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## Whose Amber?

### Changing Notions of Amber's Geographical Origin

There are many factors governing the desirability of precious stones: value, beauty, durability, rarity, fashion, social custom, tradition, myth, legend, history and ethical and environmental considerations. These factors are often interlinked or even interdependent, and each represents only the tip of an iceberg, for there are many further factors controlling them. One such is the notion of geographical locality – defined by the Gemmological Association of Great Britain as the area or district in which the stone is/was found. Diamonds, for example, occur internationally, but diamonds from one source may nonetheless be more coveted than diamonds from another. The same is true of amber, for which there are dozens of major deposits scattered around the world. Ask anyone in the western world today about the source of amber and their answer is likely to be Poland. And indeed, today no exhibition dealing with “Polish history” or culture would be without this material<sup>1</sup>. Visitors to Danzig (Gdańsk) or to Crakow’s Sukiennice are encouraged to associate product and Poland by grand displays of the material. Rarely seen today without a qualifier, this essay explores the history of amber as a “Polish material” by focusing on the geographical locality of amber deposits and exploring the importance of source to those who owned amber in the early modern period. In so doing, this paper also touches upon the problem of “national” materials and investigates the validity of this notion when dealing with the past. Exploring recent nationalistic narratives in the first half, this essay moves on to test the idea of amber as a national material for the early modern period in the second, its aim is show that amber’s cultural identity was considerably more ambivalent in times past<sup>2</sup>.

#### The Finding and Commerce of Amber in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period

Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century virtually all of the amber found in Europe had began its life on the Baltic littoral, and

most commonly in the area then known as Prussia. There, not far from the towns of Danzig and Königsberg (Kaliningrad), two long thin spits of land project out into sea on either side of the Samland Peninsula, trapping water behind them in two protected lagoons (the Frisches Haff to the south, and the Kurisches Haff to the north). Following an age old practice, local men shed their clothes – when the winds and currents were right – and advanced into the churning waters with nets stretched before them. They netted seaweed and whatever debris they could and hauled this back to the beach where it was sorted by their wives and children, and subsequently delivered to “collecting centres” spread across the region. The ownership of amber fell to the ruler of Prussia: its possession by anyone but was illegal and punished severely. The law forbidding this was called the *Bernsteinregal* (the amber monopoly) and it allowed the rulers of Prussia to control the fate of amber, which they did by overseeing and organizing its collection, as well as selling the right to trade the raw material to certain individuals only. Early modern legal structures made provision for that which could be found buried in a territory’s soil deeper than blade of the plough could till (be it ancient treasure or mineral riches), or for flotsam and jetsam and other things found floating in its waters to belong to the crown.

Before the Second Peace of Thorn (Toruń) in 1466, Prussia and all finds of amber with it belonged to the Teutonic Order. The region was then divided: the western part (later known as Royal Prussia) became an autonomous province belonging to the Crown of Poland; the eastern part (later known as Ducal Prussia), became a fief of the Catholic Polish crown remaining in the hands of the Order. Albrecht of Brandenburg-Ansbach, the 37<sup>th</sup> Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, introduced Lutheranism to East Prussia in 1525. This brought the Protestant Reformation to the region, ended the hold of the Order over it, and trans-

formed Albrecht from an ecclesiastical into a secular prince.

For much of the later Middle Ages there was little to link Prussia and product. The Order had treated amber as an export good and sold it onwards to Lübeck and Bruges, the names of which towns had become associated with beads of amber and other small goods made of this material<sup>3</sup>. According to Georg Rheticus, the Polish king, Casimir IV, had done “as a Christian ruler does when he knows that the skies and the seas being rich treasuries of mother-of-pearl, coral, lodestone, amber and other such, belong to the rich and poor alike” and given “these to everyone living in Prussia, whoever they may be [...]” in the wake of the Peace<sup>4</sup>. He is likely to have been referring to Casimir’s support for the formation of a guild of amber workers there in 1480<sup>5</sup>. The birth of a guild there meant that large quantities of amber were now being worked in a place not all that very far away from where it was being found. The Order protested at its establishment, arguing that the formation of the guild contravened the peace and continued to pursue a policy of prohibition in their own territories<sup>6</sup>. Though the Order’s rule there would come to an end with Albrecht’s conversion to Lutheranism, the prohibition of amber’s working in the eastern part of Prussia would remain in place for some time to come.

We cannot expect that consumers, looking at the region from the outside in, understood the division of Prussia, the structure of rule and the impact this had on amber. Sixteenth-century maps of Prussia rarely make the divided nature of the territory clear. They do, however, frequently highlight the abundance of amber, particularly in the sea and lagoons surrounding the Sambian Peninsula, for example Olaus Magnus’s *Carta Marina*<sup>7</sup> or Sebastian Münster’s map of Prussia, which remained unchanged in all 27 editions of the *Cosmographia*<sup>8</sup>. The average consumer of amber – although the generalization average is difficult because amber is found in the inventories of kings, goldsmiths, members of the gentry, church treasuries etc. – is also unlikely to have been much interested in the precise source of the amber he or she bought. It has been argued, for example, that most Southern Europeans were far from interested in the Baltic region<sup>9</sup>. Fifteenth-century Italian portolans were imprecise, even

hypothetical, when it came to regions north of the Flemish towns in which Italian city-states had their agents<sup>10</sup>. And it has been traditionally argued that the Hansa deliberately suppressed information about the North in order to discourage foreign encroachment on their trade<sup>11</sup>.

For those who did want to know more there were written works discussing amber, its nature and its place of finding. Several classical authors, Pliny for example, had linked amber and the Baltic region<sup>12</sup>. Written in Latin and thus understandable to many educated Europeans, the first sixteenth-century book to contain extensive information was Georg Agricola’s *De Natura Fossilium* of 1546<sup>13</sup>. The foundation of a university in Königsberg in 1544 (the first Protestant university after Marburg) and the establishment of a press in the town also encouraged the production of the first local treatments of amber. Andreas Aurifaber’s *Succini Historia*<sup>14</sup> of 1551 clearly saw itself as a corrective to Agricola, who had erred on number of occasions<sup>15</sup>. Aurifaber’s work is full of locally specific apparently accurate knowledge. Other than locating amber and its collection “in Preussen” Aurifaber does not actually explicitly stake Prussia’s claim to amber (by which I mean stating that it is “preussisch”), although it is clear that the publication itself plays a part in making a claim of sorts. By merit of being in German and printed at the Lufft press, works issued from which were censored by the Index, Aurifaber’s work had little traceable impact<sup>16</sup>. The writings of fellow Prussian Severin Göbel were much better known<sup>17</sup>. His books had been published in Latin before being translated into German, and then reprinted by the influential Konrad Gesner<sup>18</sup>. Göbel also benefited from a family connection to one of Southern Europe’s most important universities: his relative the Königsberger Melchior Wieland (Guilandinus/Guilandini) was prefect of the botanic gardens in Padua and as such acquainted with the big names of contemporary Italian natural history<sup>19</sup>. Several authors cite Göbel, but he, like Aurifaber spills little ink on the political and geographical situation.

#### **Amber after 1900: Deutsch beyond doubt**

By the seventeenth century, the word Prussia had come to mean something quite different. The union of

Brandenburg and the Duchy of Prussia in 1618 had produced a state consisting of several geographically disconnected territories. The Treaties of Königsberg and Labiau in 1656 granted the then duke full sovereignty of the duchy, which had, until this point, still been the fief of another crown. In 1701 the duchy became a kingdom, the capital of which was Berlin. In 1772 the Kingdom of Prussia annexed most of the Polish province of Royal Prussia, to its west, including the city of Danzig, replacing the Polish administrative and legal code with the Prussian system. By the dawn of the twentieth century, the state commonly known as Prussia mostly comprised territory lying outside of Prussia proper.

