

Book of Abstracts

TALKING STONES

Object and Materiality in Early Modern Central and Eastern Europe

Academic Conference Center
Institute of Art History
Czech Academy of Sciences
Husova 4a, Prague



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PRAGUE, 17-18 APRIL 2026

Title page: Giovanni Castrucci, View of Prague Castle and the Lesser Town, 1606, Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

Organised by
Studia Rudolphina Center IAH CAS
Collecting Central Europe
The Medici Archive Project

Scientific Committee
Sylva Dobalová - Markéta Ježková
Andrea Gáldy
Alessio Assonitis - Gaston J. Basile -
Federico Giglio

PROGRAMME

FRIDAY, 17 APRIL 2026

10.45 WELCOME

NETWORKING AND COMMUNICATION

11.00-12.30

CHAIR: **ANDREA GÁLDY** (CCE PLATFORM)

ALICE FORNASIERO, UFR ARTS, LETTRES, COMMUNICATION,
UNIVERSITÉ RENNES 2, RENNES:

Gemstone Trade between Bohemia and Italy through Diplomatic Routes
and Networks

BELINDA GRANATA, ACCADEMIA DI BELLE ARTI, NAPOLI:

Hardstone Paintings in Motion. Materiality, Mobility, and Diplomatic
Exchange: Daniele da Volterra's David and Goliath

ORSOLYA BUBRYÁK, INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, ELTE RESEARCH
CENTRE FOR THE HUMANITIES, BUDAPEST:

Gems on the Move: Baron Edelstein and a Roman Imperial Cameo
in the Networks of Early Modern Diplomacy

LUNCH FOR SPEAKERS [12.30-13.30]

FRIDAY, 17 APRIL 2026

13.30-15.30

CHAIR: **ALESSIO ASSONITIS** (THE MEDICI ARCHIVE PROJECT, FLORENCE)

ANJA KATHARINA FRISCH, GERMANISCHES NATIONALMUSEUM NUREMBERG:

The Circulation of Medieval English Alabaster Sculpture in Central and Eastern Europe

ĐURĐINA LAKOŠELJAC, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY OF ART, UNIVERSITY OF ZADAR:

Lost Splendour: Archival Records of Precious Jewellery in Fifteenth- and Early Sixteenth-Century Šibenik

LAURA MARTÍNEZ CAYADO, UNIVERSITY OF MURCIA:

Luxury, Gold, and Gemstones: Catherine de' Medici's Gifts in the Context of Marriage Negotiations with Vienna

MATTEO PROTO GHIRINGHELLI, UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA LA SAPIENZA, ROMA:

Collecting between Moravia and Siena: Materiality in Exchanges between Ippolito Agostini, Karel of Zerotín and Jan Sembera

COFFEE / TEA [15.30-16.00]

MATERIALITY AND COLLECTING

16.00-17.30

CHAIR: **SYLVA DOBALOVÁ** (INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, CZECH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, PRAGUE)

MICHAŁ MENCFEL, ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY POZNAŃ:

The Jagiellonian Jewels, or Paradoxes of Polish Collecting Culture

ELLA CAMPBELL, ROYAL NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE IN ROME:

Ovid on Stone: Searching for New Meaning on Antonio Tempesta's Painted Mythologies on Lapis Lazuli

MARTIN MÁDL, INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, CZECH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, PRAGUE:

"AETITES lapis est veluti prægnans..." Eagle-Stones between Magic and Practice

DRINKS AND DINNER FOR SPEAKERS

SATURDAY, 18 APRIL 2026
MATERIALITY CONTINUED
9.00-10.30

CHAIR: SUZANNA IVANIČ (SCHOOL OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF KENT)

ÁGNES SZABÓ, INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, ELTE RESEARCH CENTRE FOR THE HUMANITIES, BUDAPEST:

Diplomacy of Precious Textiles decorated with gemstones in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary

MIRJAM WIEN, UNIVERSITY OF ERFURT:

A Crucifixion Group's Many Lives. Materiality in Context in Early Modern Sibiu

JANA ZAPLETALOVÁ, DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY, FACULTY OF ARTS, PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLOMOUC:

