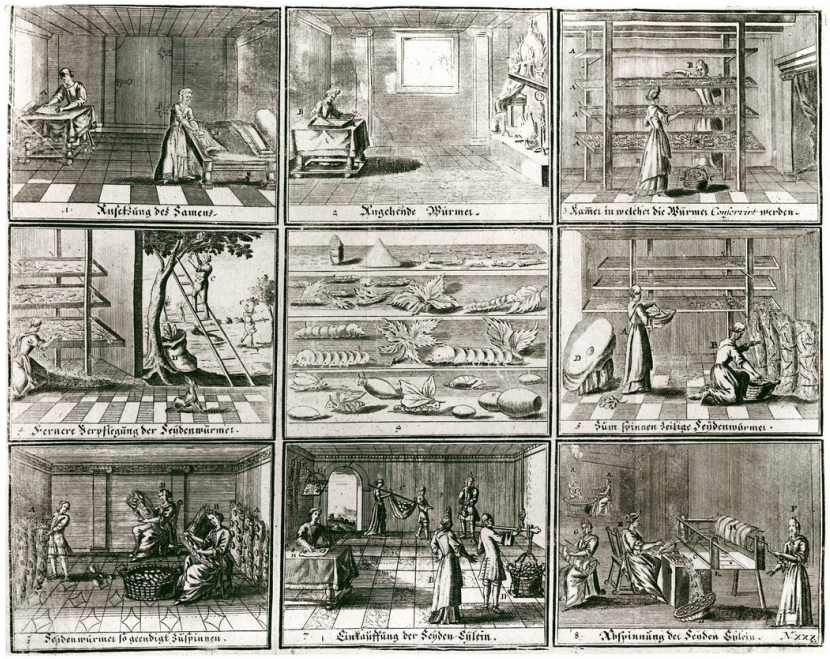
Manufacturing Silk (1750)

Abstract

This engraving shows the silk-manufacturing process from the preparation of the silkworms' eggs (top left) to the spinning of silk (bottom right). The production of silk fabrics started in China and spread to Europe in the Middle Ages. Until the mid-sixteenth century, the city of Cologne played the leading role in the German silk industry. Over time, however, Cologne's importance declined, and it eventually ceded its leading position to Krefeld in the late seventeenth century.

Silk was a luxury good, and as such, it was viewed as the preserve of the propertied classes. In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, silk adornments also became available to urban and rural commoners. In Prussia, as elsewhere in Germany, efforts to uphold traditional sartorial distinctions among the various classes faded under the influence of mercantilist, cameralist, and Enlightenment doctrines that advocated the widening of commercial markets and spurred the demand for industrial goods.

Source



Source: Copperplate engraving by an unknown artist published in the 1750 edition of Franz Philipp Florinus, *Oeconomus prudens et legalis. Oder Der kluge und rechtsverständige Haus-Vater* [*Oeconomus prudens et legalis. Or the Generally Prudent and Judicious Housemaster*].
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Recommended Citation: Manufacturing Silk (1750), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/the-holy-roman-empire-1648-1815/ghdi:image-2713> [October 15, 2026].