



1 | Nathan Mau (attributed), *Portrait of Katharina von Brandenburg-Küstrin*, ca. 1600, Grunewald Hunting Lodge.

Katharina von Brandenburg-Küstrin became electress of Brandenburg in 1598 as the wife of Joachim Friedrich. When she died four years later, she left behind a considerable collection of artefacts. In a surviving register from 20 July 1603, the collection was designated as the “Electoral Kunstkammer”.<sup>1</sup> This is the first verifiable inventory of a Kunstkammer in the electorate of Brandenburg, one of the earliest Kunstkammer inventories in Europe, and – in contrast to the others – documented the estate of a woman [■Priapus].

### Katharina von Brandenburg-Küstrin: Ruler, Benefactress, and Collector

The portrait of this extraordinary and multi-faceted ruler alludes not only to her princely dignity through the electoral hat on the table, but simultaneously narrates her diverse interests (fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> The inscription on the pilaster on the right side of the painting attests to the fact that in 1598, Katharina funded the “court apothecary for electoral court servants, clergy, and the poor” with her own means and even “organized” it herself. She is thus the founder of what remained one of the most important

medical institutions in Berlin for three centuries. In the court apothecary, medications were made available at no cost. In the portrait, Katharina thus holds in her hands the book *Praxis pietatis* (active piety), characterizing her as a pious benefactress influenced by Luther.

Four weeks after assuming power, Elector Joachim Friedrich gave his wife Katharina control of all revenues and the usage of earnings from the apothecary and transferred its administration to her.<sup>3</sup> The apothecary had been established in 1585 in a freestanding building on the kitchen garden (later the pleasure garden) by Elector Johann Georg (fig. 2). Katharina’s father-in-law, who had a deep interest in alchemical experiments, furnished it with laboratories, a mint, and a printing press.<sup>4</sup> Prior to this, Katharina had successfully and independently run an apothecary in Halle, the seat of the couple before assuming power. She cultivated close ties to Leonhard Thurneysser zum Thurn and Michael Aschenbrenner, alchemists and apothecaries in the electoral service, and wrote prescriptions herself (as was customary for noble women), supervised the purchase of materials for medications, and also dispensed them.<sup>5</sup>

The apothecary and the natural sciences, however, were not Katharina’s only fields of activity. There is a consensus among researchers specializing in the culture of female rulership in the early modern era that princesses such as Katharina had significant responsibilities in their various engagements, for instance, as custodial regents for minors, as representatives during the absence of princes, as patrons and commissioners of artworks, and as benefactresses of charitable institutions.<sup>6</sup> Hitherto neglected sources such as the inventory of Katharina’s Kunstkammer offer an expanded view of the socio-cultural fields of activity that ruling women occupied in the early modern era.

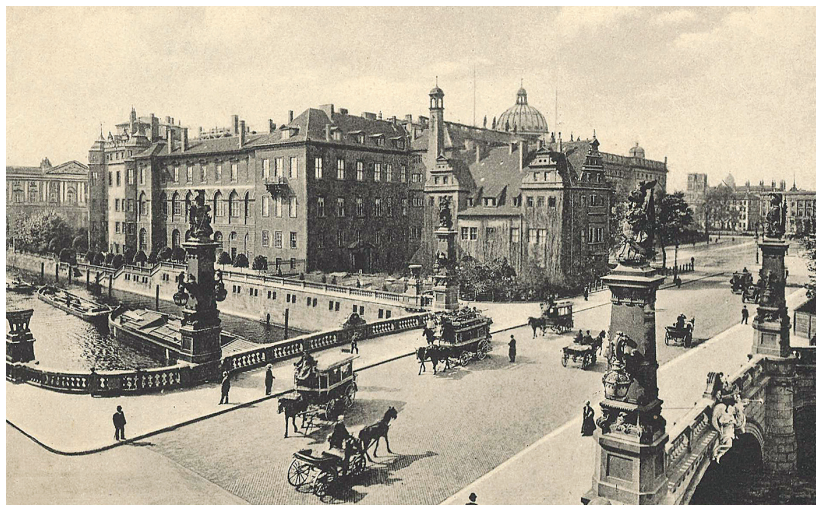
- 1 Inventar 1603, fol. 1r.
- 2 On Katharina’s role in the founding and management of the apothecary, see Hörmann 1898; Heilmeyer 2004; Klein 2015; Klein 2017.
- 3 Hörmann 1898, p. 214.
- 4 Heilmeyer 2004, p. 71; on the building that housed the apothecary, see Geyer 1898.
- 5 See Klein 2015, pp. 261–2; Hörmann 1898, p. 211. Already in 1565, the scholar Samuel Quiccheberg considered it an explicit responsibility of princesses to establish stocks of medicaments and collections of essences to help the poor and sick (see Quiccheberg 2000, p. 83).
- 6 See Wunder 2017, pp. 9–24, here pp. 10–11; Engel 2016, especially pp. 122–34; Frauensache 2015.

