

Regional Prestige: Lorenz Berger, *Thesaurus Brandenburgicus Selectus* (1696)

Abstract

By the end of the seventeenth century, Lorenz Berger (1653–1705), former librarian to Karl Ludwig von der Pfalz, had become the librarian to Friedrich I of Prussia. His responsibilities included managing the royal coin and art collections in Berlin. Berger's catalogue *Thesaurus Brandenburgicus Selectus* was an important early work of (proto) art history. It focused on the classical pieces in the royal collections and was key in shaping Berlin as a center for classical art. The engraving below, originally published on page 25 of the catalogue, shows some of Berger's contemporaries viewing objects in the collections. This image, along with others in Berger's work, suggests that people drew allegorical connections between objects and power. The regional (i.e., Berlin-Brandenburg) identity constructed here was based on the prestige associated with classical antiquities rather than a sense of history or general "Germanness." This image also shows how collections became increasingly differentiated (according to origin, chronology, or style, etc.) over the course of the Early Modern period, a tendency made all the clearer when this scene is contrasted with Ferrante Imperato's famous image of 1599, *Dell'Historia Naturale*, which depicted all and sundry (books, art objects, and plant, animal, and minerals, among other items) in a single room.

Source



Source: Lorenz Berger, *Thesaurus Brandenburgicus Selectus: Sive Gemmarum, Et Numismatum Graecorum: In Cimeliarchio Electorali Brandenburgico, Elegantiorum Series, Commentario Illustratae*. Coloniae Marchicae: Liebpert, 1696, p. 25. Available online at: <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0000A53300000000>

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