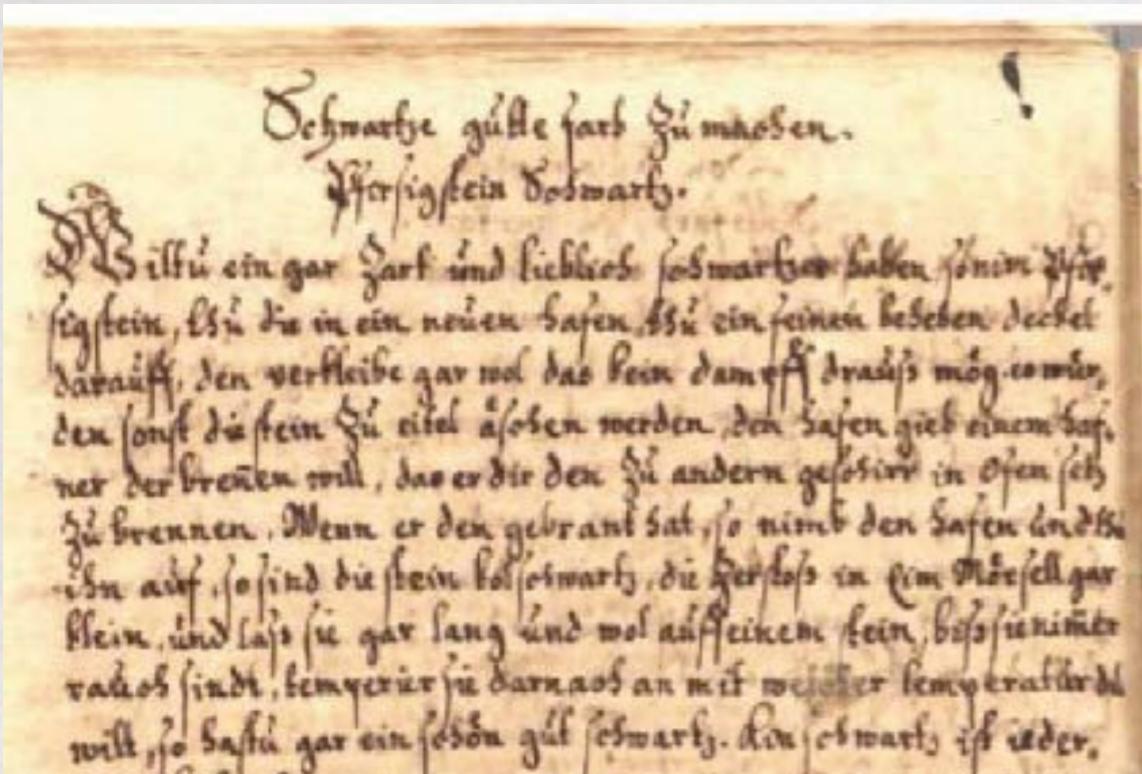




Peach pit black

Reconstruction
Recipe by Benzinger/Ruffach 1549

Recipe (1549)



Schwarze gute Farb zu machen. Pfirsigstein Schwartz.

Wiltu ein gar zart und lieblich schwarztes haben, so nim Pfirsigstein, du in ein neuen hafen, du ein feinen bedeben deckel darauß, den verkleibe gar wol das kein dampff drauß mög es würden sonst die stein zu eitel äschen werden, den Hafen gieb einem Haf/ner der brennen will, das er dir den zu andern geschirr in Ofen setz / zu brennen. Wenn er den gebrant hat, so nimb den Hafen und öhn auf, so sind die stein kolschwarz, die zerstoß in eim Mörsell gar klein, und laß sie gar lang und wol auff einem Stein, biß sie nimmer rauh sindt, temperier sie darnach an mit welcher temperatur du / wilt, so hastu gar ein schön gut schwarz. Von schwarz ist wider.



Schwarze gute Farbe zu machen. Pfirsichkern Schwarz.

Willst Du ein gar zartes und liebliches Schwarz haben, so nimm Pfirsichkerne, tue diese in ein neuen Topf. Tue einen feinen passenden Deckel darauf, den verklebe gar wohl, dass kein Dampf daraus möge [entweichen], es würden sonst die Steine zu eitel Asche werden. Den Topf gib einem Töpfer der brennen will, dass er Dir den zu dem anderen Geschirr in den Ofen setze zum Brennen. Wenn er den gebrannt hat, so nimm den Topf und öffne ihn, so sind die Kerne kohlschwarz. Die zerstoß in einem Mörser gar klein, und laß [reibe] sie gar lang und wohl auf einem Stein, bis sie nicht mehr rauh sind. Temperier sie danach an mit welchem Bindemittel Du willst, so hast Du gar ein schönes gutes Schwarz.

To make a black good color. Peach pit black.