## Documentation and Collection Practices in the Inventories of the Berlin Kunstkammer of 1603 and 1605

Two inventories of the Kunstkammer have survived from the time shortly after Katharina's death, one from 1603 and another from 1605.<sup>7</sup> Elaborate registers of papal and princely art collections at Italian and French courts in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were the precursors to the Kunstkammer inventories made approximately 100 years later, of which the inventories of the Electoral Kunstkammer in Dresden in 1587, the Archducal Kunstkammer at Schloss Ambras in 1596, and the Ducal Kunstkammer in Munich in 1598 are the oldest known examples.<sup>8</sup> Kunstkammer inventories functioned as juridical registers of ownership and were often compiled in order to define the legacy when a change of ruler or government occurred.<sup>9</sup> An early inventory (which has not been preserved) was made in Berlin-Cölln in 1599 after the death of Elector Johann Georg. However, this was not a Kunstkammer inventory, but instead recorded "treasure and church regalia".<sup>10</sup> The document was composed by court official Johann Fritz after the accession to power by Katharina and Joachim Friedrich.<sup>11</sup> It is unclear which specific holdings were recorded in the inventory of 1599, although we do know that the relics collection was listed in detail, as a report to Electress Katharina in the same year elucidated the objects of the "church treasure".<sup>12</sup>

The collection of a Kunstkammer was not explicitly mentioned prior to 1603. Written sources exist only for the (church) treasure, the armoury, and the silver collection.<sup>13</sup> It has hitherto been assumed that the Berlin Kunstkammer could be traced back to Joachim II. This surmise was based especially on commissioned work and the purchase of "rarities and remarkable things" described in the older literature,<sup>14</sup> although the latter could just as well have become part of different electoral collection units. In Samuel Quiccheberg's treatise of 1565 *Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimi* [. . .] – a guidebook for establishing and organizing an ideal collection, thus making him the founder of museology – the Flemish physician and scholar, who was responsible for the Kunstkammer at Albrecht V's court in Munich, listed examples of collections, including those of the seven electors.<sup>15</sup> In this context Quiccheberg named Joachim II of Brandenburg, but admitted that he himself had not seen the latter's collections, which he did not further specify.<sup>16</sup> The first explicit mention of a Kunstkammer can be found in the inventory of 1603, which stated on the title page: "Register of what was found after the blessed death of Electress Katharina, née Margrave of Brandenburg, of highly lauded memory, in the Electoral Kunstkammer on 20 July 1603".<sup>17</sup> This suggests that Katharina should be viewed as the actual founder of the Brandenburg Kunstkammer.

The second surviving inventory of the Electoral Kunstkammer was compiled in 1605, presumably due to a change in its administration – which, in addition to the death of a ruler, can be the reason for creating a new document of this kind [● 1685/1688]. A change of government did not occur



2 | View of the apothecary wing from the Kaiser Wilhelm Bridge, postcard ca. 1900. The apothecary wing was initially a free-standing building; it was connected to the palace in the seventeenth century and was shortened in length in the late nineteenth century.