The Amethyst Grottoes of the Archbishop's Château in Kroměříž: Precious Stones and the Self-Representation of a Late Seventeenth-Century Ecclesiastical Aristocrat

COFFEE / TEA [10.30-11.00]

RUDOLF II'S COLLECTIONS
11.00-12.30

CHAIR: PAULUS RAINER (KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM WIEN)

CORINNA GANNON, STÄDEL MUSEUM, FRANKFURT AM MAIN:

Painting on Alabaster - Painting with Light. Hans von Aachen's Allegory and Portrait of Rudolf II

IVO PURŠ, INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, CZECH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, PRAGUE:

The Dead Christ Lamented by Angels by Hans von Aachen (1552-1612) and the Alchemical Christ-Lapis Parallel

BORBÁLA GULYÁS, INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, ELTE RESEARCH CENTRE FOR THE HUMANITIES, BUDAPEST:

A Heliotrope Deluxe Bookbinding of the Prague Kunstammer

LUNCH [12.30-14.00]

SATURDAY, 18 APRIL 2026

14.00-16.00

CHAIR: MARKÉTA JEŽKOVÁ (INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, CZECH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, PRAGUE)

EDGAR LEIN, INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR, GRAZ:

A Sapphire for Emperor Rudolf II

DIRK WEBER - ULF KEMPE, STAATLICHE KUNSTSAMMLUNGEN DRESDEN, GRÜNES GEWÖLBE - TU BERGAKADEMIE FREIBERG:

A precious, hitherto unrecognised lidded bowl by D. Miseroni and H.R. Taravell in Dresden

HELEN BUDDENSIEG, PRINCELY COLLECTIONS LIECHTENSTEIN, VADUZ-VIENNA:

The Pietre Dure Works for Prince Karl I of Liechtenstein

SUZANNA IVANIČ, SCHOOL OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF KENT:

God's Instrument: Bohemian gems, efficacy and medicine

Break [16.00-16.15]

16.15

PAULUS RAINER, KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM, VIENNA:

Do Stones Matter? And if so, why?

DISCUSSION ANDREA GÁLDY AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Gemstone Trade between Bohemia and Italy through Diplomatic Routes and Networks

Alice Fornasiero

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Starting in the 1580s, gemstones emerged as key protagonists in the artistic and material exchanges between Italy and Bohemia. Although the Bohemian territories were rich in semi-precious stones, prior to the establishment of the Castrucci workshop in Prague and the renovation of the Bubeneč mill, these materials had to be sent to Florence to be transformed into Rudolf II's highly prized commessi di pietre dure. Conversely, the Medici court became increasingly dependent on Bohemia for the procurement of sought-after gemstones following the launch of the project for the Cappella dei Principi in Florence, which required the accumulation of vast quantities of hardstone materials. The circulation and trade of semi-precious stones were made possible through the activities of Italian ambassadors and secretaries, who were entrusted not only with their acquisition in Bohemian territories but also with their shipment. Owing to their mobility, privileged access to courts, and extensive personal networks, ambassadors and secretaries acted as intermediaries, creating trading routes that also relied on their diplomatic channels. Drawing on archival sources, including some previously unpublished, this paper aims to reconstruct the circuits that facilitated the circulation of semi-precious stones between Bohemia and Italy. The presentation will introduce the main actors involved, including ambassadors, secretaries, as well as sellers and transporters. It will analyze exchange dynamics, the organization of transport, and the principal routes through which these materials circulated, highlighting the interconnection between artistic exchange and diplomatic networks.

Hardstone Paintings in Motion. Materiality, Mobility, and Diplomatic Exchange: Daniele da Volterra's David and Goliath

Belinda Granata

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Daniele da Volterra's David and Goliath (Paris, Musée du Louvre), painted on a single slab of black slate, offers a compelling example of how hardstone objects mediated artistic, political, and economic relationships across early modern Europe. This paper reconstructs the painting's complex trajectory—from its Roman origins in the Peretti household to its passage through Neapolitan and Florentine elite networks—highlighting the material and symbolic functions that enabled its mobility. The slate support, heavy, fragile, and technically challenging, shaped both its aesthetic value and its logistical requirements, demanding specialised handling and acting as a marker of rarity and prestige.

