

Reflecting on Reconstructions: The Role of Sources and Performative Methods in Art Technological Studies: Closing Remarks

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Reconstructed seventeenth-century etching grounds; photo by author

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have to begin with some sad news. Information has arrived this morning that the black oak bark for making *Quercitron gelb* has SOLD OUT. However, the good news was that it can be replaced by apple tree bark. This also made clear that we don't necessarily need to stick to the past in making reconstructions, but that it is advised to explore, to venture out. The historical source may seem obvious, but rarely can be taken for granted. So:

- try everything with oil
- make different replicas in different qualities
- burn your asphaltum
- BE FEARLESS
- appreciate the value of *failure*, it may create masterworks.

We learned about the latest machines and techniques for analysing materials, while at the same time the handle of a wooden kitchen spoon remains an indispensable tool in stirring boiling hot liquids. Don't stop consuming white wine, because a nice deep black pigment can be produced from it. And who would have thought that a dash of honey can make your day in grinding smalt? And how we could be *moved* by magic lantern slides and waving silk banners?

In September 2001 I traveled to Munich, with a vague idea about a new working group. I was hosted by Christoph Krekel and while I generously supported him in emptying his wine cellar, we put some first ideas on paper. Calling together the few other people we knew then who shared our interest in art technological source research, we met in Amsterdam on 20 March 2002. After a day of intense discussions we defined and founded the ATSR working group.

Our first project was a symposium on reconstructions that made clear the need for a more structural approach, including how to call what it was that people were doing. Doris Oltrogge already mentioned the first ATSR conference and explained about developments in making reconstructions since. These two days have proved her being right: the scope is wider, the visions broader, cooperation interdisciplinary. We certainly can call this *progress*.

New terminology entered the field of art technological source research. We learned about *archeo-technical testing*, *conjectural digital reconstruction*, and *colour physic based computational reconstructions* (shall I repeat this?).

It encourages continuing with the ATSR working group for a next conference on reconstructions, where we may hear:

- what happened with the recreated plastic disk for Moholy-Nagy's art work
- about more eggs found in city walls
- *secret systems* for making reconstructions
- see other offsets of colourful butterfly wings
- hear more about reconstructing business relations.

Ladies and Gentlemen. This meeting has seen inspiring talks on *Reconstruction Research* in a great variety of subjects. I much look forward to the next one!