

The Realities of Collection Organization: Founding Certificate, Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria (1565)

Abstract

In 1565, the same year that Samuel Quiccheberg authored *Inscriptiones*, Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria and his wife, Anna of Austria, founded their Munich *Schatzkammer* (chamber of treasures). This founding certificate includes an exhaustive inventory of the objects in the collection; the first two items, both golden drinking vessels, are described below in elaborate detail. In addition to underscoring the importance of written inventories, the document provides instructions to the duke and duchess' heirs on the appropriate use of the collection. Jewels could be worn, for instance, for the purpose of adornment and to uphold the reputation of the princely state. On one point, the duke and duchess were particularly clear: the collection was to be kept intact and housed at the Neuveste, and no object was to be sold or otherwise divested for any reason. This praxis-oriented text on the process of documenting, using, bequeathing, and preserving a collection complements Quiccheberg's more theoretical text on the ideal collection. That the charter was signed by both husband and wife testifies to women's role in creating and managing collections in the Early Modern period.

Source

Certificate of Foundation, Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria

We, by the grace of God, Count Palatine of the Rhine, Duke of Upper and Lower Bavaria, etc., and we, Anna, Countess Palatine and Duchess of Bavaria, his dear spouse, born a Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, and Archduchess of Austria, hereby issue the following arrangement, instructions, and bequest to everyone together and each individually for ourselves and all our heirs and their heirs that we, in the name of the Almighty and aware of the certainty of the body's death, and that such will come to pass when it pleases the Almighty without warning, so that in such a case our male heirs, and their heirs' heirs male descendants in the line of ruling princes in Upper Bavaria, and particularly those who should inhabit our princely residence here in Munich, the Neuveste [part of the ducal residence], and hold their princely court here in this city, in order to maintain and protect their princely reputation according to this arrangement.

And as according to the composition of the law and the common rights contained therein, each person is free to stipulate how his own property and belongings are to be disposed of and arranged, we thus command, state, and wish as a result of substantial consideration and reflection and thorough comparison of these aforementioned heirlooms and jewels of our dynastic line, that these aforementioned treasures should, after our death, remain as far as possible for eternity with our princely house in the Neuveste here in Munich. And these should be conferred upon and granted to the reigning prince, those of our sons and their masculine heirs in subsequent generations of the reigning princes of Upper Bavaria who occupy and own the Neuveste with their rights and legal succession, along with his spouse and royal household, as outlined for the benefit of their reputations and the adornment of his princely state. In case of their death, [the collection] is to be passed on in its entirety without being reduced or broken up, along with the rest of his inheritance from our principalities and lands in Upper and Lower Bavaria, and the rest of our feudal rights and properties, especially our moveable goods and chattels, according to the

common laws and specific feudal rights and also other rights as practiced here, especially those of the constitution of the Holy [Roman] Empire and the customs, unification agreements, and tradition of the laudable houses of the Palatinate and Bavaria.

And the treasures that make up this bequest are hereafter listed and described, piece by piece.

First of all, we hereby provide an inventory and proclaim that to these aforementioned hereditary and dynastic jewels belong: our golden drinking vessel, decorated with fine relief and enamel work as well as diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, as follows:

First of all, on the lid, there is a large single emerald in its setting.

Then, under it, a circle of three table-cut rubies.

The next row is six diamonds, three pointed and three table-cut.

The third row is three table-cut emeralds.

In the fourth row, there are three table-cut diamonds and three table-cut rubies.

The fifth row around the opening is three table-cut diamonds, three table-cut rubies, and three table-cut emeralds. Below this, in the opening are three table-cut diamonds. In the opening, a large diamond rose, and in the middle, a small emerald held by two lions.

In the first row under the opening on the cup there is a table-cut diamond, three table-cut rubies, and three table-cut emeralds.

In the middle piece of the cup there are three large table-cut diamonds.

And between each of these stones there are two table-cut rubies, which makes six table-cut rubies. In the second row of the cup, on the main body, there are three table-cut diamonds, three table-cut rubies, and three table-cut emeralds.