A particularly revealing episode concerns Emperor Rudolf II's attempt to acquire the painting for his Prague collections. Although ultimately unsuccessful, this diplomatic overture situates the work within the broader circuits of exchange that linked Italian courts with Central European centres of collecting, natural science, and alchemy. The David and Goliath thus emerges not only as an artwork but as a communicative object whose materiality made it desirable, negotiable, and politically meaningful.

By following the painting's movements and changing interpretations, the paper illuminates how hardstone artworks operated as active agents in cross-regional networks of credit, gift-giving, expertise, and representation. This case contributes to understanding the mobility of splendid materials and their role in shaping artistic and diplomatic connections between Italy and Central Europe.

Gems on the Move: Baron Edelstein and a Roman Imperial Cameo in the Networks of Early Modern Diplomacy

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The proposed presentation explores the early modern provenance of the exceptional antique sardonyx cameo known as the Hadrian Cameo (Altes Museum Berlin), with a focus on an overlooked historical figure: the Zittau-born Gottfried Hertzog von Edelstein. Joachim von Sandrart's account in the *Teutsche Academie*, which recorded that he had seen the cameo in Edelstein's possession in Nuremberg, has often been dismissed as either rhetorical or fictitious. This contribution argues, however, that Edelstein was indeed a genuine, well-connected diplomat, making Sandrart's reference historically plausible. Drawing on archival sources, the presentation situates Edelstein within a transregional network spanning the Imperial court, German princely courts, the royal courts of Sweden and Denmark and the political institutions of the Dutch Republic. Rather than identifying Edelstein as the owner of the gem, it positions him as an intermediary, facilitating the movement of high-status antiquities through diplomatic, informational, and collecting networks. Such objects circulated not merely as artworks, but also as political assets, prestige goods, and instruments of representation. The case of Edelstein illuminates the role of diplomats in the circulation of antiquities and highlights the interplay between diplomacy and collecting practices in the early modern period.

The Circulation of Medieval English Alabaster Sculpture in Central and Eastern Europe

Anja Katharina Frisch

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From around the mid-14th to the mid-16th century numerous English alabaster carvings were produced in the Midlands. These objects of devotion were not only sold to English patrons, but also to customers on the Continent. Their movement triggered a variety of reactions – I claim – especially by the material. Aspects that shall be discussed include:

Changing Status of English alabasters within new spatial environments. The demand for English alabaster sculpture on the Continent is often traced back to the material. In those countries where the use of alabaster was not common, the material contributes to the perception of these objects as ‚exotic‘ and ‚alien‘. This shall be discussed through examples in St Mary's church Gdańsk.

Misjudgements. In the early modern period, it was often no longer known that the sculptures had once been imported from England. This led to a different perception of the objects, which could also have an impact on the way they were handled.

Restoration measures. In this regard, the focus lies on a retable at Saint-Léger church in Noûatre. About 1873 it was arranged to re-create its original polychromy. As the actors involved emphasise, the material of the altarpiece was decisive for the measure.

Lost Splendour: Archival Records of Precious Jewellery in Fifteenth- and Early Sixteenth-Century Šibenik

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When objects can no longer speak for themselves, written records may still offer a glimpse into their materiality, economic value, and social significance within specific historical contexts. This paper examines now-lost luxury jewellery documented in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century archival sources from Šibenik, focusing on pieces made of, or incorporating, precious materials such as gemstones, semi-precious stones, corals, amber, and pearls. In the absence of surviving artefacts, the written word becomes the only medium through which this world can be approached. Since the evidence consists primarily of brief entries recorded in estate inventories and pledges, the surviving documentation remains fragmentary and limited in detail. However, it indicates that luxurious jewellery circulated in Šibenik, ranging from crowns and other head ornaments to brooches, rings, strings of pearls, rosaries, and buttons made of, or adorned with, precious materials. Of particular interest are specific types of jewellery that were either imported from Italy or produced in local workshops according to Italian models. Finally, by analysing their recorded monetary value and patterns of ownership, the paper sheds light on the circulation of different types of jewellery across Šibenik's urban social strata.

