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## THE PAINTER AS A JOURNEYMAN

The Transfer of Culture and Knowledge in the Fine Arts  
from a Craft-Historical Perspective

Inquiring into the migration conditions of painters and thus into their contribution to the transfer of culture and knowledge is of relevance to the overarching topic of "Innovations in the Construction Sector and Their Worldwide Spread in the Pre-Industrial Age", as painters contributed to the drafting and realizing of architectural projects in the Early Modern Age. For example, the court painter Joseph Heinz sen. from Prague was repeatedly asked for his advice by the City Council of Augsburg when it came to the architectural design of the city. This is just one of a great number of possible examples.

However, independently of his contribution to the history of architecture, the mobility of the fine artist in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age reveals how much it contributed to the transfer of culture and knowledge in the pre-modern age. That said, however, we must move away from the common art historical line of reasoning which presents the migrations of fine artists as an expression of their individuality. Even if now and then some artist did increase his knowledge by *travelling*, we encounter migrating painters for quite a different reason. For most of them were only journeymen by rank and thus obliged to make the journey prescribed by the guilds; thus, it was not about voluntary migration but about migration imposed by others.

To understand this, we must turn our backs on the *cult of the genius* and instead look at the social reality of the artist in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age. For the profession of the painter, sculptor or goldsmith was that of a craftsman, and in the Old Empire craftsmen were organised in guilds. Accordingly, also the fine artist had to complete a training which was controlled by the guilds, and after having completed his apprenticeship he had to start a journey of several years – a centuries-old tradition which is still today practiced (on a voluntary basis) mostly by carpenters.

An artist in the Old Empire was only allowed to work in a city – with the exception of temporary permits and of so called court artists – if he was a member the local guild of painters.<sup>1</sup> This guild of painters – like other guilds (such as that of the millers) – tried to regulate everything, so to speak from the cradle to the grave.<sup>2</sup> In the set of regulations, particular attention is given to the training of future artists. The admission requirements for the profession of the painter are described, the duration of the apprenticeship and the

time spent as a journeyman are laid down, as are the regulations for the masterpiece, the requirements for running one's own workshop, also regulations for the purchase of work material or for the selling of the works of art themselves, like in our case paintings and printed graphics. The stipulated long period of training was also a reliable means of limiting competition, for without evidence of having completed a guild-controlled training usually one did not have access to urban art markets.

What we are interested in here is the future artists' time as journeymen, as usually the painters had to spend this time on the road, that is they left the place where they had started their training to find work as journeymen in foreign lands. One of the very few exceptions can be found in Munich. There the time as journeymen for painters was three years. However this time had not necessarily to be spent on the road: "Deßgleichen soll auch khainer alhie zu den stuckhen zuegelassen werden, er habe dann dreu jar lang alhie nach seinen lerjaren bey redlichen maistern seins handtwerchs gesellen weiß gearbeitet".<sup>3</sup>

But for centuries it was the common rule in most other cities of the Old Empire that in the course of his guild-controlled training, the future artist had to spend time as a journeyman. The period of time was different from place to place. In most cities the artist had to be on the road for at least two years, however often even three or four years. After his return, before his examination as a master craftsman, he had to work for one or two years for a local master craftsman. This period was called the "Muthzeit". Only then was he allowed to enrol for his examination as a master craftsman. In the following, three out of many possible examples of the time as a journeyman are presented in chronological order:

The regulations of the painters' guild of Krakow of 1490 broadly speaking state concerning journeymen that the boy – no painters' guild accepted girls – after completion of his apprenticeship was to go "to other countries" for two years, to refine his skills and to be capable of running his own artist's workshop after marriage: "Und zo ein junger awslernet zo zal her wandern ij yor yn ander lant, das her fertigk wirt yn zeinem hanttwergk eer wenne her meister wirt ader ein weip nympt; unde keyner zal meister werden, her habe denne eyn eigene wergkstadt und ein eelich weip".<sup>4</sup>

