

man, who was on his way home from Philip II's court in Madrid, where he had been sent by his parents to spend his formative years. He was Prince Rudolf of Habsburg (1552-1612), soon to become Holy Roman Emperor.

Rudolf had been sent to his uncle's court at the age of eleven, together with his brother, Ernst, one year his junior. His mother, Maria of Spain (the daughter of Charles V), who was also his aunt once removed, had insisted on his going there, in order to take the boy away from the corrupting influence of the Protestant faction at the Viennese court. She was an ardent Catholic, keen on separating the precocious Rudolf from his father, Emperor Maximilian, whose sympathies for the Protestant cause made him unreliable in her eyes, suspicions reinforced by his interest in science and patronage of scholars. Maximilian supported the printing of many books and gave stipends to astronomers and others engaged in the natural sciences, while his diplomats were under instruction to bring him specimens of unknown plants from their postings in foreign countries. It was through Maximilian's ambassador in Turkey, Ghislain de Busbecq, that the first tulips were brought to Europe in 1562, as well as other plants, which were planted in the emperor's gardens in Vienna and Prague. Busbecq, himself a keen amateur scholar and antiquarian, was to become Rudolf's teacher.

These were the influences from which Maria had sought to shield her son. There was no love lost between her and her husband, and the tension between them was mirrored by the constant feuding of papist and Protestant sympathizers at the Vienna court. To have her sons travel to her own country, to Spain, and into her brother's sphere, was a personal triumph for Maria.

Though a staunch Catholic, Philip II was nothing like the religious fanatic of popular myth but rather a worldly king and a skilful politician who did much to open Spain up to new artistic and intellectual movements. The legacy of madness in his family, presumably a result of centuries of inbreeding also evident in the famously protruding Habsburg chin, was to haunt him as well as his nephew Rudolf. Philip's grandmother, Joanna the Mad, had died insane and he himself was given to bouts of melancholy during which he would not receive even his closest advisers.² This curse of insanity within the family produced

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one of the great tragedies of Philip's life, an episode that was seized by Romantic souls like Schiller and Verdi, who reshaped it in their own image.

Don Carlos, the king's only surviving son, was being groomed for government and was due to be sent to cut his teeth in Flanders. A usually gentle and intelligent young man, he had always been beset by episodes of rage, and even by the standards of the time his cruelty to animals caused some concern at court. Misshapen from birth, a hunchback with legs of unequal length and an asymmetrical face, he had difficulties speaking properly and had what was perceived as an unhealthy attachment to the queen, his stepmother, for whom he bought expensive jewels and other presents more suited to a mistress than a mother. When the State Council decided not to send him to Flanders after he had ridden a horse to death, Don Carlos became enraged. He threatened, or, according to some accounts actually tried, to kill the Duke of Alba, the Governor of Flanders, and later threatened to murder his father. He wrote letters to various grandees asking for their support against the king and rapidly became a political liability.

On midnight of 18 January 1567, after consulting with his council, Philip donned his harness and helmet and went to his son's rooms accompanied by a handful of reliable noblemen. They entered silently and seized all weapons and heavy objects in the room. The prince woke up and asked into the darkness, 'Who is it?' to which he received the reply, 'The Council of State.' 'Has Your Majesty come to kill me?' the prince inquired, now fully awake, but was reassured that he was safe. The windows of his room were nailed shut and Philip left his stunned son telling him that he would treat him as a father ought but as a king should. Don Carlos remained a prisoner in his own room, which drove him to distraction. He tried to commit suicide by starving himself to death, swallowing a ring in the belief that diamonds are poisonous, and by putting ice into his bed. Eventually he succeeded. He died on 24 July 1568. The king himself was reported to be terribly shaken by the episode and after Carlos's death he was said to have wept for three days and nights. It is possible that he wept not so much for his son, to whom he had not been as close as to some of his daughters, but for the future of his realm.

Close personal relations generally played an important part in

Philip's life. He had had several mistresses and it was on his initiative that women were allowed to act on stage in Madrid. After two political marriages, to María of Portugal and Mary Tudor, both of whom did not live long, he found companionship in his union with Elizabeth of Valois, and true and deep affection in his marriage to his niece, Anna of Austria. In later life, Philip was a devoted husband known to behave in distinctly unregal fashion. When Elizabeth was in labour in 1566, the king insisted on being present. 'During the night of birth-pains and the birth itself, he never left off grasping one of her hands, comforting her and encouraging her the best that he knew or could,'³ the French ambassador reported with obvious surprise.