In the third row there are three table-cut diamonds and three small ruby stones.

In the fourth row there are three clusters of diamonds and three small rubies.

In the fifth row there are three table-cut diamonds and three large table-cut emeralds.

In the sixth row there is a lozenge-cut diamond, a small balas ruby, and a small emerald.

The bottom row along the pedestal is of three table-cut diamonds and three small emeralds.

And in the pedestal there is a diamond rose.

To the second:^[1]

(Cat. 562)

A golden drinking vessel with white enamel and decorated with a variety of enamel fruits, faces, and animals, as follows.

At the top, on the lid, is a golden figure of a man, enameled in a variety of colors. In his right hand, with outstretched arm, he holds a large ring which has been hewn from a single sapphire. In his left hand, the figure holds a shield in which a deeply colored sapphire has been set so that one can see through it.

On the lid there are also three large table-cut sapphires and three somewhat smaller [stones].

On the inside of the lid there is another table-cut sapphire.

In the first row around the top of the drinking vessel, there are three quite large table-cut sapphires and three eight-sided sapphires.

On the body itself there are three quite large table-cut sapphires.

On the underside of the body, there are three table-cut sapphires and three eight-sided sapphires.

The lower row [contains] six table-cut sapphires.

The pedestal [contains] three large eight-sided sapphires.

Underneath the pedestal [there is] also a small sapphire.

[...]

To the fourteenth object:

A lovely pearl necklace with two hundred and twenty pearls, on which hangs a diamond cross with three beautiful pearls.

To the fifteenth object:

A large golden pitcher, enameled in blue and white, with a ruby and diamond on the lid. These two jewels hold a shield depicting a young woman and two angels standing next to her. There is a sapphire along with a pearl on the handle, and a large sapphire in the lid.

To the sixteenth object:

An old golden salt cellar^[2] with agates, pearls, and jewels, and dancing peasants around the stem. On the top there are pictures; is it nicely trimmed in the old fashion.

To the seventeenth object:

A beautiful mirror framed in gold, at the top there is table-cut emerald, on the sides four rubies and four table-cut diamonds, at the bottom an emerald. Is beautifully enameled.

Because the two of us spouses, together and each individually, desire and wish in the case of one or more treasures that are described here to include these in our bequest, testament, and instructions, it is our, both together and individually, steady will, opinion, and instructions, that we will have such treasures described here both in the short term and the long term, on the as-yet blank pages at the end of this manuscript. Also, occasionally the treasures listed should be examined carefully, by name, and such written inventories controlled by hand to ensure that those treasures listed should be included in our instructions and testament and should be

considered hereditary and dynastic jewels alongside those listed above and treated precisely and expressly as if they were mentioned herein in clear, explicit terms.

Furthermore and as a result, we both, and each individually, decree, intend, and want, as has been outlined in part above, that, after our death, these dynastic and hereditary jewels should be forevermore housed in our princely house the Neuveste, and be inherited and possessed at all times by our heirs' and their heirs' in the patrilineal line of the ruling princes of Upper Bavaria, the legal, rightful owners and residents of the aforementioned Neuveste, be they at the point of inheritance older, middle-aged, or younger for reasons as outlined above.

The ruling princes and dukes of Bavaria, as rightful, authorized owners of these dynastic and family jewels, shall have neither the right nor the power to sell them, nor without dire or unavoidable need to pawn or use them as collateral, nor in any other manner to remove them from the princely residence the Neuveste. If it should happen that dynastic and family jewels on account of their age or because of normal wear and use (to which each rightful owner is entitled and granted for the honor and glorious maintenance of the princely reputation of him personally and that of his wife as he sees fit) are taken away, these same princes and dukes of Bavaria who reign in this period and possess the Neuveste including these treasures, should pass them on without reducing or diminishing [the collection, but rather] should repair and redress any flaws to improve and enlarge [the collection]. Furthermore, when treasures that have been pawned in cases of emergency, as outlined above, are redeemed and returned to the princely residence, they are to be kept [in the collection] without any disadvantage.

