

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

Ed. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann. Trans. Jonathan Blower. Texts & Documents. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2021. xi + 230 pp. \$65.

Published in the Getty Research Institute's Texts & Documents series, this volume introduces to English readers a book by the Austrian art historian Julius von Schlosser (1866–1938). *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sammelwesens* is rightly considered a milestone in art history and marks the beginning of scholarly interest in European art and curiosity cabinets (German: *Kunst- und Wunderkammern*), today a fruitful field of art historical research. However, at the time of publication, in 1908, this genealogy of the modern museum based on the interpretation of available sources was very much situated at the periphery of academic art history. Its unusual interdisciplinary focus has remained relevant until today and has helped to shape the current interest in collection history.

An eminently erudite author, Schlosser worked at the imperial collections in Vienna (today's Kunsthistorisches Museum) from 1889. He combined his curatorial responsibilities with an interest in archival sources and studied the abundant historical inventories of the imperial collections meticulously. His research eventually brought about the present book, which was the first major contribution to offer a broad cultural-historical perspective on what then was—somewhat disparagingly—considered decorative arts (*Kunstgewerbe*) as well as on the origins of collecting and of the modern museum.

Encyclopedic in its aim to advance a historical survey of the nature and essence of collections at the important princely Germanic courts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this eloquent study also addressed what Schlosser considered their precursors in antiquity and during the Middle Ages (part 1) and concluded with considerations about the Musée Napoleon and the National Museums of the nineteenth century (part 3).

Part 2, the core of the study, focuses on the art and curiosity cabinets from the late fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Beginning with Jean de Berry, Schlosser's narrative moves quickly via Burgundy on to the collection of Margaret of Austria in the Netherlands. Mentioning in passing famed bourgeois collections of the Praun and Imhof families in Nuremberg, Schlosser then arrives at the very center of his interest: the princely *Wunderkammern* in the German-speaking world. Not surprisingly, Schlosser concentrates on the Habsburg princes, whose collections still form the core of the “decorative arts” in the *Kunstammer* of the Kunsthistorisches Museum.

Schlosser was concerned with the person and the collection of Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol, the first prince to have a building erected for the sole purpose of housing his collection at his castle Ambras near Innsbruck (today a branch of Vienna's *Kunstammer*). Nearly half of the second part is dedicated to discussing the archduke's

collection. Schlosser's knowledge of the artifacts informs his discussion of the masterful objects assembled there, while his curiosity is directed toward questions of classification. In comparison, the famous *Wunderkammer* of Emperor Rudolf II in Prague and those of the princes of Saxony and Bavaria, in Dresden and Munich, receive less attention, even though Schlosser underlines the cultural significance of Samuel Quiccheberg's *Theatrum Sapientium*, which proposed a system of categories for the collections of the Munich *Kunstkammer* and ultimately aimed at a historical and universal understanding of the world.

Much information on the collecting history and presentation of objects in art and curiosity cabinets has been unearthed by subsequent historians, but Schlosser's study, which is far from comprehensive by today's standards, remains a standard reference. That the book is now made available in an excellent English translation by Jonathan Blower ensures that it will reach new and broader audiences. For specialists as for beginners it is still worthwhile engaging with Schlosser's arguments and ideas even though they reflect the *Zeitgeist* in Vienna around 1900.

An introductory essay by Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, who assumed the role of editor of this volume, offers a concise intellectual biography of Julius von Schlosser, discusses his upbringing and education, and sketches the intellectual and historical context of Imperial Vienna, the context in which the author composed this book. Entitled "A Landmark Reconsidered," this masterful contribution provides the historical framework for both the book and its author and, perhaps more importantly, demonstrates to English-speaking readers the significance and enduring relevance of Julius von Schlosser as a scholar and as a teacher at the Vienna School of Art History.

Following the editorial principles of the Texts & Document series, the edition of 1908 has been treated as a historic source. Consequently, the editor and translator resisted the temptation to update all references to present the current status of knowledge. In addition to a detailed index, there is a useful glossary in which some of the less common and untranslatable terms frequently used by Schlosser are explained.

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Artemisia. Letizia Treves, ed.

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Artemisia is the catalogue of the homonymous exhibition held at the National Gallery of London in 2020. It is divided in two parts, strictly and well connected: the first one (the topic of this review) is a detailed analysis of Artemisia as a painter and woman; the second one contains pictures of those of Artemisia's works that were exhibited at the National Gallery.