Luxury, Gold, and Gemstones: Catherine de' Medici's Gifts in the Context of Marriage Negotiations with Vienna

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After a decade of negotiations between France and Austria, the marriage contract between the Dauphin Charles, son of Henry II and Catherine de' Medici, and Archduchess Elizabeth, daughter of Emperor Maximilian II and Mary of Austria, was signed in 1570. To commemorate this alliance, Catherine de' Medici presented Ferdinand II of Tyrol, the principal mediator of the agreement, with a series of diplomatic gifts of exceptional artistic and material value. Among the objects incorporated into one of the most distinguished collections of the period, were masterpieces such as Benvenuto Cellini's celebrated Saliera, the so-called Saint Michael's Cup, an onyx ewer attributed to Richard Toutain, and a gold pendant capsule crafted by Dujardin and Clouet. While these works have been widely studied, they have not yet been examined within this specific context, nor analyzed in terms of how their materiality shaped the political meanings they conveyed. Far from functioning as mere displays of wealth, these objects operated as active dynastic instruments, articulating authority, prestige, and ambition. This paper explores their diplomatic significance, arguing that such gifts not only commemorated the peace restored between two major European powers but also functioned within broader networks of exchange that structured political communication among early modern courts.

Collecting between Moravia and Siena: Materiality in Exchanges between Ippolito Agostini, Karel of Žerotín and Jan Šembera

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This contribution aims to reflect on the characteristics and reasons behind the exchange of objects between the Sienese nobleman and collector Ippolito Agostini and the Moravians Karel Žerotín and Jan Šembera. The two Moravians and the Sienese exchanged a multitude of objects, including paintings, oils, seeds and precious stones. In line with the focus of the CFP, I will therefore concentrate on the mineral exchange, which was particularly relevant to the Sienese collector. Ippolito Agostini, bailiff of the Knights of St Stephen and an important figure at the Medici court, was lord of Caldana, where he had opened a major marble quarry and his father, Marcello, had been responsible for Cosimo I's mining operations. One of the objectives of this proposal is therefore to reflect on the links between a member of a family involved in the Medici court system, particularly in the mining sector, and the Moravian high nobility. The second is to observe these links not only from a political and naturalistic point of view but also from a religious one, which emerges clearly from the epistolary sources and from the intermediary between the three nobles, the rector of the Jesuit college in Brno, Ottaviano Navarola.

The Jagiellonian Jewels, or Paradoxes of Polish Collecting Culture

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The presentation focuses on the jewels collected in the 16th century by the last three rulers of the Jagiellonian dynasty on the Polish throne: Sigismund I the Old, Sigismund Augustus, and Anna Jagiellon. While very few of these jewels have survived, we have a substantial understanding of them through written sources, including inventories of the crown treasury, the monarchs' wills, financial accounts, and descriptions of court ceremonies. I will analyze the history of these jewels from the perspective of the history of collecting and highlight two significant moments in their fate. First, I will look at the mid-16th century, when the royal treasury did not evolve into a *Kunstammer*, unlike many other Central European courts. Second, I will examine the late 18th century, when the remnants of the Jagiellonian treasures finally became the subject of collecting activity. My aim is to identify and explain the specific double paradox of Polish collecting culture. I will explore two key questions: 1) Why did the jewels of Polish kings NOT BECOME collectors' items during the peak of court culture, despite having all the necessary conditions in place, such as a well-stocked treasury and close connections with European courts? 2) Why did they BECOME collectors' items during a period of deep crisis and the imminent collapse of the state, when the conditions for collecting were extremely unfavourable, given the depletion and eventual destruction of the treasury? I seek answers to these questions within the unique political system and cultural context of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the modern era.