It is important to emphasize this aspect of Philip's character in order to understand the environment in which the young Rudolf found himself. The king was very fond of his nephews and regarded the young princes as possible successors to his throne, as the suitability of his own son, Don Carlos, was already doubtful. Rudolf especially delighted the king, as the boy took a deep interest in his abiding passion: the building of a great collection and of several palaces. These palaces were given the king's attention in every detail. In the accounts and plans for their building and upkeep there are frequent notes in the margins by the king's own inelegant hand, making sure that the plants are watered properly, the gardeners trustworthy ('men who will not steal the birds' nests or the eggs'), and the vegetation chosen with the greatest care and planted at exactly the right time.

The palace that was to express his vision most perfectly was the monastery of San Lorenzo near the village of Escorial, part royal residence and part ecclesiastical complex, and designed to embody the unity and hierarchy of government, learning and faith. It was a *theatro totale*, part monastery and royal residence, part hospital and university, a microcosm of the Christian world. This was to be the setting for a great library, endowed with a royal donation to the monastery of some 4,000 books from the king's own collection, for the relic collection and, in the residence itself, for Philip's paintings.

The king's relics were the most astounding accumulation of such items in Christendom. After the death of his beloved wife, Anna, in 1580, Philip had increasingly sought comfort in religion. He had seen the death of many people close to him, among them his sister, with

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whom he had a lifelong warm relationship, four wives and three children (though the greatest blow, the death of Catalina, his favourite daughter – a loss more shattering to him than either the death of Elizabeth of Valois or the sinking of the Armada – was still to come). Even before 1580, relics had fascinated him. He had been impressed by the reliquaries he had seen in Cologne and had sent out agents to bring him every relic they could find. At the end of his life the collection amounted to some 7,000 items, including ten whole bodies, 144 heads, 306 arms and legs, thousands of bones, body parts and secondary relics, as well as the usual fragments of the True Cross, the Crown of Thorns, etc., most of which were encased in rich golden settings.

In 1598, when he lay on his deathbed, Philip turned to his relics for relief from his agony. Racked by gout and fever, his terrible pain made it impossible to move him from his bed, even to change his sheets, for five weeks, and the once-magnificent monarch lay dying in his own excrement. His bedroom was filled with holy images and crucifixes and he sent for the arm of St Vincent and a knee of St Sebastian to help soothe his inflamed joints. They did not help him, and he died miserably. Four hundred years later another Spanish ruler, General Franco, was to end his life clutching the arm of St Theresa of Avila, which he had taken with him everywhere he went.

While turning to the heavens when close to death, Philip II was very susceptible to earthly beauty. His galleries boasted masterworks by Italians such as Titian and Frederigo Zuccaro, and Flemish masters such as Rogier van der Weyden and Jan Gossaert, hung side by side with German canvases, and those by his favourite painter, Hieronymous Bosch, whose bizarre visions appealed to Philip's view of the afterlife and eternal damnation. An odd and striking absence from the galleries of the Escorial was the work of the Spanish painter El Greco, whose paintings the king had once admired, at least up until 1582, when he rejected one of them and thereafter ignored the artist altogether.

Back in Vienna, after years of intrigue and feuding at court, Maximilian had finally won the battle, and Rudolf and his brother, Ernst, could return from their Spanish exile. On their way from Genoa to the capital, the young princes and their entourage most probably visited the palace of their uncle the Archduke Ferdinand in Innsbruck. Rudolf

would have made a point of staying here, for the Archduke of Styria possessed a famous collection of his own, one of the best north of the Alps. He would have found his uncle inspiring but strangely unfamiliar: unlike his brother the emperor, Archduke Ferdinand II had married beneath himself and was content with his first and only wife, happy to be in Innsbruck and to play no part in high politics. The collection was his great passion, especially his hall of armour, in which he assembled



suits of armour worn by famous men, together with their portraits; a martial reliquary, which he called his 'ehrliche gesellschaft', or 'honest company'. In addition to this, he also had an extensive cabinet of curiosities, comprising, as was the custom of the time, *naturalia* and *artificialia*. The collection was later to move to Ambras Castle, where parts of it can still be seen today.