There are relatively few couplings of amber with a specific country before the early twentieth century. In 1900 the notion of geographical indication – a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin – was in its infancy, advanced first by the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property in 1883. France was at the forefront of this type of legislation and it was also there that the famous ‘appellation d’origine contrôlée’ was established as a designation for agricultural products in 1905. Although primarily linked to foodstuffs, the new notions of geographical ownership protected by law emerging at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century played a role in the hitching of materials and products to physical regions. The same is also true of international exhibitions at which countries funded and constructed their own pavilions to the glory of their own progress and products. Having been exhibited in single lonely examples at previous world fairs, an enormous display stand sponsored by the Royal Prussian Ministry for Trade and Industry was dedicated to amber in the German Pavillion at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900<sup>20</sup>. Though Germany was a relatively new concept, the connection of amber with it was not: Tacitus’s *Germania* contains one of the earliest references to it<sup>21</sup>. In the millennium since Tacitus, the Baltic Sea had also gone from being the only known source of amber to one of several major deposits worldwide. This may be another reason for the development of a clearly stated geographical claim.

Though amber had been chosen to part represent the German mining industry in Paris, the literature of the time is clear about its geographical connection to Samland and Prussia proper, rather than Germany. Indeed 10 of the 17 exhibitors were from Danzig or Königsberg.

It is first around the time of the Great War that we find amber claimed for Germany. The first consistent description of amber as German can be found – to the best of my knowledge – in an article researched during the conflict. Otto Pelka’s *Die Meister der Bernsteinkunst* is the first “scholarly” history of amber. Bristling with indignation, Pelka protests that the war and Russian Revolution have prevented him from accessing amber in collections outside of his homeland. For Pelka, amber is “the most German of all materials” and the war has now “closed (it) to German scholars” by locking collections of it in “enemy territory”<sup>22</sup>. By the time his book *Bernstein* appeared in 1920, the Treaty of Versailles had cloven Prussia from Germany proper. Some areas, what is more, were given to the Second Polish Republic; Danzig became a Free City under the administration of the League of Nations; and East Prussia became an exclave, only reachable by ship or by a railway through the Polish Corridor<sup>23</sup>. It is in exactly these years the notion of amber as German takes hold. By the time the time National Socialism became fully fledged, the material which in the early 1930s might still occasionally be referred to as “Samlandian Gold”<sup>24</sup> or “Königsbergian”<sup>25</sup>, had become fully entrenched as a “deutscher Werkstoff”<sup>26</sup>.

The fate of amber under National Socialism is a subject about which I have written elsewhere. The National Socialist party gained considerable support in East Prussia and strategies were developed to encourage other Germans to continue to support the now detached region which faced financial difficulties because of its status. Amber, as an export product, received attention. Marketing strategies suggested that Germans had a moral responsibility to buy because amber purchase would support Prussian/German industry<sup>27</sup>. The material acquired new meanings with the spread of the National Socialist ideology: Consumers were now introduced to amber as a “blonde” coloured stone with an affinity to the colour

of “German curls” and “ripe sheaves of corn”<sup>28</sup>. From 1933/34 onwards, tiny shards of amber were worked into over 60-million pins and pendants for sale by the *Nazionalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* (the National Socialist People’s Welfare Organisation) and the *Deutsche Arbeits-Front* (German Work Front) in order to finance *Winterhilfswerk* (Winter Relief)<sup>29</sup>.

One art historian believed that his fellow Germans were drawn to wear amber “by an inner need of the soul”<sup>30</sup>, and another poetically-inclined lover of the material penned the following hymn to it:

German stone from German soil  
 Hold it proudly in your hand  
 You are asked to wear amber  
 Because you love your Fatherland.  
 Ancient elemental forces have shaped you  
 Simple German gem  
 They radiate and proclaim:  
 “My bearer should be German too”.<sup>31</sup>

### Amber since 1945: Polish par excellence

Perhaps unsurprisingly there has been little talk about “German amber” since 1945. The years since then, and especially those since 1989/1991, have seen the increasing Polonisation of amber. Founded in 1994, the Amberif Trade Show has the declared intention of promoting the Polish amber industry. Established in 2006, the World Amber Council has appointed Gdańsk, the city in which it is based, the World Capital of Amber. In 2011 amber was one of fifteen sectors identified by the Polish Ministry of the Economy for a special export promotion program, and ‘trend forecasters’ now hope to position jewellery made of this ancient fossilised resin as one of Poland’s flagship products. All of this naturally involves claiming amber for a Polish material and the politically and economically motivated positioning of objects made of it. Amber is a popular material for gifts of international cultural significance. The Gdańsk-based amber artist Mariusz Drapikowski was commissioned to create not only the celebrated Millennium Monstrance but also an amber chalice and patena for Pope Benedict XVI and an amber crucifix for Pope John Paul II in 1999. Drapikowski has also worked on an amber altar for the Basilica of St Brigida in Gdańsk, a church of signifi-

cance for the Solidarność movement<sup>32</sup>. This huge structure, 11 metres high by 9 metres across, showcases St Brigida’s copy of The Black Madonna of Częstochowa, an important symbol in Polish culture, Protectress of Poland since 1656.

Yet the production of other large projects has stalled in the years since the completion of the altar at St Brigida, in part due to the fourfold rise in the price of amber in the last decade. Though amber has become the quintessentially Polish material, and owners of objects made from it are encouraged to consider themselves owners of little pieces of Poland, most amber being worked in Gdańsk is imported from the strip mines of the Kaliningrad Oblast, or elsewhere. For many years now finds of natural amber in Poland have fallen far below the amount needed to meet demand. Thus *Polski Bursztyn* is often actually – at least in material terms – far from it. The modern consumer of amber acquires a notion, a material which experiences its artistic transformation in Gdańsk having come from a region which is now Russia, was once German, and has, since 1656, had no real connection to Poland. The notion of amber as Polish clearly foots on an older historical tradition. Yet as the assertion above suggests, this is less clear-cut than it might seem. The second part of this essay considers the historical status of amber and explores notions of its “nationality” in the early modern period.

### The Ownership and Perceived Origin of Amber in the Early Modern Period

Studying in Italy in 1640, a young man from Cracow, a certain Jan Ługowski, wrote to his father that he had made a new acquaintance in Rome. This new friend had given Jan to understand “that he would wish to have something beautiful from Poland”. But what? Jan had himself been unsure until the acquaintance had suggested an amber rosary<sup>33</sup>. Ługowski’s example demonstrates that in the early seventeenth century Poland was associated with this yellow “stone” in the eyes of early modern Italians<sup>34</sup>. Yet the anecdote also questions the degree to which the Polish expatriate community identified with the material which came from a region geographically, culturally and politically on the fringes of their own home country. Though there are numerous sources detailing

Poles giving gifts of amber, or of amber being acquired in Polish cities – many of which will be explored in the coming pages – it is actually rare to see amber being coupled with the adjective “Polish”. Equally, though we may read of people from both Ducal and Royal Prussia giving gifts of amber, or of amber being acquired in Prussian cities, it is actually rare to see amber being coupled with the adjective “Prussian” in the early modern period.

Sixteenth-century consumers of amber living beyond the territory in which it was found appear to have had a very general and superficial understanding of amber and its origin. How, then, did those living in East or West Prussia (i.e. Ducal or Royal Prussia) understand their claim to this material? One sixteenth-century anecdote suggests that neither was unequivocally entitled to claim amber for their own.

Like his already-discussed father, Severin Göbel the Younger was an authority on amber and on the different varieties available, a reason for which we actually encounter amber described as “preussischer Stein” in his work<sup>35</sup>. His relative Melchior Wieland helped him to matriculate at the University of Padua, and while in Italy he was very much an ambassador for the material<sup>36</sup>, introducing his patron, the Venetian senator Aloysio Mocenigo, to two exceptional pieces of amber in the collection of the Duke of Mantua<sup>37</sup>. These pieces are first recorded as having been in Danzig in 1593, where, according to the English traveler Fynes Moryson, King Sigismund of Poland had seen them and “offered five hundred dollars” [11 kg. of silver] for them to their owner Andreas Jaski<sup>38</sup>. Danzig was a city with special status and enjoyed more autonomy than other towns within the Kingdom of Poland. It was, however, still Sigismund’s city and Jaski Sigismund’s subject. But Jaski refused to sell to him and presented the pieces to Georg Friedrich of Brandenburg-Ansbach instead. Georg Friedrich was the governor of Ducal Prussia. The Jaski family were not Georg Friedrich’s subjects, but they were the only merchants to whom the Dukes of Prussia, who had a monopoly over amber, supplied it. There was no industry of working amber in Ducal Prussia at that time. According to the literature, it was then Georg Friedrich who had made a present of the frog and lizard in amber to the Duke of Mantua<sup>39</sup>.