As in other cities, according to the regulations for painters in Brieg in Lower Silesia in 1615 a de-registration fee had to be paid after apprenticeship. Then the future painter had to become a journeyman for four or at least three years:

"Nach ausgestandenen lehrjahren aber, wenn er inn beysein der maler ... losgezehlet, sol er dreÿ oder vier jahr inn der wanderschaft waß mehrers sich versuchen, damit er inn der khunst wolgeübt werde undt nicht durch unzeitige unordnung, wann er baldt nach ausgestandenen lehr jahren zuem meister recht gelassen werden solte, untüchtige leute befödert undt andere, die sich inn der khunst lange zeit geübet undt was redliches gelernet, verdruckt undt inn ihrer nahrung verhindert werden möchten".<sup>5</sup>

The regulations of the painters' guild of Dresden in 1620 stipulate as a requirement for the masterpiece that those who cannot provide evidence of three years spent as a journeyman must pay 30 Talers to the guild chest – a sum hardly any journeyman was able to pay:

“Welcher allhier ein mahler werden will, der soll aufs wenigste dreÿ jahr nach seinen lehrjahren gewandert, sich etwas versucht, undt zweÿ jahr allhier bey den mahlern für einen gesellen gearbeitet haben. (So er aber so viel gelernet, das er durch seine stück bestehen kann undt er nicht gewandert hette, auch nicht wandern wolte, soll er dreißig thaler vor die dreÿ jahr in die lade geben.”<sup>6</sup>

After having completed his compulsory time as a journeyman, the future artist was allowed to return to the place where had been an apprentice, to paint his masterpiece there. The regulations on how to make the masterpiece may be neglected here; in some cities, for example, several paintings on different subjects and applying different techniques were required. Concerning mobility, however, at some places the passage concerning the masterpiece in the training regulations for painters included an obstacle. Two examples:

In Danzig the regulations for future painters of 1612 stipulated that the candidate had to spend one more year on the road if the guild did not consider the handed-in painting a masterpiece. The masterpiece had to be painted at the house of the guild alderman, to then be presented to a commission:

“Die meisterstücke sollen in des eltermans hause gemacht werden, doch also, das der geselle mit keinen unkosten auff essen und/ trincken, beschweret werde. Nach verfertigung derselben meisterstücke sollen sie vonn dem verordentem wercksherrn und den elterleutenn, ob sie tüchtig, besichtiget werden. Undt so er damit nicht volkömmlich bestünde, sol er nach erkentnüs der elterleute und eltisten des wercks auff moderation des wercksherrn gestraffet werden. Imfall er aber gar nicht bestünde und würde solche seine arbeit mit bewilligungk des wercksherrn verworffen, sol er nach ein iahr zu wandern schuldig sein und besser lehrnenn. Wan er wieder kompt und sich gebessert hat, soll er der unkosten, so er zuvor auff die meisterschafft gewandt, tzu genießen haben.”<sup>7</sup>

The regulations for painters of the City of Graz of 1622 pursued the same goal, for in case of not passing the master craftsman examination the candidate was to travel “on the heels of art” for two more years, that is he was supposed to become a journeyman once again: “Wofern aber das khunststukh für uns nicht passierlich erkhent, so soll er noch zweÿ jahr der khunst nachraissen, wie an andern orthen mehr gebreuchig.”<sup>8</sup>

Where, now, were the candidates supposed to go? The normative sources, that is the authority-controlled guild regulations, do not tell us this, as every journeyman was free to travel where he pleased. We must thus consult other archival sources, to be able – if we are lucky, as it is the case e.g. in Danzig, Leipzig or Nuremberg – to discover the places of origin of immigrated journeymen.

The self-administration of the (painters’) guilds was very bureaucratic. Concerning our topic, this means that a journeyman had to present his apprenticeship and journeyman certificate when arriving in a new city. If they have been preserved (as copies), it is possible to state for individual cities from whence the journeymen had come. In Danzig, with the help of birth certificates it is possible to investigate the places of origin of the painters for a period of time between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> century, so that they can be depicted on a map (Fig. 1).<sup>9</sup> The map shows that a number of artists came from the Hanseatic cities: A total number of 72. 18 artists originated from Lübeck, 14 from Hamburg nine from Bremen, and seven from Rostock. Furthermore, the map considers six future artists from Saxony, eight from Bavaria or Franconia as well as two from Vienna.