At court in Vienna, Rudolf soon found himself dealing with intractable religious and national conflicts when he was effectively made envoy between his father and the nobles of the troublesome region of Bohemia. As a diplomatic compromise between them and their emperor, Rudolf was elected King

of Bohemia, and crowned with the crown of St Wenceslas on 22 September 1575 in St Vitus's Cathedral in Prague. His residence remained in Vienna.

The new king was twenty-four years old, and his Spanish education had given him little to prepare him for a job that required not so much a monarch as an accomplished diplomat, skilled above all in the art of negotiation. He had some considerable accomplishments, he spoke and wrote German, Spanish, French, Latin, Italian and even a little Czech. His knowledge of courtly life, military strategy and art were excellent, but his distant, Spanish manner did little to endear him to

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his new subjects. Trying to steer a course between Protestants and Catholics, he ended up pleasing neither. For the former he remained a Spaniard and a Papist; the latter, his mother among them, regarded his conciliatory stance with great suspicion.

It was not until he had fallen seriously ill and had almost been given up for dead that he decided to go his own way. Rudolf recovered and in 1583 moved his court to Prague and threw himself into solving his subjects' practical concerns, such as the reorganization of the faltering mining industry and the stabilization of prices. In the more fundamental political questions, though, his style of rulership embodied the age-old Habsburg virtues of procrastination and avoiding conflict by delaying decisions whenever possible.

Rudolf was crowned emperor in 1575. As the affairs of state kept grinding on, with factional fights between Bohemian and Austrian nobles, Protestants and Catholics, he increasingly involved himself in extra-political activities. He especially devoted himself to adding to the already considerable collection of the Habsburg family, which his father had augmented greatly. As emperor, Rudolf had the means to indulge himself more freely than before. He invited artists and scientists to his court. The castle on the Hradčany Hill and the streets hugging the slopes around it were transformed into a colony of gold- and silversmiths, stone-cutters, watch- and instrument-makers, painters and engravers, astronomers and alchemists. Johannes Kepler worked there alongside the ageing painter Giuseppe Archimboldo, and Giordano Bruno found sanctuary here before going back to Italy (where he was burned at the stake). All of artistic and intellectual Europe was represented in these narrow lanes.

Inside the castle something altogether extraordinary was growing: a collection of such splendour, quality and sheer size that it became the envy of crowned heads throughout the continent. The artists working for the king were granted special dispensation and found almost ideal working conditions, provided they were content to see their patron's cavernous halls gobble everything they could produce as well as the works of art and other objects Rudolf's agents sent back to Prague from all over the world. In artistic terms, the collection was a black hole, sucking in everything that was precious and rare, never to release it.

A collection of mere natural curiosities seemed inadequate to Rudolf and those who thought like him. The 'chamber of artifice', the *Kunstkammer*, too, with its gems, coins and antiquities, was no longer able to contain this new feeling of boundless possibility, and the accompanying threat of disintegration of the limits of the known world that it brought with it. It required a more complex, more sophisticated response, and the sheer multiplicity of objects and ideas streaming in from abroad necessitated the search for a unifying idea or substance at the centre of it all. The 'chamber of miracles', the *Wunderkammer*, was the physical manifestation of this newly emerging mentality, which found its apotheosis in Rudolf's palace and its myth in the abiding legend of the melancholy prince, not ruling, but ruled by dark, Saturnine powers.⁴

Illustrations of these cabinets of wonders display rooms transformed into images of the riches and the strangeness of the world. They were conceived as effusions of the cabinets they had evolved from: small, often richly decorated cupboards with doors, drawers and a multitude of compartments designed to hold cameos, coins, small statues, precious stones.

One of the most famous cabinets of its time was commissioned by the Augsburg merchant and collector Philip Hainhofer and later given to Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, one of several monarchs and aristocrats to visit the merchant's patrician house. Gustavus Adolphus himself never saw his *Kunstschrank* at his Swedish palace; it was delivered there only after his death. His daughter, the remarkable Queen Christina, made it part of her own collection, though. Today it stands in the chancellor's room at Uppsala University, emptied of the miracles it once contained.