Amber was thus plausibly the property of Sigismund and Georg Friedrich both (Sigismund, because amber was worked in his territory and Georg Friedrich, because it was found in his). In this sense it united the two. The story also shows that amber brought them into conflict. Sigismund was pitted against Georg Friedrich to acquire the choicest pieces. We know that both factions and their subjects employed amber extensively in their diplomacy. Did this competition extend to it?

### Amber in Polish Diplomacy

Italy presents a good test case when discussing diplomacy because not only was it home to the Roman Catholic Church but also to several powerful dynasties; and because given the huge distance between them few Italians actually acquired their amber in person in Prussia. Diplomacy and the exchange of diplomatic gifts was the main source of their amber and this could take many forms.

#### *Nuncios and Legates*

Few Italians travelled to the North, legates and nuncios being the exceptions. One such was Giacomo Fantuzzi from Ravenna, who undertook a tour of Poland at the end of his spell as papal legate there in 1652<sup>40</sup>. Fantuzzi watched amber being worked in Danzig and acquired a set of knife handles. Given its importance to trade, many kings and princes, as well as city states sent their envoys to the city, who, like the French diplomat Charles Ogier<sup>41</sup>, are sure to have seen amber being worked and acquired it too. Amber was also a common parting gift for those who were returning to their countries of origin, for example, the set of amber objects for the celebration of the mass presented by Sigismund III to the Nuncio Enrico Caetano on his departure in 1596<sup>42</sup>. In such cases amber is essentially a souvenir, a token of remembrance (in Caetano’s case of Poland) with the capacity to invoke memories. The material is necessarily linked to a place, although as these examples demonstrate the place is frequently Poland or Polish Danzig.

#### *Mediated Gifts*

The average Italian who wanted to acquire amber above and beyond beads or small pieces of raw am-

ber depended on the mediation of others, for example agents, friends, or simply roundabout contacts. Whoever they were, they all inevitably had some sort of relationship to the north. Here again legates and envoys had a role to play. Ferdinando Cospi in Bologna acquired the amber playing pieces in his collection from Ercole Zani, an Italian who had accompanied a Polish embassy to Moscow in 1672<sup>43</sup>. And Cospi's grandnephew, Giovanni Carlo Ranuzzi, nuncio in Poland, was responsible for Cospi's specimens of amber with inclusions. The Milanese collector Manfredo Settala had Tito Livio Buratino, an Italian contact in Danzig, who provided him with amber<sup>44</sup>. In these cases the mediating person is the lynch-pin and their importance is reflected by the fact that their names are recorded alongside the entry. As the examples above demonstrate, whether Cospi or Settala, amber is the vehicle that allows them to repeatedly emphasize how well connected they are within Italian society. The actual geographical source of their amber is not stressed.

#### *Non-mediated gifts*

The majority of the more interesting amber objects in Italy were non-mediated gifts from high-ranking northern Europeans. Many members of the Polish elite carried amber to give as gifts when abroad. Philipp Hainhofer, for example, was given a lizard in amber by the Polish prince Władysław Vasa. According to Hainhofer, Władysław had originally chosen this object as a gift for Francesco Barberini whom he was to meet in Rome in 1624/5<sup>45</sup>. This would have been a diplomatically adroit gift for it fused amber from Władysław's home country with a sentiment linked to ancient Italy. No contemporary account of amber and the inclusions found within it was complete without reference to Martial's epigrams on amber-embalmed creatures and this connection was not lost on Italians who were particularly taken by the idea of owning the physical expressions of poetry<sup>46</sup>. In some cases objects incorporating inclusions were even explicitly linked to the Roman poet<sup>47</sup>. An anonymous Polish bishop gave an amber chalice to Cardinal Scipione Borghese. The chalice's foot contained a frog and was inscribed "latet et lucet" a motto taken directly from the opening to Martial's epigram on a bee in amber<sup>48</sup>. The already



(fig. 1) Small altar, probably Königsberg, 1660s, amber and ivory, gilt bronze, H. 77 cm, Florence, Museo degli Argenti Inv. Bg. 1917, no. 83.

mentioned gift of Georg Friedrich to the Duke of Mantua may have encompassed a similar gesture, for the river Po cut its path straight through his duchy and it had been into this river which, or so said the myth, amber had first been created<sup>49</sup>. These gifts are linked to the foreign personalities giving them and thus also linked to a specific geographical origin, yet again it is

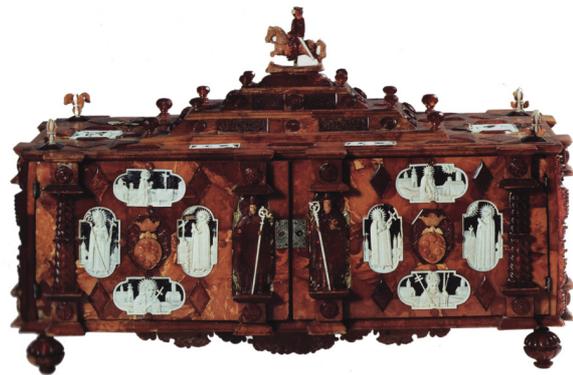
most often the former (i.e. provenance) which is foregrounded with only scant attention being paid to the latter (i.e. source).

### Faith

An expression of shared religious belief was an important factor underlying many gifts to Italy. A large amber altar in the Museo degli Argenti was originally a gift from Andreas Trzebicki to Innocent XI, the Medici pope (fig. 1)<sup>50</sup>. Trzebicki was Deputy Chancellor of the Polish Crown from 1652, bishop of Przemyśl from 1655 and bishop of Crakow after 1659<sup>51</sup>. An amber reliquary casket donated to the Neapolitan convent of Santa Chiara in 1697 by Cardinal Alderano Cybo may have been the result of his dealings with Poland in the 1670s<sup>52</sup>. Pilgrimages by nobles from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to sites of religious interest in Italy also occasioned gifts of amber: for example, the set of objects to be used for the mass – meaning an amber oil lamp, amber cruets, amber candlesticks, an amber basin, an amber pax and an amber chalice – given to the Santa Casa at Loreto by Caterina Zamoyska<sup>53</sup>. In Rome, Prince Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł presented an amber figure of St Peter to the Pope, two days after celebrating the feast of St Casimir there in 1678<sup>54</sup>. Casimir, a prince of Poland, who had died in 1484 and been canonized in 1522, was a well-known saint in Italy; he had been proclaimed the protector of Palermo by Urban VIII in 1636 and his feast day was celebrated with pomp and in the presence of the Pope in Santo Stanislao dei Polacchi in Rome. His image is found atop a casket in the Museo degli Argenti which also shows the symbols of the Medici and thus unites the two cultures in one object (fig. 2)<sup>55</sup>. Further research is still required to find the name of its donor, but it is more than likely that he or she was someone from the Polish community, and probably, given the size and complexity of the object, a member of the Polish elite.

### Non-Polish Givers

In all of the cases mentioned above, it is probable that the giver felt an affinity or connection with the material and that this affinity may have had something to do with his or her identification with the place of their and its origin, as well as pride as expressed through the



(fig 2) Casket, probably Danzig, second half of the 17th century, amber and ivory, H. 35.5 cm, L. 58 cm, D. 20 cm, Florence, Museo degli Argenti Inv. Bg. 1917, no. 77.

material. Polish nobles – whether anonymous, like the giver of Cristina of Lorraine's amber<sup>56</sup>, or named – are in the overwhelming majority when it comes to gifts of amber to Italians. It would be wrong to think, however, that all amber in Italy was the result of Polish-Lithuanian gift-giving: the House of Bavaria, for example, was responsible for the gift of an amber Virgin to the church of Santa Maria della Vittoria<sup>57</sup>, and Charles II of Spain for a chalice inset with ivory symbols of the Passion presented to the Archbishop of Syracuse, Francesco Fortezza<sup>58</sup>. Nor did they have to be Catholic: Johann Friedrich of Pomerania sent an amber crucifix and some beads to Francesco de Medici in 1578 some 44 years after the Protestant Reformation had been adopted in Johann Friedrich's lands<sup>59</sup>.