The geographic focus of the bigger group does not come as a surprise, as before working out their own guild regulations in 1612 the Danzig painters had requested a total of 19 sets of rules by painters' guilds from several cities of the Hanseatic region, to use their regulations as an orientation when drafting many of their own paragraphs. Given such a network of cities, obviously many journeymen from this region went to Danzig, where the regulations concerning their training were similar to those of their hometowns.

However, there are other influential factors apart from the networks of cities, such as the factor of denomination since the 16<sup>th</sup> century as well as the art-historical significance of the cities or their economic prosperity<sup>10</sup>; however, this is not our topic here.

The journeymen were granted access to a city's artist workshops according to a fixed order, so that no local painter was disadvantaged. If times were bad and there was no work, nevertheless a journeyman had to be given the opportunity to win his bread at an artist workshop for at least 14 days, after which he had to leave the city again.

Let us have a look at Leipzig, with journeymen immigrating from Antwerp, Vienna or Budapest, among others (Fig. 2). This also is not revealed by normative sources but by an assessment<sup>11</sup> of the *Leipzig Schöffebuch* (which reaches back to the year 1420), the municipal registers (from 1466 on), the city accounts (from 1470 on), and the Leipzig citizens register from about the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. Concerning migration to Leipzig – most of the artists covered by the map date to the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> centuries – no preferred regions of origin can be identified. In comparison to Danzig, the only significant thing is that a number of artists came from Saxony and thus from the environment of Leipzig.

Concerning the Imperial City of Nuremberg, another type of source yields information on the journeymen's places of origin. The foundation of the merchant Egidius Arnold from Nuremberg, which supported people in need from 27 groups of crafts<sup>12</sup>, paid interest also to the painters' guild of Nuremberg, so that the latter was able to support needy journeymen of the trade making station in Nuremberg. For this purpose, the Nuremberg painters kept a booklet "Arnolds Stiftung/de Anno 1610/betreffend" in their (guild) chest which today is (without shelf number) kept in the library of the Nuremberg Academy of Fine Arts. Noted in this quarto volume are donations to a total number of 216 painters (42 to of whom explicitly calling themselves painter journeymen) who had made station in Nuremberg on their wanderings.<sup>13</sup> The earliest entry dates to the year 1624, the latest to 1723. 160 entries give places of origin, unfortunately not all are recognizable. Yet still, the cartographic implementation of those place names that can be deciphered shows how big the catchment area was, thus allowing for conclusions concerning the great mobility of the future artists (Fig. 3). A look at another kind of source allows for working out individual movement profiles. For, some of these journeymen took albums with them. They presented these booklets to the master painters they met or to other journeymen of the trade. The latter wrote down epigraphs and/or hand drawings and signed them with their names, and – in the ideal case – they added date and place to their entries. Today these small volumes in horizontal format have often been taken apart. If they have been preserved in one piece, they tell us where the journeyman in question stayed. In our example (Fig. 4),

the owner of the album was travelling in the Danube region, mostly during the Thirty Years War. This album was owned by Ferdinand Simmerl, who is otherwise unknown.<sup>14</sup> The entries date from 1643 to 1660. Still at the end of the year 1649 dedications call Simmerl himself a journeyman (painter). During his long wanderings from about 1643 to about 1650 he travelled through Southern Germany and Austria. Some places he visited multiple times. In the following cities he stayed for longer or shorter periods: Stein (1643, 1651), Herzogenburg (1643), Krems (1643), Nideraltaich (1643, 1645 and 1647), Deggendorf (1643, 1644 and 1645), Moos near Plattling (1643), Passau (1644, 1645), Landshut (1644, 1645), Kailburg (1645?), Wasserburg (1645), Tegernsee (1645), Innsbruck (1645), Dürnstein (1649), Fels am Wagram (1649), Enns (1649) and Vienna (1649, 1650). Of the seventy entries in Simmerl's journeyman album, about half a hundred are by artists, 25 of whom explicitly refer to themselves journeyman painters. The number of entries by journeymen shows that during his wanderings Ferdinand Simmerl associated mostly with fellows of his trade. However, the dedications by painters (that is master painters) may be assumed to have come from those workshop owners (guild aldermen) who offered him work and bread for some time during his wanderings.