- 7 Inventar 1603; Inventar 1605. On the inventory of 1605, see also Bredekamp/Dolezel 2009, pp. 138–9. We would like to thank Gundula Avenarius and Angela Matyssek for transcribing the 1605 inventory.
- 8 See Ketelsen 1990, especially pp. 103–51; Seelig 2001.
- 9 See *ibid.*, pp. 24–6; Ketelsen 1990, pp. 103–4.
- 10 On this inventory, see Tacke 1989, pp. 155, 185, 195; see also Reichl 1930, pp. 227–8.
- 11 On court official Johann Fritz, see Tacke 1989, p. 185, n. 192–3.
- 12 See *ibid.*, pp. 184–94, document 9.
- 13 For a summary, see Ledebur 1831, p. 6; Fischbacher 2018, p. 1.
- 14 Ledebur 1831, p. 6, cited in König 1792/1799, vol. 1, p. 92.
- 15 See Quiccheberg 2000, here pp. 169–73.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 173.
- 17 Inventar 1603, fol. 1r.



3 | Johann Stridbeck, view of the Berlin Palace from the south with the palace gate between the cathedral on the left and the Stechbahn wing on the right, 1690.

vault”.<sup>20</sup> The gate referred to here, which was located behind the choir of the (old) Berlin cathedral, was for centuries the central entrance to the palace grounds in the south from Breite Strasse (fig. 3; see also the floor plan of the palace [● 1685/1688, fig. 3]). In Hainhofer’s list of a number of the objects kept there, he referred to the electoral church treasure and relic treasure. The rooms for the *Kunstammer*, however, might have been located in the adjoining space in precisely this vault. This is, in any case, implied by other sources, which state that in 1626, individual objects from the relic collection were brought from the treasure vault to the “front *Kunstammer* vault” and the “outer *Kunstammer* vault”.<sup>21</sup> We know that the “vault of His Electoral Serene Highness” was still used as a collection site in 1688, because in that year objects were transferred from there to the *Kunstammer*, which had in the meantime been moved to the court apothecary wing of the palace.<sup>22</sup>

The two *Kunstammer* vaults evidently encompassed the *Kunstammer* in the narrower sense as well as the *Textilkammer* or textile cabinet, which was located “in the vault before the *Kunstammer*”. In the surviving files, the register of the textile cabinet immediately follows the *Kunstammer* inventory of 1605.<sup>23</sup> Various withdrawals from the two locations documented in writing indicate that they were perceived as a spatial unit, as the “*Kunstammer*” was consistently referred to as the depository.<sup>24</sup> The other collection facilities at the electoral court at the time – the church treasure, the silver cabinet, and the armoury [■ Justus Bertram] – were independently administered institutions that also kept their own inventories.<sup>25</sup> It is a stroke of luck for researchers that two registers for the *Kunstammer* from around 1600 have been preserved, since they provide information about the collection profile prior to the damage caused by the Thirty Years’ War, which resulted in the loss of almost all of these objects.<sup>26</sup>

The documentation form of these two surviving inventories is directly related to the handling, organization, and function of the collection. This can be deduced from the structure of the textual content and the way in which the objects are described. The sequence of objects in the inventory follows their location in the vault, which is identified by means of the respective storage and presentation furniture (shelves, cabinets, and table) and consistently precedes the objects as an organizing category in the text. This is called a localizing inventory and is a kind of register that was still used in the Berlin *Kunstammer* in the late seventeenth century [● 1685/1688].<sup>27</sup>

In both inventories, the description of the objects is entered primarily as a summary. Material qualities are frequently used as headings, while objects with special features are emphasized within

at this time, but only three years later in 1608 with the death of Joachim Friedrich.<sup>18</sup> No reference to Katharina is made in the inventory of 1605.