### The Dukes of Prussia

There are few traces of people from Ducal Prussia in Italy, probably because the region lay outside of the Holy Roman Empire and was Protestant which means, for example, that Prussians cannot be found in the registers of the German church in Rome, Santa Maria dell'Anima. They are not, however, entirely absent. For nearly a century an enormous amber chandelier consisting of "three-tiers [...] with eight arms per tier, and ovals and roundels full of figures and histories in white amber and with an eagle on top" was a star attraction in the Medici Galleria, first in the Tribuna where it hung beneath the famous lantern, and later in the Gabinetto di Madama<sup>60</sup>. This amber is

likely to have been a gift from Johann Sigismund who married the daughter of the administrator of Ducal Prussia in 1594, and who, although Margrave of Brandenburg, would also be administrator of the duchy for several years before fully inheriting it in 1618. When compared with gifts given by members of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, there are certainly fewer gifts from people from Ducal Prussia to Italian nobles. Why and when did Ducal Prussias give gifts of amber and to whom were they sent?

#### *Faith*

Some gifts were used to cement confessional relationships: Albrecht of Brandenburg-Ansbach, the 37<sup>th</sup> and last Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, who had introduced the Protestant Reformation to Prussia, presented amber to the reformers Martin Luther and Philipp Melancthon, as well as to new Lutherans like Georg Ernst von Henneberg-Schleusingen<sup>61</sup>. But by making gifts of amber to people like Margaret of Austria, he also honoured Arch-Catholics equally<sup>62</sup>.

#### *Family*

The majority of gifts of amber appear to have been to relatives of the dukes themselves, or to relatives of the administrators of the region. The earliest example is of eighteen amber and silver plates stamped with the cypher "S.M.Z.B.H.Z.B.V.L." and dated 1585. These initials refer to Sophia, Margravine of Brandenburg, Duchess of Brunswick and Lüneburg, the wife of Prussia's governor Georg Friedrich of Brandenburg-Ansbach. She was also the daughter of Dorothea of Denmark, a connection which explains the presence of these plates in Slot Rosenborg today<sup>63</sup>.

Sophia appears to have adopted amber as her signature gift, giving goblets of amber to Elisabeth of Austria, wife of the King of France<sup>64</sup>, and to Elizabeth I of England<sup>65</sup>. Inventories show that Elizabeth's successor and Sophia's cousin Anne had one of the most interesting collections of amber of her time and it is highly likely that her links to Sophia had a role to play<sup>66</sup>. Sophia and her husband are probably also the source of the amber gamesboard given to Landgrave Moritz of Hessen-Kassel, a cousin of Georg Friedrich,

who, like Anne, had a large and unusual collection of amber<sup>67</sup>.

This pattern of gift giving among close relatives can naturally also be seen among members of the Polish royal family, but the paths taken are less consistent: the Kings of Poland were elected monarchs, meaning that dynastic allegiances were more fluid. By the mid-sixteenth century, female members of the Jagiellonian dynasty had become Queens of Hungary, Poland and Sweden, as well as Duchesses of Brunswick and Saxony. The later Wasa dynasty could be linked to the Houses of Sweden, Hapsburg and Bavaria, as well as to the Jagiellons, and the Sobieski to the House of Nevers and Bavaria. The royal crown was not linked by succession to any of these families. Patterns and predilections for giving amber change with each different generation. We do not appear to see the consistent use of amber in the cultivation of one or two familial bonds and development of estimable collections of amber on the back of them.

Although a hereditary line, the Dukes of Prussia could not claim to be on the same level as the Polish royals. The duchy's power first really increased in the early seventeenth century, when Duke Albrecht Friedrich died and his successor Johann Sigismund brought Brandenburg and Ducal Prussia into personal union. The next generation of rule saw Prussia's foregrounding: Johann Sigismund's son, Georg Wilhelm moved the court to Königsberg in 1638. The growing importance of Ducal Prussia for its rulers, who were now resident there for the first time in many years, saw a new focus on amber. Friedrich Wilhelm licensed the first guild of amber turners ever known in Ducal Prussia<sup>68</sup> and re-acquired the right to trade amber from the Jaski in Danzig first sold to them in 1530s. Friedrich Wilhelm thus became the first ruler of Ducal Prussia to really have full control over amber from sea to sale. Furthermore his status as one of the seven members of the Electoral College bearing the right to vote for the emperor essentially placed him on a par with other kings in Europe, the Polish king included. This said, Prussia remained the fief of the Polish crown until the Treaty of Labiau in 1656. Friedrich Wilhelm, however, did more than commission works in amber; he also appears to be the first to have been portrayed in it since the time of Georg

Friedrich<sup>69</sup>, most famously in a double portrait with his wife Luise Henriette of Nassau-Orange, which belonged to his sister Hedwig Sophie, wife of Wilhelm VI of Hessen-Kassel<sup>70</sup>. Friedrich Wilhelm is also said to have worked amber himself, with his skill being praised by Joachim Müllner in the poem *Drechsler-Kunst* of 1653<sup>71</sup>.

## War and Peace

The first of Friedrich Wilhelm's many notable commissions for non-family members were related to religion, but not in the sense we have seen. The Thirty Years' War saw the region become embroiled in this great Northern conflict and then extensive peace talks which brought Europe together in Münster. The War played a role in spreading amber across Europe. In Italy, nephew of Pope Urban VIII and a negotiator for the church Francesco Barberini's collection probably grew up on the back of this conflict though more research is required to discover who the sources of his ambers were<sup>72</sup>. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 also saw Cardinal Alderano Chigi, one of the chief negotiators, receive the gift of an amber pyx from an as yet unknown donor<sup>73</sup>, and probably also the making of the huge cabinet now in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum with the eight new electors agreed upon during the negotiations<sup>74</sup>. Claude de Mesmes is said to have received a gift of amber as a gesture of thanks for his involvement in the peace negotiations for the Swedish-Polish War<sup>75</sup>. And less honest pursuits, like looting and booty-taking, meant that amber made its way across borders.

Friedrich Wilhelm went on the diplomatic offensive after the cessation of hostilities and amber was his weapon of choice. He used it to secure cheaper grain for his war-ravaged lands, and to cement relationships with his neighbours. In the course of the next twenty years, as the sovereign ruler of Prussia from 1656 onwards, he sent copious amounts of unusually worked amber to the Tsars of Russia<sup>76</sup>, commissioned majestic gifts for Emperor Ferdinand III and Leopold I<sup>77</sup>, sent a spectacular chandelier to Frederick of Denmark, honoured the Electors of Saxony<sup>78</sup>, and the child-regent King Charles of Sweden<sup>79</sup>. Friedrich Wilhelm was careful to make sure that no two gifts were the same – this meant altering the details of estab-

lished forms as well as commissioning new and unseen ones, like the gondola-shaped amber vessel and the quite amazing amber mirror frame given to Louis XIV of France<sup>80</sup>.

## Conclusion: Whose amber?

The examples given above suggest that there was no "clear" attribution of amber to one territory or another in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, perhaps because it was a material which was being both found and worked in not only Ducal but also Royal Prussia, as well as being used in the diplomacy of the rulers of both. In this sense, objects made of amber were truly "gemeine Artefakte". Indeed, as if to provide further proof, documents also record that the Russian tsars, for example, often re-cycled the gifts they had received, simply passing them on to other potentates as and when was appropriate<sup>81</sup>. Amber was, after all, a precious and rare material, which made a suitable gift for high-ranking personages and, as we have seen for Italy, there was no hard and fast rule that its donors had to be Prussian or Polish themselves<sup>82</sup>. Sir Walter Leslie, a Scot, gave an amber tankard to the Emperor in Vienna. There are even examples of amber being given to the rulers of Poland, for example the amber crucifix and other altar goods given by Johann Sigismund of Saxony to Constance of Austria, wife of Sigismund III<sup>83</sup>. How are we to understand the link between material and its geographical origin in this circumstance? In cases such as Leslie's one might argue that the object's provenance – in this example presumably somehow associated with his involvement in the Thirty Years War – had a role to play. Every object has a story – as the cliché goes – and, as we have seen with Hainhofer's lizard in amber, stories were very important in the early modern period. Johann Sigismund, on the other hand, was married to the Princess of Prussia, daughter of Albrecht Friedrich, Anna of Prussia, and it is probably only thanks to this relationship that he could have made such a spectacular gift to Constance. In short, amber appears to have been capable of ambivalently playing a number of roles – its identity was dynamic and like the material itself, which was famous for becoming statically charged, it could be charged, discharged and recharged.

