

Carin Grabowski

**Between faithfulness and construction: Re-assessing Merian's oeuvre**

Based on recent research, this paper will provide answers to two questions related to Merian's scientific observations and to her workshop: for a long time it has been assumed that Merian's daughters, Johanna Helena and Dorothea Maria, were their mother's apprentices. However, until now, all attempts for attribution were based on hypotheses without solid proof. Furthermore, the question is dealt with whether, from an entomological perspective, there is even more to Merian's pictures than a faithful representation of metamorphosis and parasitism on the respective host plants. New and original research provides answers to both questions. Solid criteria are presented for the attribution of pictures to each of the three artists, the mother and her two daughters. In the course of that research, the additional, novel aspect of Merian's work became evident: her intention to represent the insects' movements, thus going beyond a static representation of metamorphosis and parasitism. The findings are based on the analysis of two series belonging to the St. Petersburg collection, where they are categorised as "preparatory work for a herb book".

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