Even without them it is an awe-inspiring work of ingenuity and craftsmanship. The objects in the drawers were arranged as an elaborate allegory to represent the animal, plant and mineral world, the four continents, and the range of human activities, and the front was adorned with hundreds of miniature paintings illustrating the triumph of Art and Science over Nature, and the primacy of Religion over all. Venus crowns the entire creation, but death is never out of sight, depicted in several *vanitas* scenes. The cabinet itself is simple in form despite the ornateness of the ideas underlying its construction. Two

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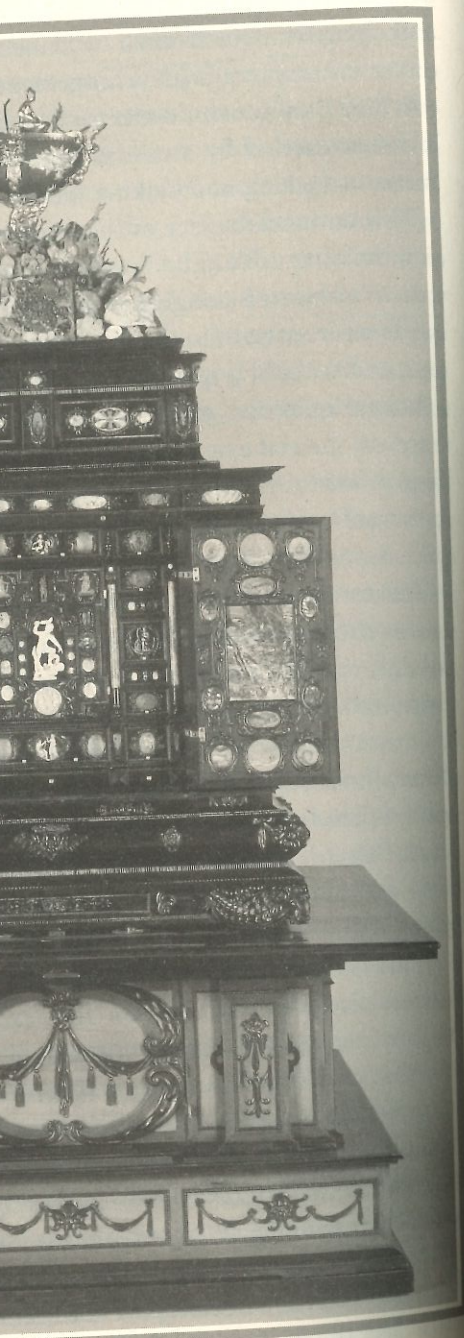
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central doors on a massive pedestal open to reveal a variety of drawers and compartments fronted by cameos, columns and pilasters. On top of the entire piece is an arrangement of crystals, coral and shells out of which rises a coco-de-mer (or Seychelles nut) set in gold and ship-like in form, carried by an Atlas figure and supporting the statuette of Venus crouching and looking into an imaginary distance.

This outlandish piece of furniture was used, probably by Christina, as a dressing table. The Seychelles nut was not only one of the most valuable objects belonging to the cabinet (the only two islands producing them were not discovered by Europeans until 1768), but was also designed to hold a quart of wine and was thought to possess strong antidotal qualities, while coral was supposed to have the ability to ward off the evil eye. Inside the cabinet was a bezoar, also believed to be a powerful antidote to poison. Bezoars were highly popular and immensely expensive, the property of the very rich. Often set in gold and shaped like cannonballs, they are calcareous concretions formed in the stomachs of *Capra aegagrus*, a Persian goat. Initially extremely rare as their formation depended on the diet of their host, it was later possible to cultivate them like pearls inside furry oysters. Nothing was supposed to be as effective against poison as a bezoar, and no prince of great station would travel without at least one of them in his luggage. Other antidotes and aphrodisiacs contained in the cabinet included powerful and obscure substances such as a musk pouch, cups of *lignum Guaiacum* (a West Indian wood used for medical purposes) and a bowl and mug of *terra sigillata* (a fine clay thought to have magical properties).