This forces us to return to the issue of the marking of geographical identity when it comes to materials. As was noted at the beginning of this essay, early modern legal structures made provision for all that could be found buried below a certain depth in a territory's soil, or for flotsam and jetsam found floating in a territory's waters to belong to the ruler of that territory. In the legal sense, amber or other minerals belonged to the ruler, and the exploitation of them, as with the production of porcelain from Saxon earth by Augustus the Strong, can be thought of as creating a product that is inextricably linked to a unique geographical locality. When it came to Meissen this was certainly true in the eyes of Augustus' contemporaries – when they spoke and wrote about Europe's first porcelain they did not speak of Meissen, as we do today, but rather of 'porcelaine de Saxe' in France or simply of Saxe in the Ottoman Empire<sup>84</sup>. Here the place of the material's making/finding and the object made of it were linked by name. But there is no consistent or strong evidence that this is the case for amber until the twentieth century. Amber's status was decidedly less fixed than today: it could be draped with a variety of meanings, which could be cast off and replaced by others, or which might exist simultaneously. It was only in the last century that strong claims were made to the actual ownership of the material and that people more generally, with the rise of the notion of nation and national, have been able to link a nation with the material.

## Endnoten

1. Amber was shown in the exhibition *Polen–Deutschland. Tür an Tür. 1000 Jahre Kunst und Geschichte* at the Martin-Gropius Bau in Berlin, and is also addressed in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition: Berlin, Martin-Gropius Bau, *Tür an Tür. Polen – Deutschland. 1000 Jahre Kunst und Geschichte*, ed. Małgorzata Omilanowska, Köln 2011. The previous year, 2010, was POLSKA! YEAR in the United Kingdom, and this was marked with, among other things, an exhibition on amber in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, with catalogue: Glasgow, Hunterian Museum, *Amber. Tears of the Gods*, Neil Clarke, Edinburgh 2010.
2. The role of amber in modern Poland has been the subject of a doctoral thesis by Amy Goldenberg, *Polish Amber Art*, Thesis presented for the Doctor of Philosophy, University of Indiana, 2004. My own extended article on amber since 1870 will appear soon: *Bernstein. Ein deutscher Werkstoff?* in: *Ding, ding, ting. Objects as Cultural Mediators. German, Dutch and Nordic Language Areas*, ed. Kim Andriaga et al., Paris (Forthcoming 2014).
3. For background information, see: Rachel King, *Rethinking 'the oldest surviving amber in the west'*, in: *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 155 (1328), 2013, pp. 756–762.
4. Nicolaus Copernicus, *Three Copernican treatises: the Commentariolus of Copernicus, the Letter against Werner, the Narratio prima of Rheticus* (Records of civilization, sources and studies, vol. 30), trans. Edward Rosen, New York <sup>3</sup>1971, p. 189. For similar sentiments see also Martin Zeiller, *Topographia electorat, Brandenburgici et ducatus Pomeraniae. &c: das ist, Beschreibung der vomembsten vnd bekantisten stätte vnd plätz in dem hochlöblichsten churfürstenthum vnd march Brandenburg; vnd dem herzogtum Pommeren. Zusampt einem dopplten ahnhang, 1. Vom lande Preussen vnnnd Pomerellen, 2. Von Lifflande vnnnd selbige beruffenisten orten*, Frankfurt am Main 1652, p. 5 and Simon Grunau, *Preußische Chronik*, in: *Die preußischen Geschichtsschreiber des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, 3 vols, vol. III, Leipzig 1896, p. 52: "Casimirus König in Pohlen that als ein Christlicher Fürst und gab anno 1467 den Armen so wohl als den Reichen die sich mit Bornstein ernehrten denselben frey zu lesen". Grunau's work is claimed to date to the early sixteenth century. His opinions on amber were first published as an appendix to another work: Simon Grunau, *Simonis Grunovii, Monachi Ordinis Praedicatorum Tolkemitani Chronici*, in: Philipp Jacob Hartmann, *Succini Prussici physica & civilis historia: cum demonstratione ex autopsia & intimiori rerum experiential deducta*, Frankfurt am Main 1677, pp. 154–164. His work is never mentioned by his contemporaries and Karin Friedrich, *The other Prussia: Royal Prussia, Poland and liberty, 1569–1772* (Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History), Cambridge 2000, pp. 81–83 has questioned Grunau's reliability/authenticity.
5. On the formation of this guild, see Karl Gottfried Hagen, *Geschichte der Verwaltung des Börnsteins in Preußen. Von dem Herrn Medizinal- und Regierungsrath Hagen. Erster Abschnitt. Von der Zeit des Ordens bis zur Regierung König Friedrich I*, in: *Beiträge zur Kunde Preussens*, Bd. 6 (1), 1824, pp. 1–41, esp. p. 7, Wilhelm Stieda, *Lübische Bernsteinreher oder Pater-nostermacher*, in: *Mittheilungen des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Alterthumskunde*, Bd. 2 (7), 1885, pp. 97–112, esp. p. 111; Wilhelm Tesdorpf, *Gewinnung, Verarbeitung und Handel des Bernsteins in Preußen von der Ordenszeit bis zur Gegenwart*, Jena 1887, p. 38; Otto Pelka, *Bernstein*, Berlin 1920, p. 15; Lothar Dralle, *Der Bernsteinhandel des Deutschen Ordens in Preußen, vornehmlich zu Beginn des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Hansische Geschichtsblätter, Bd. 99), 1981, pp. 61–72, here pp. 65 and 67; Gisela Reineking von Bock, *Bernstein, das Gold der Ostsee*, Munich 1981, p. 28; and Janina Grabowska, *Polish Amber*, trans. Emma Harris, Warsaw 1982, p. 15.
6. Tesdorpf 1887, *Gewinnung*, pp. 34, 38, and 66 for an undated document; Pelka 1920, *Bernstein*, p. 15; Alfred Rohde, *Bernstein: Ein deutscher Werkstoff. Seine künstlerische Verarbeitung vom Mittelalter bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1937, p. 14. See also Dralle, 1981, *Der Bernsteinhandel*, pp. 61 and 65.
7. On this map and the collection of amber in it, see Jan Forkiewicz, *The Baltic amber deposit in the light of sixteenth-century cartographic resources*, in: *Libri Gedanenses* 1973 (4–5), pp. 21–