For these reasons, and so that nothing be forgotten and to insure [that it is remembered], a clearly written copy of the inventory bearing our secret seal should be kept by our heirs and all subsequent ruling princes of Upper Bavaria in the princely archives or chancellery vaults in Munich. Of this, a reliable copy and certificate is to be provided without delay to the other dukes in Bavaria, who are potential successors of the sovereignty of the upper lands and duchy of Bavaria and have reason to hope or expect that they might come into these dynastic and family jewels. And in every instance with explicit instructions as to how these dynastic and family treasures are to be used by our posterity, in other words the succession of ruling princes of Upper Bavaria and the rightful residents and owners of the Neuveste, to improve their stature, decoration, and honor, for reasons outlined here.

And so in order to preserve our memory via these instructions for all eternity by the grace of God (as has been undertaken by us for this reason in the instructions outlined here explicitly forbidding the divestiture, sale, unnecessary pawning or use as collateral, or other changes to the inventoried dynastic and house jewels), it is thus rightful and fitting that such treasures be passed down by the succession of ruling princes and residents of the Neuveste (who, accordingly, should have absolutely no authority to act with unbound hands and power according to their whims and circumstances aside from those purposes outlined in the instructions above) and not be consolidated or considered part of other bequests or estates. Instead these ruling princes and future owners of the Neuveste, shall observe and comply with, one after another as a free preferential legacy and advantage or otherwise in immediately valid and legally binding fidei commis[sum] and well-known order, or another of our well-meant provisions, orders, and instructions, as we then for our heirs and their heirs' heirs in the line of succession unceasingly calculate, hereby the whole lot explicitly and resolutely desire to have assigned, bound, and ordered in the highest and best manner, as definitely and effectively as is possible according to the power and content of the general ecclesiastical and secular law.

Should however it be the will of God that our sons and masculine heirs or their heirs' heirs in the successive patrilineal line and ancestry die out without leaving behind legitimate sons, after the death of the last owner of these dynastic and family jewels, they should be conferred—with no deception at all—first on our daughters and

the daughters of their late brothers (if they lived during the same period) and subsequently to their heirs, but rather after the death of the last of our masculine heirs and heirs' heirs in the successive patrilineal line to those same daughters and (should there be such) and thereby to the other, closest-related surviving daughters of the previously deceased dukes of Bavaria and to their heirs with full parity.

We have both signed with our own hand this true and entirely true charter, and furthermore commanded that our secret seal be attached to this text.

And, in addition, for the rightful procedure and establishment, and for reinforcement of this all, we ordered all of our noble and learned advisors—our *Landhofmeister* Otto Heinrich, Graf of Schwarzenberg; our *Hofmeister* Wilhelm Lösch von Hilgertshausen; our chancellor here Simon Eck, a legal scholar; Burkhard von Schellenberg zu Hüfingen, and our beloved son's *Hofmeister*, Christoph von Pienzenau zu Zinneberg—all five of our councilors and loyal servants to witness the signing and [we] also verbally instructed the assembled group of our intentions and instructions. Subsequently, we had this booklet and written instructions publicly read aloud and again requested that they rightfully witness this all and remember it, and then to legitimately with appropriate posture and decisive action to sign it in their own hand and attach their seals to it.

Which we personally negotiated with the five witnesses named above and whose incidence we hereby recognize with our own signature and the attached seals. Munich, the Monday after Reminiscere [Sunday] during Lent, the 19th of March, in the repeatedly mentioned Neuveste, since the birth of Christ, our dear Lord and Savior, one counts fifteen hundred and sixty-five years.

[signed]

Albrecht
Duke in Bavaria, etc.
m. p.

Anna
Duchess in Bavaria, etc.
m. p.

[...]

NOTES

[1] This is a description of the Sapphire Cup by Hans Reimer, ca. 1563 – trans.

[2] i.e., a small box for setting out salt at the table – trans.

Source: Gründungsurkunde Herzog Albrecht V von Bayern (1565); reprinted in *Schatzkammer der Residenz München. Katalog*, 3rd edition. Munich: Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Gärten und Seen, 1970, pp. 7–9; 12–16.

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