

The city of Bautzen, known colloquially as Budyšin, belonged to the kingdom of Böhmen in 1511 when the papermaker Valten Ochs sold his newly built paper mills to Michael Schaffhirt. The 500th anniversary of this event provided the impetus for Harald and Thomas Schaffhirt to pull together a history of these mills, drawing from generations of family genealogical data as well as from the historical research undertaken by Alfred Kraus in the last decades.

Their research has been published in a book that will be of interest not only to German historians of paper, but also deserves notice in other disciplines. In the paper industry, Schaffhirts owned or managed mills in nearly two dozen locations, across the German states of Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen, and Brandenburg, as well as in the Czech Republic, Poland and Russia. In the course of their research, they discovered that “the Schaffhirts made regular use of names such as Alexander, Michael, Samuel and Martin without any regard for the confusion that this might cause historians (p. 3)”. They also established that the paper mills in Hermsdorf (today part of the village of Ottendorf-Okrilla - see pp. 215-219) and in Wilthen (pp. 224-227), formerly attributed to the Schaffhirts, did not actually belong to the family holdings.

The book opens with a richly illustrated history of paper making (p. 5-21). The chapter concludes with an alphabetical listing of places – from Arnstadt to Zittau – relevant to subsequent chapters of this history. In addition to listing the dates of events and people, the book also presents geographic coordinates of the paper mills. In this, the authors have accomplished an extraordinary feat. They have spared no effort to present, in words and numbers, the results of their historical research. In addition, they also present vivid pictorial evidence. In particular, their reproduction of watermarks attached to city coats of arms can lead to surprising insights not apparent to those not expert in the field. Landscapes and formal portraits are used to place the local histories in context.

A few special objects stand out from the abundance of materials. Wrapping paper¹ gives a very descriptive picture of the Arnstadt mill in 1610 (p.22). Welcoming-goblets from Bautzen (p. 43), Carben (pp. 61-63), and Dresden (p. 211) as well as a papermakers’ glass from Zittau (p. 213) bring old craft customs to mind (S. 209—215: Appendix B – Welcoming and honoring gifts). Visits to cemeteries led to interesting grave markers (the Fischers’ family grave in Bautzen, p. 45; Friedrich Gottlob Keller’s gravestone in Krippen, p. 48; Schaffhirt gravestones in Zittau, p. 73). Expeditions to the locations of the old paper mills led in some cases to old buildings where monogrammed cartridges (Bautzen, p. 40) were found; these have since been placed in museums (p 43). In Schirgiswalde the former mill is now the site of a historical museum (p. 175).

The authors developed an industrial-archeological perspective and tracked down the

¹ Riesumschlag - the sort of packing paper used to wrap packages and material for transport. I think...

old canals and waterways necessary to papermaking (cf. Mühlbach and Rasnitz in Friedland/Böhmen, p. 132; Salza near Mühlhausen, p. 157; Zorge near Nordhausen, p. 163). In some locations street names are indicative of the former paper industry.

The authors spared no effort to look for old building plans, postcards and photos of buildings. Modern electronic satellite pictures were used to determine exact locations of mills (Arnstadt, p. 28; Aussig/Ústí nad Labem, p. 37; Bautzen, p. 53; Carben, p. 60; Dresden p. 107; Görlitz-Moys/Zgorzelec-Ujazd, p. 139; Leipzig-Lindenau, p. 145; Lohmen, p. 149; Nedereinsiedel, p. 155; Teschenwalde, p. 191; Wittenberg, p. 195; Hermsdorff, p. 218; Domkau, p. 234).

A detailed index organizes by chapter the sources of all pictures and consulted works. A register of names in the book would have been a welcome addition; those interested can utilize the search function available in the digital edition. Both authors are to be congratulated for an impressive job combining the available source material with their own investigation, and for utilizing new methods in their research – the use of aerial photos to reconstruct old mill locations (Carben in the former East Prussia) comes to mind.