30. The copying process meant that this detail would appear reversed when reproduced in Magnus's *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*, the book he published in 1555, with the result that amber is shown being collected from the sea to Danzig's west, and that Royal Polish Prussia becomes the source of amber
8. Research has revealed that Münster's map is probably a reduced version of a chart by Heinrich Zell, which was itself probably based on a now lost map by Georg Rheticus, cartographer to Albrecht of Hohenzollern, ruler of Ducal Prussia. It is thus likely that it was Rheticus who first introduced amber and we might safely assume that Rheticus located amber in the lands of his own lord and not the rival Polish king. On its history, see Matthew McLean, *The Cosmographia of Sebastian Münster: describing the world in the Reformation* (St Andrews Studies in Reformation History), Aldershot 2007, pp. 176-177. The date of the *editio princeps* is disputed, cf. Francesca Fiorani, *The marvel of maps: art, cartography and politics in Renaissance Italy*, New Haven 2005, p. 85; Werner Horn, *Sebastian Münster's Map of Prussia and the Variants of it*, in: *Imago Mundi*, vol. 7 (1), 1950, pp. 67-73, here p. 68; and Karl Heinz Burmeister, *Georg Joachim Rheticus as a geographer and his contribution to the first map of Prussia*, in: *Imago Mundi*, 23 (1), 1969, pp. 73-76, here p. 76. According to McLean, Münster had been waiting for an updated map of Prussia at the time of his death.
  9. Richard W. Unger, *Mapping the Northern Mediterranean*, pp. 6-7, 10, 14, 17-18, paper presented at the *XIV International Economic History Congress*, Helsinki, Finland, August 2006; available to download <http://www.helsinki.fi/iehc2006/papers1/Unger.pdf>, 17.11.2013. Neither interpretation takes into account that, by the early fourteenth century, Italian commercial involvement with the region was also taking place via internal routes.
  10. See, for example, the 1466 chart by the Majorcan hydrographer Petrus Rosselli, or the 1489 chart by Albino de Canepa from Genoa. On Rosselli's charts specifically, see A. Wilhelm Lang, *Traces of Lost North European Sea Charts of the 15th Century*, in: *Imago Mundi*, 12 (1), 1955, pp. 31-44, esp. pp. 36-37. On lack of detail and the guesswork that was involved in mapping the Baltic, see Arnolds Spekke, *A brief cartographic-icographic view of the Eastern Baltic coast up to the 16th century*, in: *Imago Mundi*, vol. 5 (1), 1948, pp. 39-52, esp. 43; Lang 1955, *Traces of lost sea charts*, p. 32; Heinrich Winter, *The Changing Face of Scandinavia and Baltic Cartography up to 1532*, in: *Imago Mundi*, vol. 12 (1), 1955, pp. 45-54; Aleksander Gieysztor, *Le Centre et l'Est européens au XIVe siècle vus de la Méditerranée*, in: *Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel. Histoire économique du monde méditerranéen 1450-1650*, Toulouse 1973, pp. 219-225, here p. 220; and Unger 2006, *Mapping the Northern Mediterranean*, pp. 3-4.
  11. Summarised in Spekke 1948, *A brief view of the Eastern Baltic coast*, pp. 44-45.
  12. Pliny, *Natural History with an English Translation in Ten Volumes*, trans. D. E. Eichholz, vol. 10 (Libri XXXVI-XXXVII), Cambridge (Mass) 1962, Book XXXVII. XI-XIII on amber.
  13. Agricola, Georgius, *Georgii Agricolae de ortu & causis subterraneorum lib. V. De natura eorum quae effluunt ex terra lib. IIII. De natura fossilium lib. X. De ueteribus & nouis metallis lib. III. Bermannus; siue, de re metallica dialogus. Interpretatio Germanica uocum rei metallicae*, Basel 1546. Here I refer to: Georgius Agricola, *De natura fossilium (textbook of mineralogy)*. Translated from the first Latin edition of 1546 by M.C. Bandy and J.A. Bandy for the *Mineralogical Society of America* (The Geological Society of America, Special Paper 63), New York 1955, pp. 70-80.
  14. Andreas Aurifaber, *Succini Historia Ein kurtzer: gründlicher Bericht woher der Agtstein oder Börnstein vrsprünglich komme das er kein Baumhartz sey Sonder ein geschlecht des Bergwachs Vnd wie man jnen manigfaltiglich in artzneien möge gebrauchen*, Königsberg 1551 (cf. <sup>2</sup>1572), Andreas Aurifaber, *Succini Historia Breuiter & succinctè descripta, A Clariss. Viro, Domino D. Andrea Avrifabro, Vratisl. Quondam Illustriss. Principis Borussiaci Medico dignissimo, Et nunc primùm studio & opera, Laurentii Scholzii Med. Vratisl. in lucem edita*, in: *Consiliorum, et epistolarum medicinalium Ioh. Cratonis a Kraftheim, archiatri Caesarei, et aliorum praestantissimorum medicorum, liber quartus; nunc primum studio & labore Laurentii Scholzii medici Vratisl. in lucem editus*, 5 vols, vol. IV, Frankfurt am Main 1593, pp. 443-463 (cf. 1614).
  15. Agricola 1955, *De natura fossilium*, p. 75. Twenty years after the Lutheran conversion of the Order's Grand Master in 1525 and the associated secularization of their lands, Agricola was still asserting, for example, that the Teutonic Knights coordinated the collection and sale of amber in Sambia. Aurifaber makes a veiled but still clear reference to inaccuracies in Agricola's work: "Werden aber die selbigen, so gentslich an anderer gezeugnissen hangen, mir disfals guenstiger erscheinen, und mich alles beschwernis erlassen, so ich nicht der erst diese lere vom Boernstein an tag gebe, sonder vor mir davon geschriben hat der hochgelahrte und vortreffliche philosophus un' artzt D. Georgius Agricola, dere in der heubtsachn (wie ich solt sagen) mit mir eigentlich ubereintrifft..."
  16. The text was commissioned by Duke Albrecht. For a discussion of Albrecht's ability to read Latin see Thomas Anselmino, *Medizin und Pharmazie am Hofe Herzog Albrechts von Preussen: (1490-1568)* (Studien und Quellen zur Kulturgeschichte der frühen Neuzeit, Bd. 3), Heidelberg 2003, p. 103, n. 2. It is worth noting that Aurifaber suggests a link between the use of German and the new Lutheran religion, for in it prayers are said in German and not in Latin. Lufft is listed on the Index of 1559: *Index Auctorum, et Librorum, qui ab Officio Sanctae Rom. et Universalis Inquisitionis caveri ab omnibus ... mandantur, sub censuris contra legentes, vel tenentes libros prohibitos in Bulla, etc.*, Rome 1559: "Ioannes Luffe Vuitenberg. Impreffor".
  17. Göbel is the "Goebellio medico de nostri tempi" named by Ferrante Imperato, *Dell' Historia Naturale ... libri XXVIII. nella quale ... si tratta della diversa condition di miniere e pietre. Con alcune historie di piante & animali, etc.*, Naples 1599; the "Severinus" cited in Ulisse Aldrovandi's posthumous *Musaeum metallicum in libros IV. distributum, Bartholomaeus Ambrosinus ... labore et studio composuit cum indice copiosissimo*, Bologna 1648 and the "Gebelius" "medicus hereticus" referred to by Apollonio Menabeni, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Manoscritti, A. 119 inf., *Observationes de' Succino* (1575-1605).
  18. Severin Göbel, *Pia commonefactio de passione, resurrexione ac beneficiis Christi, quae in historia succini depinguntur. Hvic vera de origine succini addita est sententia*, Oberursell 1558, reprinted as book one of Severin Göbel, *De Succino libri Dvo; Horvm Prior Liber continen piam commonefactionem, de pabione, resurrexione, ac beneficiis Christi, quae in historia Succini depinguntur; Posterior veram de origine Succini addit sententiam Avthore Seuerino Goebelio, Medico Doctore...*; in: *De Omni rerum fossilium genere, gemmis, lapidibus, metallis Et Hviusmodi, Libri Aliqvot, Pleriqve Nvnc Primvm Editi*. Conradus Gesnerus, Zürich 1565. Gesner appears to have been particularly interested in amber in Winter/Spring 1564-5. His work suggests that he was aware of Caspar Peucer's *Propositiones de origine et causis succini Prussiaci*, Wittenberg 1555 but had yet to read them. Then, in April 1565, Achilles Gasser sent him a copy of Severin Göbel's work (discussed above). He had also written to an unnamed friend for information – this may have been Aurifaber or even Rheticus, with whom Gesner had studied. In 1548, nearly a decade after first going to Königsberg, Rheticus returned to Zürich to work with Gesner, preparing a contribution to Gesner's *Pandecta*. These dates can be reconstructed from Hero Tilemann, *Das zweite Buch der medizinischen Briefe des Züricher Philosophen und Arztes Konrad Gessner. Eine Übersetzung (Epistolarum medicinalium Conradi Gesneri medici et philosophi Tigurini. libr. III ed. C. Wolf, Zürich 1577)*, Tübingen 1939, pp. 30, 39, 40, 42, 46, 50-1, 54, 63; and Burmeister 1969, *Rheticus as a geographer*, pp. 73, 75. For Göbel's work in German, see Severin Göbel, *Historj vnd Eigendlicher bericht von herkommen vrsprung vnd vielfeltigeen brauch des Boernsteins neben andern saubern Berckhartzten*, Königsberg 1566; and Severin Göbel, *De Svccino libri duo ... de origine Succini*, Königsberg 1582.
  19. On whom see Nancy G. Siraisi, *History, medicine, and the traditions of Renaissance learning, Cultures of knowledge in the early modern world*, Ann Arbor 2007, p. 227 and Paula Findlen, *Possessing nature: museums, collecting, and scientific culture in early modern Italy* (Studies on the history of society and culture, vol. 20) Berkeley etc., 1994, p. 69. For his connections, see