For example one unknown future artist made the following entry: "Diß mach ich Sebolt Schwaiger Malergesell geschen in Wasserburg 1645" (Fig. 5). Schweiger correctly gives his status as that of a "Malergeselle" (journeyman painter). At the time he was not yet allowed to call himself a painter, as this was exclusively reserved for those having achieved the status of master painter.<sup>15</sup> The place name and the year allow for reconstructing the course of the album owner's journey. Today only very few albums of journeyman painters have been preserved. Especially if they contained entries by famous artists they were taken apart.

During his wanderings the future artist was supposed to complete his training. In the course of this, there occurred a process of exchange among artists which deserves more detailed investigation. The object of wandering was the perfection of the journeyman's training. The guild regulations call the journey a necessary requirement for successfully passing the master examination. If the candidate failed, he had to go on the road again – as already mentioned – to overcome his deficiencies. Thus the journey/*travelling* became a crucial criterion for securing the quality of training as an artist.

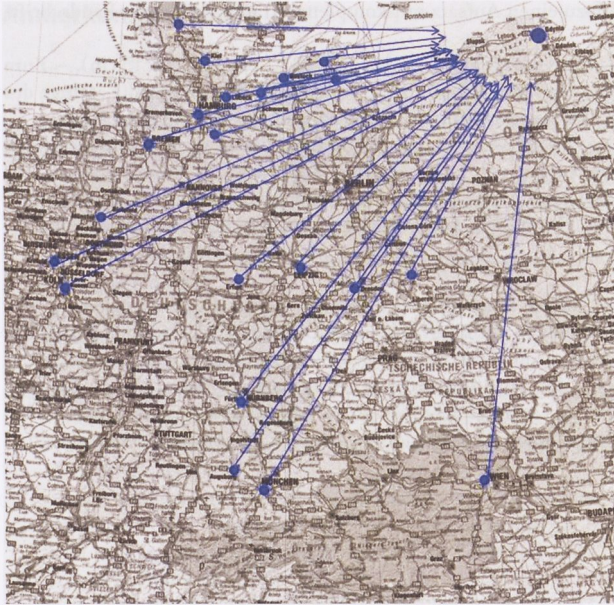
The above given examples have demonstrated that in the Old Empire the artist, due to his status as a craftsman, was obliged to be a travelling journeyman for an average of two to three years. Thus, the decision for the journey, that is for *mobility*, for *travelling*, was not made by the individual but prescribed by the guild in the pre-modern age. As the fine artist had craftsman status, he took part in the transfer of culture and knowledge initiated by the guilds in the pre-modern age.

