

## von Schlosser, Julius. *Art and Curiosity Cabinets of the Late Renaissance: A Contribution to the History of Collecting*

Edited by Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann; translated by Jonathan Blower.  
 Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2021. Pp. 232.

Andrea M. Gáldy

Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, Germany

Email: [andrea.galdy@lmu.de](mailto:andrea.galdy@lmu.de)

Collecting historians and museologists working on the history of the *kunst-* and *wunderkammer* will sooner or later have to consult Julius von Schlosser's pioneering work of 1908. Although research has much progressed since then, von Schlosser's contribution to the history of collecting remains a fundamental text. It presents an approach to the *kunstkammer* (and related spaces of display) often revised and occasionally lost until museum history was rediscovered as a worthy subject of investigation in the 1970s (e.g., Wolfgang Liebenwein's *Studiolo* of 1977).

As a museum practitioner and scholar, von Schlosser was able to approach his topic from several directions, while his own (family) history also prompted an international perspective toward his chosen topic. Rather than concentrating on Italy and Italian *scrittoi* and *studioli*—mainly those of the Medici, Gonzaga, and d'Este—he investigated them in tandem with examples of the *kunstkammer* in Burgundy, Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Ambras, and Gottorp. After decades of neatly separating the *studiolo* and the *kunstkammer* on the basis of their respective names and terminology, modern historians have finally returned to this way of thinking. Although von Schlosser discussed Italian and German cabinets as distinct from each other, he nonetheless included the collections of Cospi and Adrovandi and the “link between natural history and antiquarian research” in his inquiry (175–76).

For von Schlosser, collecting had much to do with ownership, treasures, and treasuries; accumulation was the root of a collection, and therefore, he included ancient temple treasuries, medieval churches, or grave goods from all periods in his discussion in a way that we, today, no longer think entirely appropriate. Our focus is on context, intentionality, the taste of the collector, and a programmatic display of the collecting items. As a result, over the past forty years, several theories have been developed; for example, the four-phase theory, which informs our discussions of collections and their histories. In the early twentieth century, von Schlosser had to find his own way, and he successfully created modes of research in the *kunstkammer* to which—despite subsequent changes and innovations—we sometimes must return (i.e., in relation to multinationality and multicategorization). After all, the *kunstkammer* could also be a *wunderkammer* (curiosity cabinet) with *naturalia* and *scientifica* included in the display; see, for example, Samuel Quiccheberg's many asides about the von Zimmern Wunderkammer in his *Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimi* (1565). Owners of Italian *studioli* were as likely to collect plants, weapons, and scientific instruments as their peers up north.

Apart from drawing our attention to the *Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance* in a timely reminder of previous research and its concerns and qualities, the present publication offers two main advantages. One of them is obviously the smooth English translation, providing easy access to an important text originally written in the Viennese German of the turn of the twentieth century. Both translator and editor evidently gave a lot of thought to the project—the text edition, number and type of illustrations, and issues of translating special terms are all undertaken with an intrepidity and diligence that must be applauded (viii–xi).

The present volume, however, does far more than that. Given that the original text expresses ideas and research that has become a little dated or even controversial, the translator and editor refrained from creating a potentially confusing apparatus that would have changed both text and

footnotes (viii). Rather, they decided to add an introduction with recent bibliographical material, a glossary, and additional references helpful to the readers but clearly separate from von Schlosser's work.

Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann's introduction (1–50) sets the scene for a better understanding of both text and author of *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance*. Julius von Schlosser was and is not as well-known as he should be. Kaufmann calls him an “outsider,” someone “whose work is more often cited than read” (3). By providing much of the political and cultural context in which von Schlosser composed his work during the final years of the Donaumonarchie, the introduction explains how his curatorial activities as a museum practitioner at the Kunsthistorische Museum, Vienna, had inspired and influenced him. Trained first in the classics and philosophy and later in archaeology and the then new discipline of art history, the author brought essential knowledge and experience to his research on the *kunst-kammer*. As the son of parents originating from Hesse and Italy, and having spent part of his studies in Italy, he was in an advantageous position to appreciate the wider geographical field and ramifications of the history of collecting.

The introduction not only picks up important issues of terminology of the *kunst-* and *wunder-kammer* and the importance of the Ambras collection for von Schlosser's work (22–24) but also gives the reader useful insights into its structure and organization. Kaufmann calls it a triptych, in which the central part on renaissance collections is flanked by both a “prehistory” (Antiquity and Middle Ages) and “posthistory” (eighteenth century) of collecting (27). In von Schlosser's mind “art” and a definition of art within the context of collecting were a major goal, which he tried to achieve on the basis of the discussion of collections ranging from those of the dukes of Berry and the dukes of Burgundy all the way to the *kunst-kammer* of Ferdinand II at Ambras.

Julius von Schlosser's views on the history, developments, contents, and functions of the *kunst-* and *wunderkammer* have not remained uncontested. Since the 1970s, over eight hundred publications have investigated topics and objects linked to collecting cabinets (31). These may not have appeared without von Schlosser's fundamental work. If we know today about many more *kunst-kammern*—their diversity in relation to set-up and use or about diverse categories of owners—the necessary research will in many cases have been inspired by *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance*. As we still do not know nearly enough, it is to be hoped that this new English-language edition will prompt further engagement with this very important topic within the history of collecting.

doi:10.1017/S0067237823000139

## **Pásztorová, Barbora. *Metternich, the German Question and the Pursuit of Peace, 1840–1848***

**Berlin: DeGruyter, 2022. Pp. 184.**

Robert D. Billinger, Jr.

Wingate University (Emeritus), Wingate, North Carolina, USA

Email: [Robert.billinger@gmail.com](mailto:Robert.billinger@gmail.com)

It is a pleasure to welcome a young Czech colleague to the company of Metternich revisionists. That company has been growing in the scholarly literature, if not in the popular mind, since the 1960s. Barbora Pásztorová, like her mentor, Miroslav Šedivý, joins Enno Kraehe, Robert Billinger, Wolfram