- Richard Palmer, *Pharmacy in the Republic of Venice in the sixteenth century*, in: *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. A. Wear et al., CUP 1985, pp. 100-117.
20. Amber was shown in New York in 1853, at Santiago in Chile in 1875 and in London in 1891. For the exhibitors at the Paris exhibition see *Weltausstellung in Paris 1900: amtlicher Katalog der Ausstellung des Deutschen Reichs*, ed. Otto N. Witt, Berlin 1900.
  21. Cornelius Tacitus, *Germania*, trans. J. B. Rives (Clarendon ancient history series), Oxford/New York 1999, V. 55.
  22. Otto Pelka, *Die Meister der Bernsteinkunst*, in: *Anzeiger und Mitteilungen des Germanischen National-Museums in Nürnberg*, Leipzig 1918.
  23. Authors pointed out that where amber had carried Prussia's name abroad, it was now the Treaty of Versailles that was responsible. For any reference to the region see Karl Andrée, *Der Bernstein und seine Bedeutung in Natur- und Geisteswissenschaften, Kunst und Kunstgewerbe, Technik, Industrie und Handel*, Königsberg 1937, pp. 7-8: Versailles had redrawn the boundaries of Europe and left East Prussia separated from mainland Germany, a status cemented by pro-Germany vote in a referendum in 1920. Prussia's new physical removal from Germany and the economic difficulties this involved explains the tone of the following passage: "The link between amber and German East Prussia (was) indissoluble, because Nature has laid such a rich and inexhaustible wealth of this precious stone in the lap of the old lands of Prussia that no other deposit ... outside of our country can compete with it ... if in the interests of the German economy and the preservation of the jobs of many hundreds of German workers the thankworthy attempt were to be made to bring amber back into bloom and to revive with it one of the most unique German industries in the new Germany, then it is in the interest of German East Prussia, which first became known to the Mediterranean world in Antiquity through its amber, and which after the War and the demarcation enforced by Versailles, has once again drawn the attention of an international public to it, to wish these attempts complete success". Author's translation.
  24. Georg Malkowsky, *Das samländische Gold in Paris*, in: *Die Pariser Weltausstellung in Wort und Bild*, Berlin 1900, p. 138.
  25. Alfred Rohde, *Königsberger Bernsteinarbeiten des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 1, 1934, pp. 205-224.
  26. Rohde 1937, *Bernstein*; Alfred Rohde, *Bernstein, ein deutscher Werkstoff, in der Vergangenheit*, in: Berlin, Preußische Staatsmannufakturen, *Ausstellung der Preußischen Akademie der Künste zum 175jährigen Bestehen der Staatlichen Porzellan-Manufaktur, Berlin*, Berlin 1938, pp. 93-102.
  27. Anonymus, *Bernstein als urdeutscher Schmuck*, in: *Die Goldschmiedekunst* 9, 1933, p. 433: "Wenn Du aber, deutscher Mann und Du deutsche Frau, die schönen Gegenstände aus Bernstein wählst, so bringst Du damit ein wunderbares Geschenk der Heimerde und Du gibst Hunderten Arbeitsmöglichkeit und lässt auch sie mit zukunftsreichen Augen an dem Erstarren unseres Vaterlandes Anteil nehmen": "But if you, German man or German woman, choose beautiful objects made from amber, so you will be taking a wonderful gift from your home soil, giving a chance of work to hundreds and helping them - with eyes full of hope - to play their part in strengthening our Fatherland".
  28. Wilhelm Bölsche, *Der deutsche Bernstein*, in: *Velhagen und Klasing's Monatshefte* 2 (1934/5), pp. 89-90: "Der blonde Stein, der zugleich an deutsche Locke erinnert und reife Garbe".
  29. Alfred Rohde, *Das Buch vom Bernstein: Bernstein ein deutscher Werkstoff*, Königsberg <sup>2</sup>1941, p. 22.
  30. Rohde <sup>2</sup>1941, *Das Buch vom Bernstein*, p. 21.
  31. Christian Schwahn, *Deutsche Schmucksteine*, in: *Die Goldschmiedekunst* 9, 1933, p. 191.: "Deutscher Stein aus deutschem Boden, / Stolz gefasst von deiner Hand, / Dich zu tragen ist geboten / Dem, der liebt sein Vaterland. / Urgewalten, die dich schufen, / Deutscher schlichter Edelstein, / Strahlen aus von Dir und rufen: / Deutsch soll auch mein Träger sein".
  32. Discussed at length in Goldenberg 2004, *Polish Amber Art*. St Brigida is one of the most significant religious sites in modern Poland because it is connected to Solidarność. After the declaration of martial law in Gdansk in December 1981, St Brigida's became a centre of resistance, hiding such figures as Lech Wałęsa.
  33. Quoted in Janina Grabowska, *Polish Amber*, trans. Emma Harris, Warsaw 1982, p. 21.
  34. Two examples being: Ptolemy, *Geografia cioè descrizione universale della terra partita in due volumi, nel primo de' quali si contengono gli otto libri della geografia di Cl. Tolomeo nuouamente con singolare studio rircontrati, & corretti dall'eccellmo. sig. Gio. Ant. Magini Padovano ... dal latino nell'italiano tradotta dal r.d. Leonardo Cernoti*, Venice 1598, pp. 110-111 where amber appears under Prussia, which is a subsection of the chapter on Poland, and Georg Braun, *Civitates orbis terrarum*, Cologne 1572 (here the edition of 1599), p. 46, which discusses amber in the section on "Gedanum" or Danzig.
  35. Severin Göbel, *Einfeltiger jedoch gründlicher Bericht und Bedencken vom Ursprung des Agadt oder Börnsteins*, Königsberg 1616; cf. Severin Göbel, *Vom Indianischen Boernstein Bericht*, Königsberg 1586.
  36. The Galileo Project has Göbel Jr. travelling to Padua in the company of Michael Maeir in 1591. This is currently not supported by archival evidence. The petition for a place at Padua can be found in Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Preußischer Kulturbesitz XX Hauptabteilung, Ostpreußische Folianten, 60, f. 9r, letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1596 to Doge Marino Grimani in Venice.
  37. Göbel 1616, *Einfeltiger Bericht*, unpaginated, which duke is unclear as no name is mentioned.
  38. Fynes Moryson, *An itinerary wvritten by Fynes Moryson gent. first in the Latine tongue, and then translated by him into English: containing his ten yeeres travell through the twelue domjnions of Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Jtaly, Turky, France, England, Scotland, and Ireland. Diuided into III parts. The I. part. containeth a jourmall through all the said twelue dominions. The II. part. containeth the rebellion of Hugh, earle of Tyrone, and the appeasing thereof: written also in forme of a jourmall. The III. part. containeth a discourse vpon seuerall heads, through all the said seuerall dominions*, London 1617, p. 81. See Tesdorpf 1887, *Gewinnung*, p. 15 n. 2 for the Jaski genealogy.
  39. Göbel 1616, *Einfeltiger Bericht*, unpaginated; and Friedrich Samuel Bock, *Versuch einer kurzen Naturgeschichte des Preußischen Bernsteins und einer neuen wahrscheinlichen Erklärung seines Ursprunges*, Königsberg 1767, p. 67.
  40. Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Miscellanea Armadio XV, 80, *Itinerario di Iacomo Fantuzzi da Ravenna nel partire di Polonia dell' 1652*, ff. 25r-27v. A printed edition of this manuscript is available as Giacomo Fantuzzi, *Diariusz podróży po Europie (1652) Giacomo Fantuzzi; z rękopisu przełożył, wstępem i przypisami opatrzył Wojciech Tygielski*, Warsaw 1990 and more recently in Italian as Giacomo Fantuzzi, *Diario del viaggio europeo (1652) con istruzioni et avvertimenti per far viaggi lunghi* Giacomo Fantuzzi, ed. Piotr Salwa e Wojciech Tygielski (Conferenze accademia polacca delle scienze. Biblioteca e centro di studi a Roma, vol. 109), Warsaw 1998.
  41. Grabowska 1983, *Polish Amber*, p. 9. Ogiej also sought to acquire amber through his contacts, visiting the father-in-law of the theologian Martin Ruarus. See the story told in Kurt Schottmüller, *Reiseindrücke aus Danzig, Lübeck, Hamburg und Holland 1636. Nach dem neuentdeckten II. Teil von Charles Ogiers Gesandtschaftstagebuch*, in: *Zeitschrift des Westpreußischen Geschichtsvereins* 51, 1910, pp. 199-273, here p. 221.
  42. Elżbieta Mierzwińska, *Bernsteinkunst*, in: *Danziger Kunst vom 15. bis 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Teresa Grzybkowska, Danzig 1997, pp. 165-181, here p. 171.
  43. Marquis Ferdinando Cospi began collecting around 1624. In 1657, Cospi donated his collection to the town of Bologna. Here, it was displayed in the Palazzo Pubblico alongside Aldrovandi's collections. In 1742 the Senate decided to move the collection to the Palazzo Poggi, where a number of objects still remain, although the one-time system of classification has been dissolved. The collection was published in Lorenzo Legati, *Museo Cospiano annesso a quello del famoso Ulisse Aldrovandi e donato alla sua patria dall'illustrissimo signor Ferdinando Cospi*, Bologna 1677, see pp. 48-50, 178, 285, 307 on amber. Zani accompanied the Polish ambassador to Moscow in 1671-1672, see Ercole