## Anmerkungen / Notes

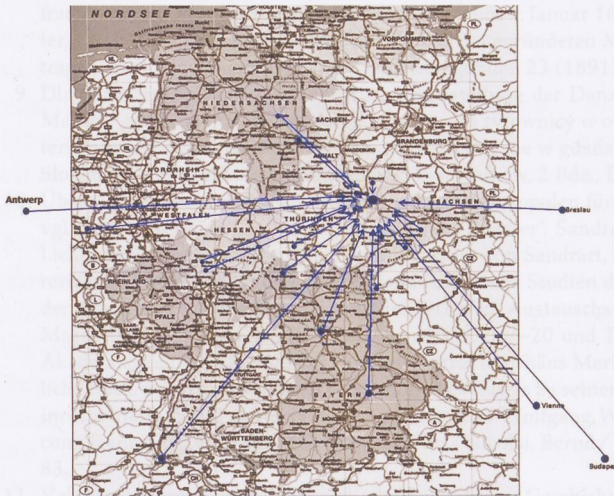
- 1 In mehreren meiner Forschungsprojekte der „Trierer Arbeitsstelle für Künstlersozialgeschichte“ (TAK), ein Forschungsverbund auf Zeit, werden die Ausbildungs- und Arbeitsbedingungen für Maler bis um 1800 untersucht; u. a. ist eine sehr umfangreiche Edition in Arbeit, die alle diesbezüglichen deutschsprachigen normativen Quellen des Alten Reiches erfassen soll. An dieser Stelle möchte ich von meinen Mitarbeitern und Mitarbeiterinnen v. a. Marina Beck, Monika Borowska, Nora Faust, Elsa Oßwald, Ursula Timann danken, auf deren Beiträge ich z. T. zurückgreife.
- 2 Einen Überblick bieten die Aufsätze in Tacke, Andreas / Irsigler, Franz (Hg.): *Der Künstler in der Gesellschaft. Einführungen in die Künstlersozialgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, Darmstadt 2011.
- 3 München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek: Cgm. 1531 „Ordnung der Maler, Bildhauer, Seidennäher, Glasmaler und Glaser und Bortenmacher“ (vom 30. Juli 1562 mit Nachträgen), fol. 1r-40v, hier fol. 2v.
- 4 Krakau, Jagiellonische Bibliothek: Kodeks Baltazara Behema, MS 16 „Ordnung für die Zunft der Maler, Glaser und Schnitzer“ (vom 26. August 1490 mit Nachträgen), fol. 272v-276r; hier fol. 273r-273v. – Vgl. Bucher, Bruno: *Die alten Zunft- und Verkehrs-Ordnungen der Stadt Krakau*, Wien 1889, S. 57–60.
- 5 Oppeln, Staatsarchiv: Cechy miasta Brzegu, 95 „Statuten der Maler“ (vom 8. April 1615), fol. 2–6, hier fol. 4. – Vgl. Hoffmann, Heinrich: *Zur Geschichte der zeichnenden Kunst in Schlesien. Malerzunft in Brieg*, in: *Monatsschrift von und für Schlesien 2* (1829), S. 417–420.
- 6 Dresden, Stadtarchiv: RA C. XXIV. 216 c, I „Ordnung der Maler“ (von 10. August 1620), fol. 228r-236v, hier fol. 232r. – Vgl. Tacke, Andreas: *Dresdner Malerordnungen der Frühen Neuzeit. Ein Quellenbeitrag zur Kunstgeschichte als Handwerksgeschichte*, in: *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* (2001), S. 29–48.
- 7 Danzig, Staatsarchiv: Fond: 300 C, 612 „Statuten der Malerzunft mit königlichen Bestätigungen und Notizen“ (vom 28. September 1612 mit Nachträgen), fol. 1–29, hier fol. 8–9. – Vgl. Simson, Paul: *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig bis 1626*, Bd. 3, Danzig 1918, S. 253–259 Nr. 187.
- 8 Graz, Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv: A. Graz, Stadt, K. 58, H. 430 „Statuten der Grazer Malerkonfraternität mit Privileg Kaiser Ferdinands II.“ (vom 4. Januar 1622), S. 1–26, hier S. 10. – Vgl. Wastler, Josef: *Die Ordnung der von Peter de Pomis gegründeten Maler-Confraternität in Graz*, in: *Beiträge zur Kunde Steiermärkischer Geschichtsquellen 23* (1891), S. 10–24.
- 9 Die Auswertung basiert auf der Zusammenstellung der Danziger Künstler von Palubicki, Janusz: *Malarze gdańscy: malarze, szklarze, rysownicy i rytownicy w okresie nowożytnym w gdańskich materiałach archiwalnych*; Bd. 1: *Środowisko artystyczne w gdańskich materiałach archiwalnych*; Bd. 2: *Słownik malarzy, szklarzy, rytowników i rysowników*, 2 Bde., Danzig 2009.
- 10 Über Generationen hinweg waren europäische Metropolen für Malergesellen ein Reiseziel; zu Rom vgl. Tacke, Andreas: „... auf Niederländische Manier“. Sandrarts römisches Willkommensfest im Lichte der Künstlersozialgeschichte, in: Joachim von Sandrart, *Ein europäischer Künstler und Theoretiker zwischen Italien und Deutschland (Römische Studien der Bibliotheca Hertziana 4: Rom und der Norden, Wege und Formen des künstlerischen Austauschs 3)*, hg. von Ebert-Schifferer, Sybille / Mazzetti di Pietralata, Cecilia, München 2009, S. 9–20 und Tacke, Andreas: *Italiensehnsucht und Akademiegedanke. Das Baseler Familienporträt Matthäus Merians des Jüngeren*, in: *Der unbestechliche Blick. Festschrift zu Ehren von Wolfgang Wolters zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstag / Lo sguardo incorruttibile. Studi di storia dell'arte in onore di Wolfgang Wolters in occasione del settantesimo compleanno*, hg. von/a cura di Gaier, Martin / Nicolai, Bernd / Weddigen, Tristan, Trier 2005, S. 73–83.
- 11 Vgl. Wustmann, Gustav: *Archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Malerei in Leipzig vom 15. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert*, in: Ders. (Hg.), *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Malerei in Leipzig vom XV. bis zum XVII. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig 1879, S. 19–70.
- 12 Pilz, Kurt: *Egidius Arnold, seine Familie und seine Geldstiftungen für Nürnberger Handwerke*, in: *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg 62* (1975), S. 102–160.