Ovid on Stone: Searching for New Meaning on Antonio Tempesta's Painted Mythologies on Lapis Lazuli

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Paintings on precious stone supports have attracted the same poetic and scholarly musings in recent historical study as they did when they filled the homes and collections of European aristocracies in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The symbolic capacities of stone as a natural material designed and decorated by God has foregrounded interpretations of the medium as devotional in function, explaining their frequent appearance in Roman cardinal collections. However, numerous examples of mythological, and therefore pagan, subjects painted on stones leave reason to question this theory. Through the contextualised study of Antonio Tempesta's 1617 double sided Perseus and Andromeda / Venus and Adonis on lapis lazuli in the Galleria Borghese and its pendant, this research offers a novel, epistemological interpretation of the stones as a pictorial group. These conclusions are supported by a plausible reconstruction of the pendant paintings' original display within the Palazzo Borghese, in the Cardinal's studio and by comparison with contemporary collections in Prague and Florence, where painted stones were appreciated for their symbolic and scientific breadth, as objects of devotion, admiration or study.

"AETITES lapis est veluti prægnavans..." Eagle-Stones between Magic and Practice

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Among the unusual minerals that attracted the attention of ancient authors were the so-called eagle-stones. According to tradition, eagles built their nests from these stones, from which their name is derived. They are stones with an internal cavity (geodes), which could be empty or filled with another mineral, sand, pigment, or water. The stones also attracted attention because they often rattled when shaken—hence the nickname "rattle stone" (German Klapperstein). The filling of the stone's cavity gave rise to beliefs in magical properties thought to help pregnant women during childbirth. Early modern naturalists, including the Rudolphine mineralogist Anselm Boëtius de Boodt (1550–1632), paid particular attention to the varied structure and material composition of eagle-stones and attempted to classify them accordingly and assess their significance. Of particular interest is Boëtius's mention of eagle-stones occurring in the vicinity of the West Bohemian city of Plzeň. Reports from around 1700 indicate that geodes containing yellow or red pigment suitable for oil painting as well as frescoes were found north of Plzeň, near the Cistercian monastery of Plasy. This pigment was probably also used in the monastery's richly painted decoration. Geodes are still found today in the vicinity of the former Plasy monastery, and their material analysis forms part of our study.

Diplomacy of Precious Textiles Decorated with Gemstones in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary

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The commerce of Italian luxury textiles in late Medieval Hungary is known before scholars of the era. These textiles whether they were for ecclesiastical or secular use are the subject of research. Decorating them with pearl embroidery made these textiles specific in the Hungarian Kingdom at the end of the 15th Century. Besides costumes and orphreys richly embellished with pearls, several textile objects emerge from documents of the period that bear precious stones as ornament. The presentation aims to collect this rare and particular group of objects from the apparel of King Matthias Corvinus (1458-1490) through gemstone ornamented orphreys of the Esztergom Cathedral and wall hangings till royal tents and horse trappings as diplomatic gifts. Hence these goods all outline the personal environment of the Hungarian sovereign as part of his domestic life or patronage, analysing their presence in the documents can provide a broader view of their evaluation both in local and international context. As gemstones were also applied on courtly costumes in Italy at the time, the present research also explores the possible effects of the cultural and commercial exchange between Italian courts (Milan, Ferrara, Naples), cities (Florence, Venice) and Hungary.

A Crucifixion Group's Many Lives. Materiality in Context in Early Modern Sibiu

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The paper sheds light on how a Crucifixion group is put into different contexts. The ensemble was initially carved of stone by Austrian sculptor Petrus Lantregen for the Dominican convent church of Sibiu in Transylvania in 1417. After the convent relocated into the walls, the church was used as a hospital church and torn down during the siege of Sibiu in the middle of the 17th century. Thus, the object group was sunk in a pond and after its rediscovery placed in an open vault which was extended into a chapel in the middle of the 18th century.

The paper investigates the way in which features like colours, size, material and non-material value, movability as well as location influence how the object group is perceived and treated. It analyses the religious, military and political factors resulting in changed material contexts, positions and meanings of the ensemble. By introducing this material dimension to the Urban history and topography of Sibiu, we can get a better grasp of the complex dynamics leading to alterations of the cityscape.

