

Craft in borderlands. The stuccoist Johann Michael Graff and his contribution to the transregional prevalence of a specific formal language concerning Rococo interior decorations in the eastern Baltic Sea region of the 18th century

My research is, in a broader sense, about social networks as well as the geographical and social mobility of craftsmen. In addition it is about the complex system of various processes leading to works of art.

In a narrow sense the thesis will consider the craft of stuccoists as highly mobile craftsmen and discuss their influence on a prevalence of specific languages of form. In any case they have an intermediary function. On the transregional level it concerns the contribution of skills and knowledge as well as work capacity and forms of organization in other regions and their cultural value for different ethnic groups among themselves, on the intraregional level it concerns the mediation between urban and rural culture and citizenship.¹

Against this background it is the aim of the project to analyse these facts on the basis of the biography of the Wessobrunn stucco-worker Johann Michael Graff and to locate his works as a communicative instrument of different clients in the art history of the eastern Baltic sea region of the 18th century.

Points of research (extract):

1. Filling gaps in the biography of Johann Michael Graff especially his early years and defining the basement of his transregional language of form to find hints for his later career in the Baltic sea regions Courland, Livonia and Poland.
2. Examining social networks of (Wessobrunner) stuccoists among themselves, stuccoists and clients and clients among themselves to get a multilayered view of social interaction and communication in the 18th century
3. Transferring the research data into digital tools to visualize the results and to support an ongoing research by linking Graff's vita to other databases

¹ Vgl. Roth, Klaus: *Vorwort*, in: Roth, Klaus; Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft (Germany); Bayerisches Nationalmuseum u. a. (Hg.): *Handwerk in Mittel- und Südosteuropa: Mobilität, Vermittlung und Wandel im Handwerk des 18. bis 20. Jahrhunderts*, München 1987 (Südosteuropa-Studien), S. 8.