- 13 Ursula Timann (Nürnberg) plant dazu einen Aufsatz mit kompletter Transkription der handschriftlichen Einträge.
- 14 Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Bibliothek: Hs 137 321 (169 Bl., 9 × 15 cm). – Zum Stammbuch siehe Kurras, Lotte: Die Stammbücher, 1. Teil: Die bis 1750 begonnenen (Kataloge des Germanischen Nationalmuseums, Die Handschriften 5, 1), Wiesbaden 1988, S. 89 f., Nr. 60.
- 15 Kein geringerer als Johann Liss beschriftet seine Handzeichnungen, die in seine Ausbildungszeit fallen, mit „Malerjunge“ bzw. „Malergeselle“; vgl. Tacke, Andreas: Zeichnend zur Auszeichnung!? Zur paradigmatischen Rolle der Handzeichnung im Streit zwischen zunftgebundenem Malerhandwerk und Akademie, in: Lauterbach, Iris / Stuffmann, Margret (Hg.), Aspekte deutscher Zeichenkunst, München 2006, S. 104–113.

**Nachtrag / Addendum**, alle zitierten Quellen nun abgedruckt in / all sources cited are now printed in: Statuta pictorum: Kommentierte Edition der Maler(zunft)ordnungen im deutschsprachigen Raum des Alten Reiches (artifex. Quellen und Studien zur Künstlersozialgeschichte / Sources and Studies in the Social History of the Artist. Hrsg. von / Ed. by Andreas Tacke), von Andreas Tacke, Ursula Timann, Marina Beck, Elsa Oßwald, Sarah Wilhelm, Luise Schaefer, Zbigniew Michalczyk, Sandra Knieb, Radka Heisslerova, Hana Pátková, Karina Wiench, Susan Tipton, Monika Borowska, Benno Jakobus Walde, u. a. 5. Bde., Petersberg 2018.