If you want a delicate and lovely black, take peach stones, put them in a new pot. Put a fine, matching lid on it, seal it so that no steam can escape, otherwise the stones would become vain ashes. Give the pot to a potter who wants to burn, that he put it together with the other vessels into his kiln. When he has finished burning, take the pot and open it, the pits are coal-black. Crush them very small in a mortar, and leave [grind] them long and well on a stone, until they are no longer rough. Temper with whichever binder you want, so you have a nice, good black.

Handout instructions

Source

Benzinger. 1549. *'Illuminier Buch. Künstlich alle Farben zumachen und beriten'*, Manuscript copy of the 'Illuminierbuch' by Boltz von Ruffach, Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Ms 32075'. fol. 22r. http://digilib.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/digitallibrary/jquery/digilib.html?fn=/experimental/ARB/ARB_PRIMARY_SOURCES/ARB_manuscripts/MS_580/pageimg.

Ingredients & equipment

- Peach pits
- Wood-fire
- Iron-cast crucible with lid
- Metal mortar & pestle
- Grinding slab stone, muller, water
- Gum Arabic solution, sweet water shell, brush

Preparation steps

- (1) Collect cherry stones
- (2) Light a fire
- (3) Put cherry stones in a crucible
- (4) Put the crucible on the fire and let it there for about 2 hours
- (5) Crush the charred pits in a metal mortar & pestle
- (6) Grind the powder on a stone with a muller and water
- (7) Transfer paint into a sweet-water shell and apply on paper with a brush

Date & Place

"Burgundian Black" Summerschool ROOTS: Research on the origins of historical techniques, University of Antwerp, 1-5 July 2019, Ellingshausen (Germany), August 2020, Amsterdam January 2021.

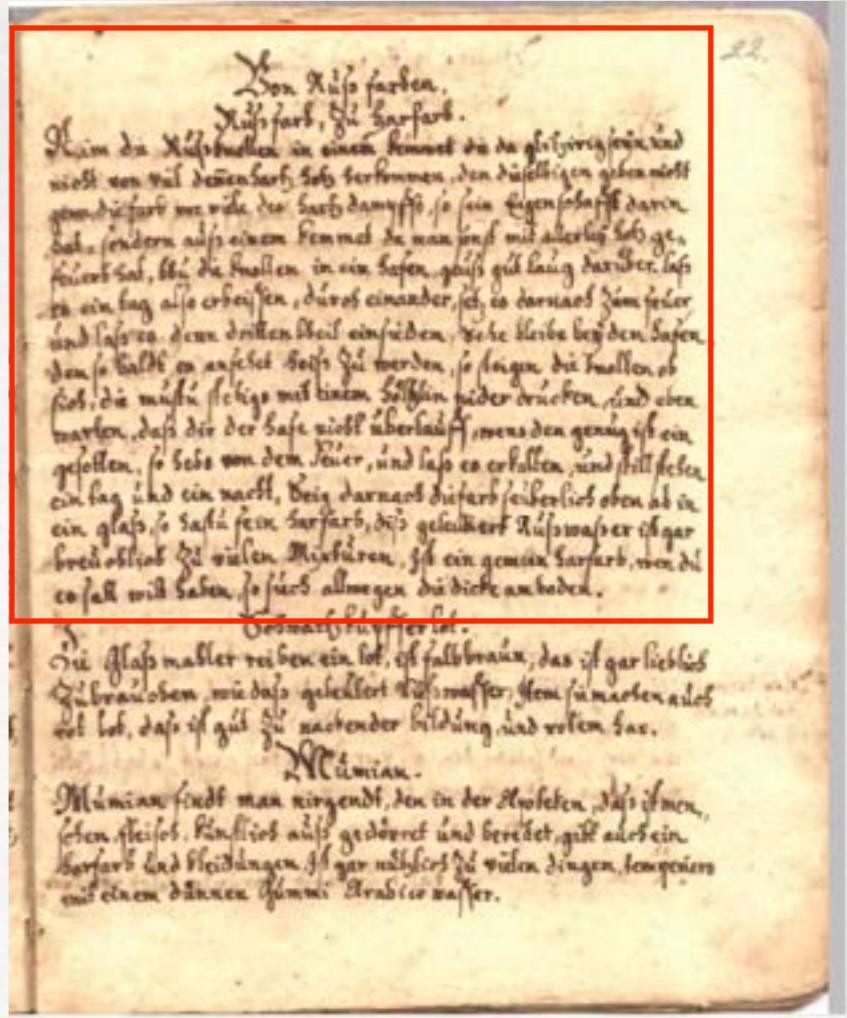


Photo report: step-by-step reconstruction

1. Collect and char peach pits



Peach pits are charred in a cast-iron crucible on a wood- and charcoal fire for about 2 hours.

Reconstructions: "Burgundian Black" Summerschool ROOTS: Research on the origins of historical techniques, University of Antwerp, 1-5 July 2019, "Black", hands-on workshop for master students painting conservation, Conservation & Restauration Department, University of Amsterdam, 20 February 2020 and Ellingshausen August 2020.