Apart from mysterious substances and ancient coins and gems, the drawers also contained objects 'for vexation' such as a pair of gloves without an opening, a cup that one could not drink from and artificial fruit that could fool the hungry. There were anamorphoses, distorted pictures that could be viewed in proportion only when reflected in specially constructed mirrors, and mirrors that would distort the viewer's face. A beautiful pair of portrait pictures, a man and a woman, turned into grinning skulls when turned upside down, thus reinforcing the message that all pleasures and experiences afforded by the *Kunstschränk* were nothing but transient whispers in God's world to be used by the wise as insights into his wisdom and by the foolish as



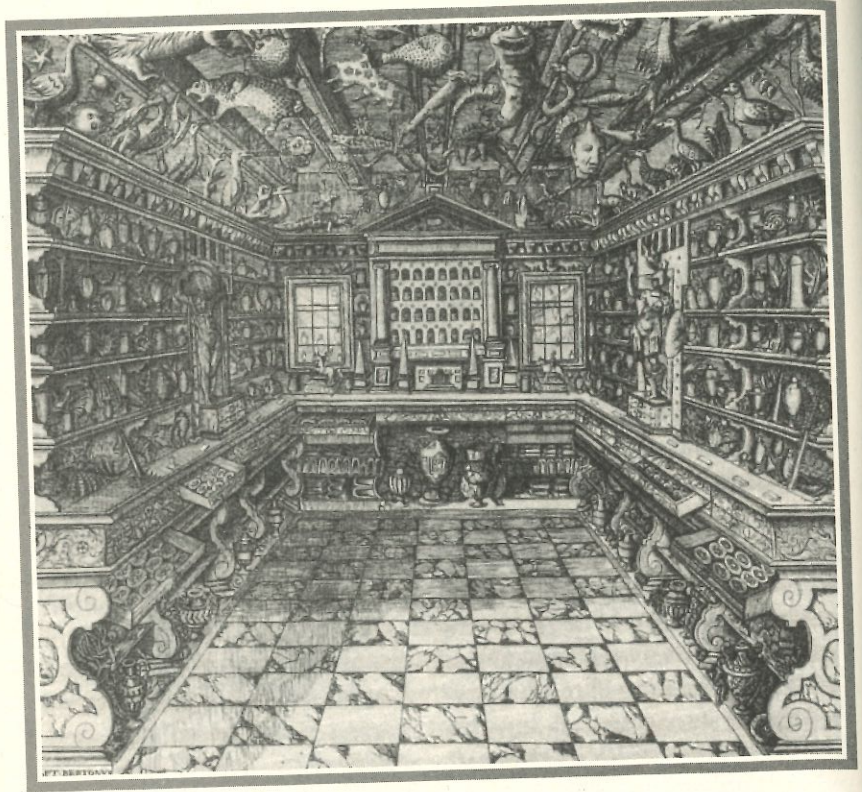


diversions from his laws. There were also four pictures of heads composed out of fruit and other matter, and, hidden among the crystals crowning the cabinet, an automaton re-enacting an episode from the tenth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which the hunter Cyparissus is transformed into a tree after shooting a stag. As if this was not enough to dazzle the curious, a virginal concealed in the upper compartment would play one of three tunes when the cabinet was opened, or it would spring into motion every full hour the internal clockwork struck. Those disinclined to leave the automaton to making all the music by itself could take out the virginal and play melodies of their own invention.

Hainhofer's *Kunstschrank* was not just a container of the curious and the precious, it was also an encyclopaedia in objects, a programme of the world in microcosm, a *theatrum memoriae*, in which the individual parts illustrated their place in the great drama of God's mind. Less a piece of furniture than a metaphysical manifesto, it spoke eloquently of a world view dominated by the ideas of metamorphosis and hidden meanings. *Artificialia* and *naturalia* were demonstrated to be two aspects of the same, just as life and death could be seen to change in front of the beholder's eye. A hunter could be transformed into a tree just as a beautiful face could become a skull; ornaments were far from being pleasant only for the eye: they also served a deeper purpose by exerting healing powers and by functioning as allegories. The artist's craft could deceive the eye with enamel fruit and silver beetles, just as what seemed like vegetables in loose arrangement could reveal a portrait – nothing is as it seems, but a hidden order underlies it all.

While the intricate chests from which these new cabinets derived their names were allegories of the natural world and of the principles at work in it, the collection that took their names from them followed a similar programme. An illustration (1622) of the Museum of Francesco Calceolari in Verona displays a scene that is in turns grotesque and highly organized and allows the observer to step through centuries into the museum itself and into the mind that created it.