The Amethyst Grottoes of the Archbishop's Château in Kroměříž. Precious Stones and the Self-Representation of a Late Seventeenth-Century Ecclesiastical Aristocrat

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The contribution will introduce the recent internationally significant discovery of the so-called Amethyst grottoes in the Archbishop's Château in Kroměříž (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), which were built between 1688 and 1695 on commission of the Olomouc Prince-Bishop Karl von Lichtenstein-Castelcorno (1624–1695). The presentation will focus on the significance and role of amethysts in the decoration of both grottoes as a key element in the construction of the patron's memory. At the same time, it will examine the origin of the precious stones, archival documents relating to their mining and transport, as well as the literary and visual sources of inspiration for the grottoes. The uniqueness of the iconographic program of the Sala Terrena and the Grottoes of the Kroměříž Château points to an intellectually advanced and original environment that was not limited to the mere adoption of, or dependence on, other European concepts for decorating similar spaces. The intellectual complexity of this concept suggests an independent development of a distinctive program, which can be confidently ranked among the most significant works of its kind in Europe.

Painting on Alabaster - Painting with Light. Hans von Aachen's Allegory and Portrait of Rudolf II

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Hans von Aachen introduced the art of painting on stone to Rudolfine art. Creating an artificial image based on the natural image of the stone pattern was a highly intellectual task which underlined the artist's ability to perfect nature. The frequently challenged rivalry between art and nature was elaborated fully with paintings on translucent stones which also take the interaction with incoming light into consideration. It comes to no surprise that Rudolf II appreciated such works of art not only for their artistic ingenuity but also for their material value.

This paper intends to focus on a small, two-sided painting on alabaster by Hans von Aachen, today in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg. Whereas one side depicts an allegory on Rudolf II's triumph in the Turkish Wars, the other side shows an intimate portrait of the emperor himself. Besides analyzing the iconography of the painting, the paper will address the materiality of the stone and the question in how far Von Aachen's painting goes hand in hand with it. Since the portrait destroys the translucency of the stone, the question arises whether the image of the emperor was added at a later point in order to make the Rudolfine allegory comprehensible beyond the Prague court. Was the painting on alabaster meant to be a diplomatic gift?

The Dead Christ Lamented by Angels by Hans von Aachen (1552-1612) and the Alchemical Christ-Lapis Parallel

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The image painted on black marble depicts Christ lying in a tomb on three stone steps covered with cloth and with a stone under his head. The stony quality of the whole space is given great emphasis, as if the painter wanted to make Christ's body part of it. Given that the picture shows the place and the state from which Christ was to be resurrected and ascend to heaven, this all-permeating stony heaviness enhanced by the underlying material creates an exceptional tension. It is possible that we find here a distant echo of the widespread motif of alchemical symbolism, in which parallels were developed from the late Middle Ages between the suffering and resurrection of Christ and the production of the philosopher's stone. Christ's death was essential for the redemption of humanity, and similarly, the "death" and blackening of the substance in the alchemical vessel was the key to obtaining the philosopher's stone.

A Heliotrope Deluxe Bookbinding of the Prague Kunstkammer

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An entry of the earliest inventory of the Prague Kunstkammer (1607–1611) reads: “No. 1497. Ein buch mit lehr papyr, ist an beyden seitten mit schonem jaspis wie landtschafflein von natur also und mit vilen granaten gefast.” The inventory categorized the precious item among the collection's “Guldene geschirr und sachen, von den besten sachen”. The deluxe binding was later associated with an ornate writing model book that was prepared by the Hungarian calligrapher George Bocskay for Ferdinand I in 1561–1562 and was decorated by the Flemish miniaturist Joris Hoefnagel for Rudolf II in the 1590s. The silver-gilt goldwork and heliotrope binding was prepared by the Flemish artist Jan Vermeyen, the court goldsmith of Emperor Rudolf II and the creator of the ruler's imperial crown. The central elements of this jewelled cover's panels are a pair of polished sheets of heliotrope (also known as bloodstone, so called for the blood-red inclusions in its dark-green jasper).

A Sapphire for Emperor Rudolf II

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In a letter dated September 1607 to the Bavarian Duke Maximilian I, Wilhelm Bodenius reports that Emperor Rudolf II showed Duke Heinrich Julius of Brunswick and Lüneburg the imperial crown with the sapphire attached on top of the high arch during an audience. This sapphire, which the duke had worn on a silk thread in front of his chest during an earlier audience, had been so admired by the emperor that he had received it as a gift.