Photo report: step-by-step reconstruction

2. Crush and grind charred peach pits, mix with gum Arabic



Peach pits in water after 5 min



Peach pits in gum Arabic

Charred peach pits are hard and therefore first need to be crushed in a metal mortar & pestle. They are quite brittle and coarse.

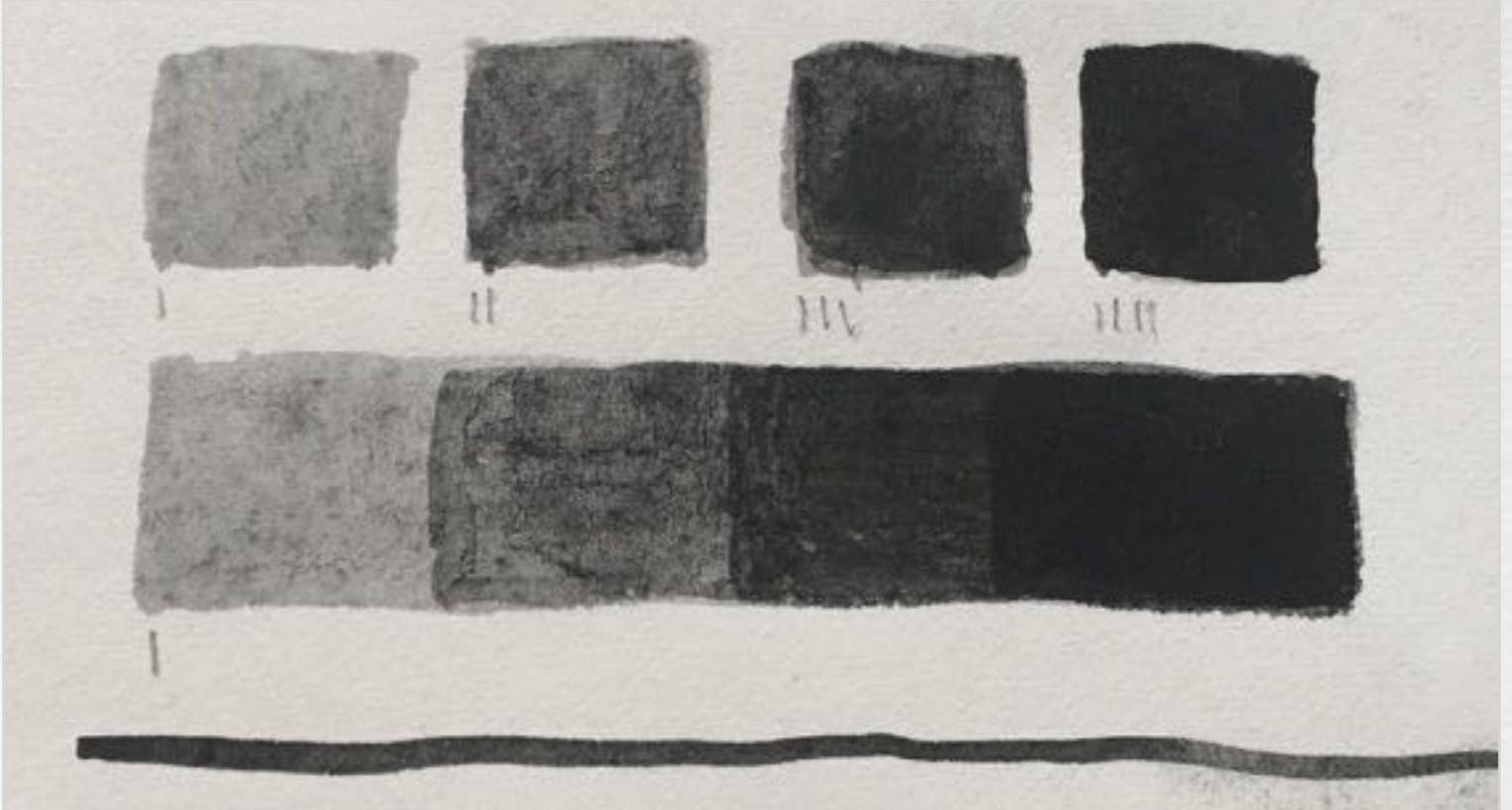
In water, the particles are easy to grind on a porphyry grinding stone. Already after 10 minutes they form a film.

Preparing larger amounts of pigment seems to demand (much) longer grinding times, up to 120 minutes (UvA Amsterdam 20 Febr. 2020).

In gum Arabic, peach-pit pigment forms a deeply black water colour.

Photo report: step-by-step reconstruction

3. Transfer peach pit black into a shell and apply on paper



Four superimposed layers of peach pit black.
Concentrated peach pit water colour is very black,
opaque and velvety.

What did we learn during the reconstruction?



It is possible to char peach pits in a crucible.

They are hard and need to be crushed in a pestle.

The resulting particles are quite coarse.

Peach pit water colour is intensely black.





Enjoy your own reconstructions !

Birgit Reissland

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Heritage on paper and related materials

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