

How did medieval people make glass? Our understanding of their process comes to us by way of a book by Theophilus.

Who was Theophilus?

Most scholars believe that Theophilus was actually a metal worker whose name was Roger of Helmarshausen. If so, he was alive and producing work around 1100 A.D.

However ... because Theophilus uses words which were not used after the 11th century, other scholars believe he may have been a Benedictine monk who was working in Cologne during the mid-10th century.

The translators/editors of Theophilus' book - which was originally written in Latin - tell us that the medieval writer was most likely Roger of Helmarshausen. They have reasons for their conclusion:

...the evidence seems to be strongly in favor of Roger of Helmarshausen's being the actual author of the Treatise, and that, desiring a pseudonym in Benedictine modesty, he chose the Byzantine name of Theophilus in recognition of Byzantium's excellent in the techniques described.

The surviving work by the historic Roger strongly supports this view. Helmarshausen [a picturesque central-Germany town, formerly the location of Helmarshausen Abbey] was an important center for all the arts described by Theophilus.

*The book cover attributed to Roger involves the use of beaded wire, cloisonné enamel, and the mounting of gems. (See *On Divers Arts: The Foremost Medieval Treatise on Painting, Glassmaking, and Metalwork*, by Theophilus (Presbyter.), translated from the Latin with Introduction and Notes by John G. Hawthorne and Cyril Stanley Smith, at [pages xvi and xvii](#).)*

This image depicts the cover of Theophilus' translated book. Thanks to the publisher and Google Books, much of the work is available for online reading.

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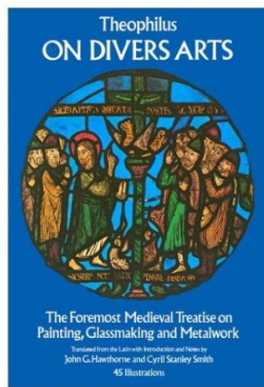
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