

The travel journal and book of recipes of Ulrich Daniel Metzger

The aim of this project is to analyze an extremely illuminating eighteenth-century source on the life of an artist and the technology of art; render it accessible, digitally and intellectually; and discuss it, focussing on the important questions it raises concerning the history and technology of art. In addition, the analysis of the manuscript will constitute an exemplar for research into a group of artists and an era that have been neglected by art-historical study.

Ulrich Daniel Metzger, a skilled glass-painter and reverse glass-painter, began compiling his travel journal and book of recipes in 1708, collating impressions, recipes and experiences during his travels, drawing artworks he had seen, and collecting dedications from various artist colleagues. This notebook has proved to be an unusually rich source for documenting this typically multifaceted figure of the period. Through entries that provide date and location it is possible to reconstruct both Metzger's travels and the network of artists of which he was a part. Because, in addition to the manuscript, Metzger has left various works in different genres, comparisons can be made between the information on paint colours and painting techniques assembled in the manuscript and the works executed by its author. With the help of the manuscript we can reconstruct his conception of himself as a man, his career history, and his artistic training. Having said that, this little book is also a document of a craftsman's general living conditions – specifically the social and commercial standing, throughout the whole of Central Europe, of a glass-painter and reverse glass-painter at the start of the eighteenth century.

The project will not be content simply to provide an edition of the manuscript with critical apparatus identifying sources, but strive to portray the artistic life of a journeyman from various perspectives. It is thought valuable to highlight the various connections between works, materials and techniques, as well as people, places and events, and to link these to knowledge derived from research in the fields of art history, history and art technology. This will be achieved on the one hand by means of a discursive written analysis, and on the other by means of a dedicated digital platform on the web, newly developed specifically for this project.

Ulrich Daniel Metzger's travel journal and book of recipes will be published in its entirety for the first time. With its extensive commentary on the artist's life and the route his travels took him, on his network of artistic relationships, and on the drawings as well as the recipes in the book, the manuscript will be investigated with an eye to future research.

By including material analyses in the assessment and interpretation of Metzger's works the project will contribute to the promotion of dialogue between art technology and art history. Investigation of an artist's life and working conditions from a journeyman's point of view will act as model for bringing to the fore a group of artists that has hitherto been neglected by traditional art history. The project should thereby enrich research in the fields of history and art history, and sees itself as a stimulus for scholars to engage more frequently with the 'marginal' areas of art history.

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