Around 1600, the *Kunstammer* was located in a vault (made of stone and thus fireproof) on the palace grounds, as noted in the title of this second inventory: *Inventarium. Inn der Kunstammer, Den 8. und 9. Novembris A[anno] 1605. Im Gewelbe*.<sup>19</sup> Augsburg art agent Philipp Hainhofer also reported about a vault as the collection room at the time of his visit in 1617. “Beneath the great gate live the guards and the house bailiff; next to this is the treasure, in a



the summary descriptions: “of completely gilded cups, forty-three large, medium, and small cups, all with lids; among which, the shaft is missing on a medium cup lid and on one small cup lid, a shark tooth”.<sup>28</sup> In contrast to later inventories of the Berlin *Kunstammer*, objects were not given consecutive numbers. It is noteworthy that one aspect in particular is emphasized: the material value of the objects. A listing of several objects is followed by a recording of their weights. It was also noted explicitly if objects were not weighed.

Also of importance in the inventory of 1605 are marginal notes that were made at a later point in time and in a different hand. On 1 April 1609, for example, Elector Johann Sigismund removed several objects for his wife Anna, née duchess of Prussia, according to the inventory in the presence of “*cammermeister* Johan Friz”<sup>29</sup> and other persons.<sup>30</sup> Johann Fritz was thus responsible not only for the church treasure and relic treasure, but also for the *Kunstammer*.

In addition to information about the condition of objects insofar as they were damaged or no longer complete, there were also sporadic remarks about gifts, such as a note written in another hand about a lidded cup: “this small cup, Electoral . . . Lord gave to his dearly beloved wife according to the undersigned note, no [text unreadable] . . . 1.”<sup>31</sup> It is not clear from this remark whether the note mentioned in the inventory served as a substitute for the missing object on the shelf or whether it had been stored at another location. In any case, signed documents regarding several withdrawals (between 1605 and 1607) have survived and evidently had a certifying function.<sup>32</sup>

This way of documenting the holdings suggests that the inventories served primarily as an overview of material property and its value and that the retrievability of objects was of secondary importance. In both inventories, information regarding the location of objects is oriented around the architecture and furnishings, but is described relationally (“in the other shelf next to it”<sup>33</sup>), so that locating an object using the inventory functioned only if the spatial constellation described had not been altered, and selective access was not always possible since the exact location was not unambiguously identified and could be determined only in sequence. The objects and their placement as listed in the two inventories represented snapshots of a particular moment in time, 1603 or 1605, which was otherwise superimposed only by the points in time of later withdrawals.

These documentation practices resemble those of the inventories for the *Kunstammers* in Dresden (1587), Ambras Palace (1596), and Munich (1598), each of which were made on the occasion of the death of a regent. All of these earlier inventories recorded the holdings according to location. The Dresden inventory of 1587 proceeded spatially, listing the objects by room. Within this list, object groups served as headings, which were then followed by individual listings.<sup>34</sup> The Ambras *Kunstammer* inventory was oriented especially around the sequence of the display cabinets used to present the collection and recorded their contents by compartment. Each object was treated individually, and a description along with information about material and value as well as weight and provenance was included if the previous owner had been renowned. The objects were not given consecutive numbers.<sup>35</sup> In the Munich *Kunstammer* inventory of 1598, there was a similar procedure organized around depository and presentation furniture.<sup>36</sup>

18 It is possible that a change of personnel took place, as suggested by the various signatures of the participating court officials at the bottom of the two inventories certifying the legality of the two documents.

19 Inventar 1605, fols. 13r and 15r.

20 Hainhofer 1834, p. 125.

21 *Verzeichnis der nach Küstrin verbrachten Gegenstände [...]*, quoted in Tacke 1989, pp. 219 and 220; see also p. 162.

22 Eingangsbuch 1688/1692b, fol. 10v.

23 GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 9 Allgemeine Verwaltung, Nr. D2, Fasz. 1, fols. 36r–43r, here 36r. The register of the textile cabinet was compiled in 1606.

24 See *ibid.*, fol. 46r–v: *Verzeichnis der Himmel und Tischdebichte, so auß der Kunstammer, in die Ambs Cammer, und vorders in die Silber Cammer gegeben worden.*

25 See also Ledebur 1831, p. 7; Reichl 1930, pp. 227–8. The few surviving inventories of the different cabinets of the Brandenburg court are listed in Fischbacher 2018.

