

Argument

The title “Theatrum machinarum molarium, oder Schau-Platz der Mühlen-Bau-Kunst“ probably used to address people who were willing to build a mill or interested in technology, since the first 25 chapters (published 1767) of the text introduce different types of mills and their composition. The second part of the book (published 1735) is structured into registers containing information about the law of building mills. Today, people interested in architectural and building history might find a pleasure in reading this book.

In the text itself a couple of small, detailed, decorative illustrations can be found. Also, although less considered as illustrations, the initial letter of every chapter is quite large and decorative. This might be due to the traditional font. However, at the end there are almost 100 pages with construction drawings of certain parts of different mills. The reason for so few decorative but even more descriptive illustrations is the rather mathematical and technical than artistic intention of the book.

One would think the book has a normal, handy size just by flipping through the digital version, but when looking at it in real life, it is much bigger than expected. It is not a book to carry around but instead to keep it at home. Although the format is rather large, it still has around 500 delicate, thin pages. This indicates how extended the state of the art was at that time already.

This book was written by Johann Matthias Beyer (and others). There is not much information on Beyer, but Jacob Leupold, (1674 – 1727) a German engineer, wanted to create an encyclopedia of the state of the art back then. Unfortunately, he died before finishing all the volumes he planned to publish, which is why “Theatrum machinarum molarium” was written by Beyer. (*Jacob Leupold – Wikipedia*).