Stuffed animals are dangling from the ceiling: a porcupine seems to pounce on the visitor, a small leopard, snakes, moonfish, various sharks, a severed, misshapen human head and a crocodile all silently



menace the guest from the roof beams above. Below them, perching on a precipice formed by the top of the ornate shelving running round the room, are stuffed birds, among them a pelican, gulls and a penguin, as well as several animals, starfish and corals. The shelves themselves with their scrolling decoration are filled with shells, beakers and chalices and other precious containers, as well as various animal parts, such as the saw of a sawfish, antlers and snail houses. In the middle of the walls to either side are two statues set in niches, one of Atlas, the other of Minerva with full armour, helmet and shield. At the centre of the far wall, directly opposite the door, is a cabinet built into the wall, containing four rows of small compartments. Doric columns and a simple tympanum frame this inner sanctum. Two small obelisks and a mounted figure are standing on either side. A number of vases, other vessels and books are sorted near to the floor, and the shelves are intersected horizontally by a band of drawers containing cameos.



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Calceolari's collection was close to the ideal of a cabinet of art and miracles, combining beauty with strangeness, classical form with riotous excess, scholarship with sheer curiosity. It is a repository of all that is bizarre and exotic (the sharks and crocodiles, the deformed head), all that is venerable (the vases and cameos), and of great and secret knowledge (the books stored below the central 'temple'). The statues and the structure on the middle wall demonstrate that there is order in this chaos, a mind pervading this precocious flourishing of strange forms: Atlas, the carrier of the world, symbolizes the very ambition of the collection to be a microcosm of everything knowable, everything he is supporting on his shoulder, while Minerva, goddess of wisdom, vouches for the fact that the intellect can and will rule over even those alien things and lands that the human mind is only just beginning to grasp. The wealth of the universe and the mind controlling it come together in the central temple and its resonances of ancient knowledge and harmony: the architecture of ancient Greece, and the obelisks, reminding the educated visitor of Egypt, an even more ancient civilization believed to have been in possession of the key to the wisdom of Hermetic philosophy, named after Hermes Trismegistus, the legendary Egyptian priest and teacher of Moses. Here scientific inquiry and the search for truth in alchemy and mysticism went hand in hand. What the scientific method, still in its infancy, could yield was to be used as material for an inquiry into the deeper nature of the universe, into the mind of God.

If Rudolf's collection was such a microcosm, it was so on an infinitely more ambitious scale. In order to contain the ever-growing possessions, the castle was expanded and transformed into a building site for much of his reign. Before taking up residence in Prague the emperor had already ordered the renovation of the living quarters, and then the construction of a summer palace, which he held to be more in keeping with his courtly life. In 1589, the castle was extended by the *Gangbau*, a two-storey gallery set against the old fortifications. New stables and a second large gallery, the Spanish Gallery, were also constructed, linked to the castle by the *Gangbau*. Meanwhile, in 1600, the emperor had taken up a new residence, a palazzo on Hradčany Square, which he had confiscated from Prince Lobkowitz. When it became evident

that even this would not be sufficient to contain the collections, yet another building was started, containing stables and more galleries, most importantly, three vaulted rooms or *Gewölbe*. Here the emperor finally established his *Kunstammer*, the main home of his treasures.

This was not a collection assembled for display. Some of its best and most spectacular pieces were locked up in cupboards and hidden from view by gilt leather boxes. The *Kunstammer* was a very private universe, containing, among other precious things, a large gallery of paintings, drawings and prints; several Seychelles nuts; ivories and works in gold and silver; carved rhinoceros horns; numerous cups and beakers in precious stone and rock crystal as well as in glass; landscapes inlaid in agate and jasper; glass engraved with great personages and allegorical scenes; medals; exotic arms and armour, among them Japanese and Arabic pieces; works in wax; Islamic art and Mughal miniatures; Chinese porcelain; games and puzzles; bezoars and other items thought to possess magical qualities; globes, sextants, telescopes, compasses, planetaria, astronomical compendia and sundials, clocks, automata and other mechanical devices; books on architecture, astronomy and astrology; printed music and musical instruments that kept coming in from all corners of the Habsburg empire, and filling up every last corner and every inch of free space in the depth of Rudolf's vaults.