26 See Ledebur 1831, p. 10.

27 Ketelsen 1990, pp. 108–10.

28 Inventar 1605, fol. 15v.

29 *Ibid.*, fol. 31v.

30 On this, see Ledebur 1831, p. 7.

31 Inventar 1605, fol. 16r.

32 See GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 9 Allgemeine Verwaltung, Nr. D2, Fasz. 1, fols. 43v–50r.

33 Inventar 1605, fol. 24r.

34 See Syndram/Minning 2010.

35 See Boeheim 1888.

36 See Fickler 1598.

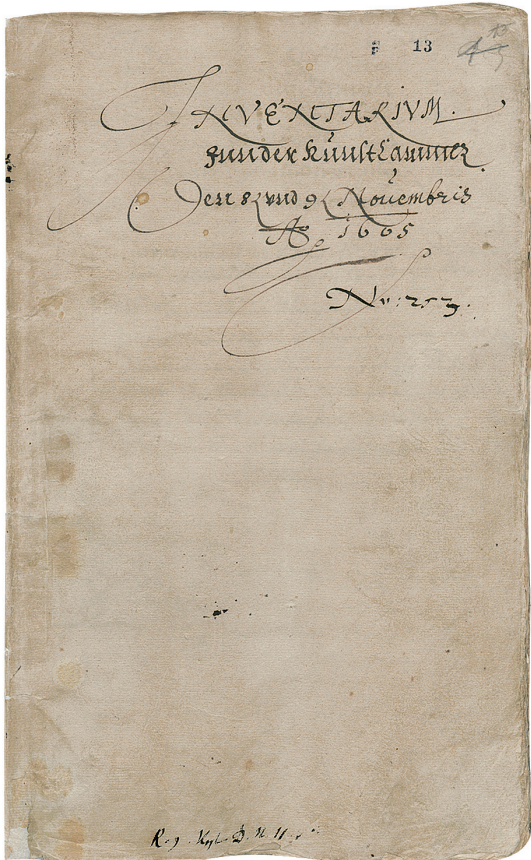
The Berlin inventory of 1605 does correspond with the inventory of 1603 in terms of objects, albeit in a slightly different order. In the 1603 inventory, the room is described with the same pieces of furniture as in 1605, but uses slightly different formulations, and the circuit taken through the room is somewhat different as well. The 1603 inventory begins with the shelf “next to the door on the left”<sup>37</sup>; in the 1605 inventory, this shelf is identified with its objects only in the middle of the description.<sup>38</sup> The order of the individual objects on the shelves had partially changed in these two years, although the summary descriptions of object groups in 1603 is essentially repeated again in 1605, that is, the holdings of Katharina’s collection were adopted and continued in the

*Electoral Kunstkammer*. For in-depth analyses of the collection at this time, the 1605 inventory is used – always in comparison to 1603 – because it reflected the last known condition of the Kunstkammer prior to the losses of the Thirty Years’ War.

### Reconstruction of the Kunstkammer of 1605

The inventory of 1605 contains around 2,000 objects on approximately sixty folio pages (fig. 4). In the Kunstkammer in the vault, these objects were presented in a room on eight large shelves, two box-shaped cabinets with drawers, and a long table – in other words, in the open for the most part. Numerous objects were kept in small boxes or cases. The objects on the shelves were probably described from bottom to top without explicitly identifying individual compartments. This is suggested by the fact that the contents of the drawers of the two display cabinets were clearly described from bottom to top.<sup>39</sup> The inventory follows a circuit that paces off all of the furniture. It begins on the left side of the room, where a large shelf is mentioned that contained silver-gilt tableware and drinking vessels.<sup>40</sup> The second shelf next to the first also contained silver and silver-gilt vessels such as cups and chalices, pitchers, salt shakers, egg cups, and candleholders; figurative works by goldsmiths (including automatons); and composite objects such as gilt stag figures with coral antlers – which could also be found in the Dresden Kunstkammer (fig. 5) – and cups made from coconuts, nautilus shells, and ostrich eggs as well as vessels of precious stone.<sup>41</sup> These two shelves were followed by a window

