution by assembling detailed information on ceiling paintings from various towns in Bavaria and southern Germany. The volume does not limit itself to describing the frescoes: it combines systematic documentation, stylistic analysis, historical contextualisation, and

photographic apparatus, enabling the reader to understand both the materiality and the symbolic and social function of the works.

The methodology adopted by the *Corpus* proves exemplary. By integrating inventory, plans, sketches, data on authorship, patronage, and conservation, the volume provides tools for rigorous analysis of the paintings, following traditions in German art historiography since Wölfflin. The detailed classification by states, districts, and counties, as well as the alphabetical ordering of objects and their historical and spatial orientation, reflects meticulous care, making the work a methodological reference for future research.

The theoretical reading developed for this review, in dialogue with Panofsky, Warburg, and Gombrich, shows that Baroque ceiling painting goes beyond mere decoration: it represents a form of visual thought, a pedagogical device, and a space of emotional experience. In this interpretative dialogue, Panofsky allows the understanding of perspective as symbolic construction; Warburg highlights the survival and circulation of gestures and signs; and Gombrich emphasises the active participation of the spectator's mind in the visual experience. In this way, the analysis proposed here offers an unprecedented reflection on the intellectual and performative dimension of the *Corpus* images, without implying that such interpretations are part of the original volume.

Wolf Christian von der Mülbe's photographic work constitutes another innovative element of this publication. His images are not merely illustrative: they recreate the spatial and sensory experience of the observer, maintaining chromatic fidelity and perspective, and allowing the theatricality and pathos of the compositions to be conveyed to the reader. The photographic documentation, combined with iconographic and architectural analysis, elevates the volume to a unique interpretative level, making visible the immersive dimension of ceiling painting.

By focusing on Freising and smaller Bavarian towns, the *Corpus* brings to light previously unpublished information on frescoes that were little studied or

fragmentarily documented. The work highlights the centrality of this region in the reception of Italian influences, the circulation of artists, and the consolidation of late German Baroque, positioning each painted ceiling as a document of the religious, social, and cultural experience of the communities that produced them.

In summary, the volume transcends its cataloguing function, asserting itself as a hermeneutical and scholarly instrument. This review underscores the relevance of the work, highlighting its innovative character, the wealth of unpublished information, and the integration of documentary rigour, visual apparatus, and theoretical reflection. In doing so, it reaffirms the ceiling painting of Freising and other studied localities as fundamental testimonies of European Baroque visual culture, engaging with history, theology, and aesthetic perception in a profound and lasting way.

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