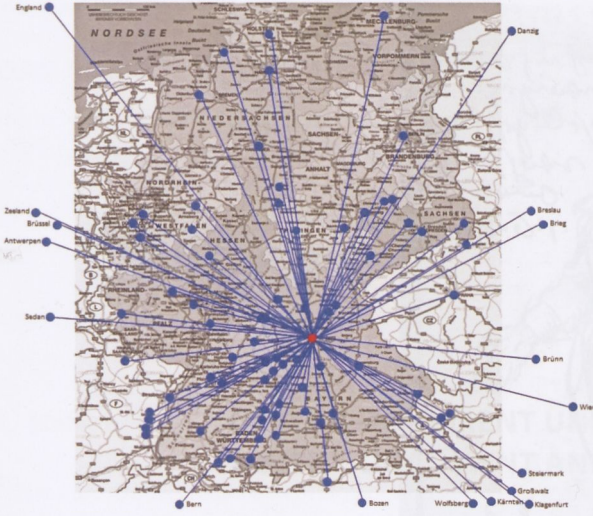


- 1 Wandergesellen mit dem Zielort Danzig aus  
Travelling journeymen with Danzig as their destination from  
Augsburg, Bremen, Dresden, Erfurt, Flensburg, Görlitz, Greifswald, Hamburg, Kiel, Köln, Leipzig,  
Lübeck, Lüneburg, München, Münster, Neuss, Nürnberg, Rostock, Stralsund, Wien, Wismar



- 2 Wandergesellen mit dem Zielort Leipzig aus  
Travelling journeymen with Leipzig as their destination from  
Annaberg, Antwerpen, Bad Neustadt, Basel, Bitterfeld, Braunschweig, Breslau, Celle, Cleeberg, Eger  
(Cheb), Freiberg, Glauchau, Halle, Landshut, Maastricht, Nürnberg, Oberursel, Ofen (Budapest),  
Schmalkalden, Weißenfels, Wien





- 3 Wandergesellen mit dem Zielort Nürnberg aus  
 Travelling journeymen with Nuremberg as their destination from  
 Antwerpen, Augsburg, Bamberg, Barr im Elsass, Bayreuth, Berlin, Bern, Bozen, Breslau, Brieg, Brunn?, Bruck bei München (Fürstenfeldbruck?), Brüssel, Colmar, Danzig, Dinkelsbühl, Donauwörth, Dresden, Duderstadt, Ellwangen, England, Frauenfeld (Schweiz), Görlitz, Greding, Gresten (Gersten?) in Österreich, Günzburg, Güra, Hadeln (Land *Hadeln*), Hamburg, Kaiserswerth, Hannover, Heidenhausen, Heilbronn, Heppenheim, Herborn, Hirschberg, Holstein, Innsbruck, Langensalza, Laupheim, Leipzig, Linz, Loßwig (bei Torgau), Mainz, Meißen, Memmingen, Michelbach, Naumburg, Öhringen, Oldenburg, Osterode, Passau, Pforzheim, Plech, Prag, Preußen, Raiming?, Regensburg, Rufach (Rouffach / Elsaß), Rust, Sachsen, Scheyern, Schlettstadt, Schönbrunn, Schweinfurt, Segringen, Sint Gillis polder im Zeeland, Solchbach, Spalt, St. Avold, Steiermark, Stralsund, Straßburg, Stuttgart, Torgau, Trier, Ulm, Villingen, Wasserburg, Wassertrüdingen, Weingarten, Weißenhorn, Wels, Westerburg am Bodensee, Westfalen, Wien, Wolfsberg in Kärnten, Würzburg, Zedan (Sedan?), Zittau, Zwickau



- 4 Bewegungsprofil des Malerwandergesellen Ferdinand Simmerl  
 Movement profile of the journeyman painter Ferdinand Simmerl  
 Deggendorf, Dürnstein, Enns, Fels am Wagram, Herzogenburg, Innsbruck, Kailburg, Krems, Landshut, Moos bei Plattling, Niederaltaich, Passau, Stein, Tegernsee, Wasserburg, Wien



5 Gesellenstambuch des unbekannt gebliebenen Malers Ferdinand Simmerl, mit Eintrag des ebenfalls unbekannt gebliebenen Malers Sebald Schweiger  
Journeyman's register of the painter Ferdinand Simmerl, who remained unknown, with an entry by the likewise unknown painter Sebald Schweiger  
(Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg, Bibliothek: Hs 137 321, fol. 80r)