alcove in which there were another two shelves. “On a shelf to the left of the window” were numerous gilt animal figures, including pigs, dogs, hares, bears, deer, a unicorn and also figures from the “upside-down world” that united play and moral message and had been popularized in the sixteenth century by intellectual and artistic elites.<sup>42</sup> Figures in upside-down realities with exchanged roles such as with a monkey with a sabre or a fox with wheelbarrow and geese<sup>43</sup> have also been preserved in the Ambras Kunstkammer and the Dresden Kunstkammer.<sup>44</sup> In these two window shelves, there were not only animal figures, but also small bowls made from various materials such as mother of pearl and crystal as well as jewellery, set stones, an ornate hunting horn, and talismans such as moose and lynx claws, as well as portraits and wax-embossed effigies of be-friended princely and royal houses [■Wax].<sup>45</sup> In the shelf to the right of the window, there were a number of small boxes with “common” (ordinary) objects, but also toadstones (petrified sea urchins) as well as other small objects, numerous additional gilt animal figures, ornate hunting weapons, jewellery, mirrors, writing implements, Madonna figures from amber, solar



4 | Title page of the inventory of the Berlin Kunstkammer from 1605.

37 Inventar 1603, fol. 2r.

38 Inventar 1605, fol. 30r.

39 Ibid., fols. 34r–35v.

40 Ibid., fol. 15r.

41 Ibid., fols. 15v–19r.

42 See Pfrunder 1990.

43 See Inventar 1605, fol. 19r.

44 See, for example, the bear as hunter in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. no. Kunstkammer, 1094 or the automaton clock of figures in the Mathematisch-Physikalischen Salon, Dresden, inv. no. D V 10.

compasses and, for the first time, pure naturalia, namely two red coral branches.<sup>46</sup> The collection continued in the fifth adjoining shelf, on which there were gilt animal figures with motifs based primarily on the fauna of the Old World long familiar to Europeans (Europe, Africa, Asia). These were accompanied by numerous crystal and silver-gilt spoons, a gilt granulation box, and two “mother-of-pearl snails” explicitly described as unmounted, which were in all likelihood nautilus shells [■Nautilus].<sup>47</sup> The adjoining shelf, which in the 1603 inventory was located to the right of the door, contained numerous crystal and glass vessels, some of which were mounted.<sup>48</sup> On this shelf, there were also many boxes containing valuables, additional cups made of nautilus and other snail shells, artworks from ore, vessels of alabaster and other stones, coconut cups, tableware, and other valuable functional objects such as a “round gilt ball that is used in the winter to warm one’s hands” – a kind of pocket hand-warmer that was a luxury item in Europe during the early modern era (fig. 6). Additional objects from everyday court life were also listed, such as silver gardening tools – which were also present in large numbers along with other implements in the Dresden *Kunst-kammer* founded under Elector Augustus in 1560 and were actually used<sup>49</sup> – as well as ornate knives, an apothecary box, toilet accessories, ostrich eggs, and rosaries.<sup>50</sup> After the third large shelf on the right, there was a “shelf on the left” (according to the 1603 inventory, left of the door).<sup>51</sup> Here there were lathed ivory objects, alabaster works, and also marshal’s batons. Finally, there was another shelf whose contents included lathed amber objects.<sup>52</sup> After these eight variously sized pieces of storage

furniture, the inventory describes a long table, on which there were paintings, wax embossings, numerous boxes, ornate boardgames, a large crystal ship in a case, automatons, another apothecary box, cups, and other ornate vessels.<sup>53</sup> It is unclear where this table was located in the room. It might have been in the middle of the room or on a wall, as was the case in Joseph Arnold’s depiction of the *Kunst-kammer* of the merchant family Dimpfel in Regensburg around 1688 (fig. 7).

The table is followed in the inventory by a “large inlaid chest with small drawers, by the window”. This chest contained mussel shells and “fragrant grains”, small stones and “Turkish” textiles.<sup>54</sup> Next to this, there was another small cabinet or chest with drawers containing valuable and artfully woven textiles.<sup>55</sup> It is impossible to definitively reconstruct where these two chests were located, except that they were near a window.