This event, which provides insight into a precious gift to the emperor, is documented and was first described by Hilda Lietzmann (1993). Subsequently, Jochen Luckhardt (1998), Ivo Purš (2013), and Ivana Horacek (2015) have apparently referred to the sapphire as a gift from the Duke of Brunswick to the Emperor. However, to my knowledge, this fact is not mentioned in recent publications on the Rudolphine crown, which was also used as the Austrian imperial crown from 1804 onwards.

In my presentation, I will explain in more detail the circumstances surrounding the donation of the sapphire and its presumed origin. I will also show the significance of the stone and its hoped-for effect on the wearer based on the description by Anselmus de Boodt.

A Precious, Hitherto Unrecognized Lidded Bowl by D. Miseroni and H. R. Taravell in Dresden

Dirk Weber

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Stone carving is an art widely presented on objects in the Grünes Gewölbe. During systematic research on precious and ornamental stones we noted a graceful object not yet investigated: a greenish-white lidded bowl resting on two high tree trunks made of rock crystal and on a flat foot. The bowl is richly decorated with turquoise, enamel and a large cameo in a blossom on the top of the lid.

According to the museum database, the bowl is carved from “Oriental jasper” probably in Italy. “Oriental jasper” in inventories of the 18th Century normally signifies heliotrope. Detailed inspection under the microscope showed that, instead, the rock is a so-called “Herbal jasper”, an ornamental stone from Kozakov in Northern Bohemia popular in the 16th and 17th century and widely used in the famous workshops in Prague. Comparison with three objects documented as masterpieces by the stone carver Dionysio Miseroni and the goldsmith Hanns Reinhardt Taravell allows to identify these two artists as the creators of the bowl in Dresden. The object demonstrates the efforts made to restore diplomatic relations between Vienna and Dresden after the end of the Thirty Years' War.

Set in Stone: The Pietre Dure Works for Prince Karl I of Liechtenstein

Helen Buddensieg

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This paper examines Karl I of Liechtenstein's (1569–1627) pietre dure tabletop and chest made by the Castrucci workshop, as pivotal diplomatic tools and as vehicles of communication at the intersection of material culture, artistic practice and imperial politics. The House of Liechtenstein's splendour and political authority was quite literally set in stone when Karl I was elevated to the rank of prince after serving the court of Rudolf II (1552–1612). During this period, Karl observed the Medici's use of pietra dura within their diplomatic networks, and the role these objects played in the emperor's conception of sovereignty, nature, and divine order, expressed through precious materials from his lands. However, it was not until after Rudolf's death and Karl's elevation to princely rank that he began collecting commessi. Around 1620, after he was appointed viceroy and imperial governor of Bohemia, he commissioned a tabletop and a chest adorned with commessi from the Prague workshop. Rather than serving as diplomatic gifts, these works operated as instruments of political communication and self-fashioning. Through their material specificity, durability, and symbolic associations, they articulated Karl's political achievements and territorial claims, aligning his family with the visual and material language of the Holy Roman Empire.

'God's Instrument: Bohemian gems, efficacy and medicine'

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Rudolf II's court (1576–1612) was at the centre of knowledge production about gems and stones in Europe. Jaspers and other chalcedonies, such as carnelian and agate, were sourced in northern Bohemia were transformed into glyptic artworks by the Miseroni workshop from 1588 and studied by the court physician and naturalist Anselmus Boëtius de Boodt for his treatise, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia* (1609). Knowledge about the stones was produced through artistic manipulation, natural observation and everyday use. This paper examines how these stones were understood as instruments for revealing divine creation. It illuminates the relationship between nature, God, knowledge and art. By analysing both De Boodt's philosophy and an agate statue of the Penitent Saint Mary Magdalene by Ottavio Miseroni (c. 1590), this paper demonstrates how natural philosophy, natural history and artisanal work mutually constructed understanding of natural matter, and how objects made from these stones can be reassessed in this light.



TALKING STONES

OBJECT AND MATERIALITY
IN EARLY MODERN CENTRAL
AND EASTERN EUROPE

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