While he was an avid collector of antiquities, his great love in the arts was Mannerism, a style which favoured sophisticated posture and allegory over natural representation (Hainhofer's *Kunstschränk* is a Mannerist masterwork). His commissions to artists like Hans von Aachen, Bartholomäus Spranger and Giuseppe Archimboldo often reflect not only his taste in art, but also his legendary fondness for the pleasures of the flesh. Religious contemporaries condemned many of his paintings as immoral: *Cupid and Psyche*, *Neptune and Caenis*, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*, *Mars and Venus*, *Apollo and Venus*, *Satyrs and Nymphs*, *Bacchus*, *Ceres and Cupid*, *The Rape of the Sabine Women*, *The Rape of Ganymede*, *Two Satyrs and a Nymph*, *The Suicide of Lucretia*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Hercules and Omphale*, *Leda and the Swan* (the latter attempting to make anatomic sense of legend especially energetically and in many versions) – all good humanistic excuses for titillation and very close encounters.

efficient to contain the collections, yet containing stables and more galleries, and rooms or *Gewölbe*. Here the emperor's *Kammer*, the main home of his treasures, assembled for display. Some of its best and locked up in cupboards and hidden from the *Kunstammer* was a very private collection of other precious things, a large gallery of objects; several Seychelles nuts; ivories and rhinoceros horns; numerous cups and rock crystal as well as in glass; landscapes and glass engraved with great personages and exotic arms and armour, among them works in wax; Islamic art and Mughal objects; games and puzzles; bezoars and other medicinal qualities; globes, sextants, telescopes, astronomical compendia and sundials, clocks, mechanical devices; books on architecture, astronomy, music and musical instruments that kept the Habsburg empire, and filling up much of free space in the depth of Rudolf's

collector of antiquities, his great love in the which favoured sophisticated posture and presentation (Hainhofer's *Kunstschränk* is a list of his commissions to artists like Hans von Aachen and Giuseppe Archimboldo often art, but also his legendary fondness for the religious contemporaries condemned many of his paintings: *Cupid and Psyche*, *Neptune and Caenis*, *Life, Mars and Venus*, *Apollo and Venus*, *Mercurius*, *Ceres and Cupid*, *The Rape of the Nymph*, *of Ganymede*, *Two Satyrs and a Nymph*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Hercules and Omphale*, the latter attempting to make anatomic sense of the scene (and in many versions) – all good illustration and very close encounters.

Rudolf reflected his predilections for erotic themes in his private life. While obstinately refusing to make the advantageous marriage his court was pressing for on account of his belief that there were no women noble enough to be worthy of him (both the Infanta Isabella of Spain, the daughter of Philip II, and Maria de' Medici eventually despaired of his procrastination and accepted other suitors), his sexual exploits were famous, and according to rumour he did actually marry his mistress of long standing, Katharina Strada, in a secret ceremony. He had various illegitimate children from these relationships, but none of them rose to any distinction. Katharina alone bore Rudolf six children, three boys and three girls. Of the latter, one, Carolina of Austria, was recognized by him and was able to marry well. Two others were tucked away in nunneries. Two of his three sons died early, one in childhood and one in battle. The third, Rudolf's beloved Don Juan of Austria, had inherited the Habsburg madness. His sexual excesses, megalomania and Caesarist illusions made him a liability and, despite Rudolf's plans to give him a high office, he was eventually exiled to the imposing Krumlov Castle in southern Bohemia, where he killed a young girl and disfigured her corpse with his hunting knife. It cannot have been lost on Rudolf that he had been forced to act exactly like his uncle Philip had had to with his own son Don Carlos.

While Bartholomäus Spranger and Hans von Aachen were chief purveyors of Mannerist depictions of dubious mythological scenes and of portraits glorifying Rudolf in various heroic poses, the painter Archimboldo had a special place both at court and in the collection. During his stay at Prague, the Venetian artist was in charge not only of a large workshop turning out the grotesque images that made him famous, but he also planned and oversaw large-scale spectacles and celebrations drawing on the entire repertoire of courtly life: lavish banquets, large allegorical processions, painted backdrops, triumphal arches, live animals and fireworks. The emperor was always at the centre of the iconography, cast as a great ruler in the tradition of the Caesars and the great rulers of the Holy Roman Empire.

Archimboldo's paintings have survived, and are a testament to the spirit and the programme of Mannerism. The famous composite heads, symbolizing the four seasons or the four elements by taking objects associated with them and assembling them into an arrangement