After the listing of *Kunst-kammer* holdings in the vault, the inventory of 1605 concludes with a brief section set off from the rest of the text: “[A]nd in this *Kunst-kammer*, up on the cornices and beneath the banks, all kinds of painted iron and bronze: jugs, bowls, also animals, and old empty boxes”.<sup>56</sup> It would be tempting to speculate that these were decorative depictions of the collection itself, as is the case with the Duke of Montefeltro’s studiolo in



5 | Andreas Rosa, drinking vessel in the form of a leaping stag, 1603–9, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Green Vault.



6 | Handwarmer, northern Germany, second half of the fifteenth century, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum of Decorative Arts.

45 Inventar 1605, fols. 19r–21r.  
 46 *Ibid.*, fols. 21v–24r.  
 47 *Ibid.*, fols. 24r–25v.  
 48 Inventar 1603, fol. 8v.  
 49 See Menzhausen 2017; Syndram/Minning 2010, pictorial appendix, unpag.  
 50 Inventar 1605, fols. 24v–30r.  
 51 *Ibid.*, fol. 30r; see Inventar 1603, fol. 2r.  
 52 Inventar 1605, fol. 30v.  
 53 *Ibid.*, fols. 30r–33v.  
 54 *Ibid.*, fol. 34r–v.  
 55 *Ibid.*, fols. 34v–35v. In the 1603 inventory, the furniture is described as “two inlaid chests with small drawers” (Inventar 1603, fol. 10v).  
 56 Inventar 1605, fol. 35v.





7 | Joseph Arnold, *The Kunstkammer of the Dimpfels, a Family of Ironmongers and Traders from Regensburg*, ca. 1668.

Urbino, which was completed in 1476.<sup>57</sup> This private study room measuring only about twelve square metres is known for its wooden panelling, which has survived to the present day. The panels have trompe-l'œil inlays that refer to the collection objects located behind the panelling of the built-in cabinets (fig. 8).<sup>58</sup> This connection between objects and their spatial containers can also be found later in the Berlin Kunstkammer as well as in the Cabinet of Artefacts and Natural Curiosities of the Francke Foundations in Halle, although here it was not walls or wall panelling, but rather the display cabinets themselves that still exist today and were painted with the objects that they contained [● 1685/1688, fig. 4]. However, it is also conceivable that the items mentioned here in the inventory were actual objects. In any case, they had a decorative function since, whether as paintings or three-dimensional figures, they either formed or ornamented the pedestal zone and the mouldings.

Around 1600, the Berlin Kunstkammer was characterized by a predominant number of artificialia. Decorative arts, especially works by goldsmiths in the form of tableware, vessels, and figures, constituted the bulk of the holdings, although there were also many ornamental objects and works of precious materials. Composite objects with an interplay of art and nature [■ Nautilus], such as the gilt stag with coral antlers or the numerous mounted cups, could also be found in several locations. There were relatively few pure naturalia, and these were primarily valuable items that could be used as the raw material for composite objects. Taxidermy animals were not mentioned in the inventories of 1603 and 1605, with the exception of the talismans. The collection was also interspersed with ornate hunting utensils, tools, portraits, and automatons. Regarding the classification of objects, the beginnings of a superimposed order according to material, object group, and origin (*Turcica*) can be detected. In general, however, the wide range of collection objects appears to have been distributed throughout the repositories, thereby creating ever new relationships to other neighbouring objects. It is precisely this ordering and presentation of objects and the resulting principles of analogy that are constitutive elements of cabinets of art and curiosities, something that was not evident in Italian studioli and treasure chambers.<sup>59</sup>

The Kunstkammer was not only a collection and display room, it was at the same time also a depository. Many of its objects were in use at the time, as demonstrated by the protocolled withdrawal and return of objects, for example for festivities and hunting parties.<sup>60</sup> The textile cabinet was even more clearly a storage site, as it contained items that were still more closely tied to functionality, ranging from valuable bed sheets, pillow cases, and curtains to furs and horse blankets. Marginal notes about absent objects such as a green silk bed valance – which, according to a slip of paper attached to the inventory, was missing – indicate the functional character of these amenities, which was due in large part to the epoch of the travelling principality.<sup>61</sup> Into the mid-seventeenth century, there was no permanent residence in Brandenburg; the prince always travelled to the location where his presence was most necessary.<sup>62</sup> For this reason, the ornate furnishings of the palace were only required on certain occasions. The palace on the Spree first became the centre of rule in 1640 with Elector Friedrich Wilhelm's accession to power. However, the Berlin complex was so damaged during the Thirty Years' War that buildings threatened to collapse, and the elector

57 Höfler 2004, pp. 162–3.

58 On the images, see Cheles 1986.

59 See Evans/Marr 2006.

60 GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 9 Allgemeine Verwaltung, Nr. D2, Fasz. 1, fol. 43v (register of removed objects from 25 July 1606).

61 Inventar 1605, fol. 37r.

62 Neugebauer 1999, p. 26.

had several of them renovated and rebuilt.<sup>63</sup> Re-establishing the electoral collections was also part of this recovery program. One measure that Friedrich Wilhelm undertook was to transfer surviving objects from the relic treasure – which had been brought to Küstrin for reasons of security, including a “small chest covered with thin silver-gilt metal, with crystal ornamentation on top” – to his *Kunstammer*.<sup>64</sup> Evidently most of the objects from the old *Kunstammer*, which had initially remained in the palace during the war, had been lost.<sup>65</sup>



8 | Wall panelling in the studiolo of the Palazzo Ducale von Urbino, 1472–76.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the *Kunstammer* in the vault already possessed a fundamentally encyclopaedic character in terms of breadth, as it unified a comprehensive spectrum of objects from the three realms of nature (mineral, plant, and animal) and from multiple domains of human labour. Naturalia were clearly a minority and appeared almost exclusively in processed form. They tended to be purchased and used in different contexts: just as the artefacts of the *Kunstammer* and the textiles were objects used to furnish the Brandenburg travelling court, the naturalia of the *Kunstammer* were materials used by apothecaries and alchemists [■ Bezoars]. This relation to alchemy continued at the court during the seventeenth century. Christian Albrecht Kunckel, the administrator of the *Kunstammer* in 1685, was court alchemist, as had been his father Johannes Kunckel, who stood in close contact with other apothecaries and representatives of experimental alchemy. This close nexus to the work space of the court apothecary is reflected in a surviving *Kunstammer* inventory from the late seventeenth century, in which the objects were assigned not only consecutive numbers, but also planetary signs. According to the title of this inventory as well as a handwritten note, these signs referred to an older inventory that has not survived and in which the objects were ordered according to the cosmic symbols of alchemy.<sup>66</sup> Thus it was presumably no coincidence that at the end of the seventeenth century, the branches of the electoral collection were ultimately centralized at this site and the Library, the Antiquities and Medals Cabinet, and the Art and Rarities Collection were relocated together in the court apothecary wing of the palace, thus constituting a spatial system of knowledge. During his more than forty years of rule, Elector Friedrich Wilhelm succeeded in establishing a distinguished and truly encyclopaedic collection at the Berlin court [● 1685/1688].

Translated by Tom Lampert

63 For a detailed architectural history of the palace in the second half of the seventeenth century, see Usenbinz 2021, here pp. 272–1; for the functional change of the palace in Berlin–Cölln in the early modern era, see Beyer 2014, pp. 41–87.

64 *Verzeichnis der nach Küstrin verbrachten Gegenstände [...]*, entry from 23 February 1626: “This small chest with the crystal has been requested by His Highness [S. H. Dht. 28.] . . . in [1]644. As is verified by the signed certificate lying with the *Kunstammer* items” (quoted in Tacke 1989, p. 219).

65 Ledebur 1831, pp. 9–10.

66 See Inventar 1688a; see also Segelken 2010b, pp. 114–15.