- Zani, *Relazione, e viaggio della Moscovia*, Parma 1691; also discussed in Gaetano Platania, *Il bolognese Ercole Zani: un italiano in viaggio in Moscovia*, in: *Da est ad ovest, da ovest ad est: viaggiatori per le strade del mondo*, ed. Gaetano Platania, Viterbo 2006, pp. 181-202.
44. Manfredo Settala used his contacts to build up a considerable collection of amber. But for the descriptions in the numerous catalogues he commissioned of his collection and their likenesses, these objects have disappeared. See Paolo Maria Terzagò, *Museo o galleria adunata dal sapere, e dallo studio del signore canonico Manfredo Settala Descritta in latino dal Sig. Paolo Maria Terzagò; et hora in italiano dal Sig. Pietro Francesco Scarabelli e dal medemo accresciuta*, Tortona 1666, pp. 56-61. This text had originally appeared two years earlier as *Museum Septalianum Manfredi Septalæ Patritii Mediolanensis industrioso labore constructum; Pauli Maria Terzagii ... geniali laconismo descriptum, etc.*, Tortona 1664. Information about Tito Livio Buratino is scarce. It appears that he is the same "viro erudito in Mathematicis" who presented Valeriano Magni, a Capuchin friar from Milan and vehement supporter of Galileo, with a hydrostatic balance in 1644. Using this Magni, who was working at the court of Wladyslaw IV Vasa in Warsaw, was able to discover the density of mercury, see Michael John Gorman, *The Scientific Counter-Revolution: mathematics, natural philosophy and experimentalism in Jesuit culture 1580-c1670*, Thesis presented for the Doctor of Philosophy, EUI Florence, 1998, p. 182, n. 29. Gorman cites Sebastiano Ciampi, *Bibliografia critica delle antiche reciproche corrispondenze politiche, ecclesiastiche, scientifiche, letterarie, artistiche dell' Italia colla Russia, colla Polonia ed altre parti settentrionali il tutto raccolto*, 3 vols, vol. I, Florence 1834-42, p. 311 as his source. A more comprehensive treatment of Buratino is: Jan Wladyslaw Wos, *Tito Livio Burattini, uno scienziato italiano nella Polonia del Seicento*, in: *L'Europa di Giovanni Sobieski. Cultura, Politica, Mercatura e Società*, ed. Gaetano Platania, Viterbo 2005, pp. 23-36.
45. Philipp Hainhofer, *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Philipp Hainhofer und Herzog August d. J. von Braunschweig-Lüneburg* (Forschungshefte herausgegeben vom Bayerischen Nationalmuseum München, Bd. 8), ed. Ronald Gobiet, Munich 1984, pp. 424-425. The connections between the Polish royal family and the Barberini were strong. For some examples see the entrances of the Polish princes reported by Giacinto Gigli, *Diario di Roma*, ed. Manlio Barberito, 2 vols, vols. I and II, Rome 1994, I, pp. 237, 244, 399, 42; II, p. 359.
46. Martial, *Epigrams*, trans. D. R. S. Shackleton Bailey (Loeb classical library 94) 3 vols, vols. I and III, Cambridge, etc., 1993, I, IV. 32 and 59 and II. VI. 15; discussed in Martial, *Select Epigrams*, ed. Lindsay and Patricia Watson (Cambridge Greek and Latin classics) Cambridge 2003, p. 336; and Rosario Moreno Soldevilla, *Martial, Book IV: a commentary* (Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava, vol. 278), Leiden 2006, pp. 269, 416. An article on inclusions on amber in which these objects and their relationship with poetry are discussed more extensively is forthcoming as: Rachel King, *Collecting Nature within Nature – Animal Inclusions in Amber in Early Modern Collections, or "Miniature Marvels of Nature"*, in: *Collecting Nature*, ed. Andrea Galdy and Sylvia Heudecker (Forthcoming 2014).
47. Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Miscellanea Armadio 80, *Itinerario di Iacomo Fantuzzi da Ravenna nel partire di Polonia dell' 1652*, ff. 26r-v.: "et in casa Borghese vi è un bellissimo bicchiere di ambra gialla donato già da un vescovo Polacco al Sig. Cardinale Borghese, nel manico ò piede stallo del quale dentro un gran globo di ambra si vede come viva una ranocchia col moto di sotto latet et lucet".
48. Martial 1993, *Epigrams*, I. IV.32: "Shut in Phaethon's drop, a bee both hides and shines, so that she seems imprisoned in her own nectar. She has a worthy reward for all of her sufferings. One might believe that she herself willed to die". Yet, as another example demonstrates such meanings could be entirely absent from the exchange. The story of one lizard in amber is recounted by see John Fletcher, *Kircher and Duke August of Wolfenbüttel: museal thoughts*, in: *Enciclopedia in Roma barocca: Athanasius Kircher e il Museo del Collegio Romano tra Wunderkammer e museo scientifico*, ed. Maristella Casciati et al., Venice 1986, pp. 282-294, here especially pp. 285-286. This may be the "little animal enclosed in spuma maris" sent to Kircher by August of Wolfenbüttel in December 1659. It appears with a laudatory reference to its donor in Athanasius Kircher, *Mundus subterraneus, in XII libros digestus: quo divinum subterrestris mundi opificium, mira ergasteriorum naturæ in eo distributio, verbo [pantamorphon] protei regnum, universæ denique naturæ majestas & divitiæ summa rerum varietate exponuntur: abditorum effectuum causæ acri indagine inquisitæ demonstrantur: cognitæ per artis & naturæ conjugium ad humanæ vitæ necessarium usum vario experimentorum apparatu, necnon novo modo, & ratione applicantur*, 2 vols, Amsterdam 1664-5. It is illustrated in Giorgio da Sepi, *Romani Collegii Societatis Jesu musæum celeberrimum... ex legato Alphonsi Donini, S.P.Q.R. a secretis... liberalitate relictum... instruxit... publicæ luci votisque exponit Georgius de Sepibus Valesius, authoris in machinis concinnandis executor*, Amsterdam 1678, p. 44, and in Filippo Buonanni, *Musæum Kircherianum, sive, Museum a P. Athanasio Kirchero in Collegio Romano Societatis Jesu: jam pridem incoeptum nuper restitutum, auctum, descriptum & iconibus illustratum Excellentissimo domino Francisco Mariae Ruspolo ... oblatum a P. Philippo bonanni Societatis Jesu*, Rome 1709, p. 215.
49. In the ancient account of amber's creation Phaëthon seeks proof of his father's paternity by asking to be allowed to hold the reins to Helios' chariot of drawing the sun. Unaccustomed to controlling the powerful horses, Phaëthon allows the wagon to career towards the earth, at whose frightened request it is dashed from the sky by a thunderbolt. Phaëthon plummets to his death in the river Eridanus, where the discovery of body by his mother and sisters provokes such overwhelming grief that his sisters are transformed into trees. Their arms and hands gnarl and their tears course down their skin – now knotted bark – as drops of liquid amber. This myth was well-known in the early modern period, principally because of the role it played in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but also because it could be found in the writings of several ancient authors, such as Euripides, Hesiod and Aeschylus.
50. The altar is discussed in K. Aschengreen-Piacenti, *Due altari in ambra al Museo degli Argenti*, in: *Bollettino d'Arte*, vol. 4 (5), 1966, pp. 163-166, here p. 165. By 1704, this altar had entered the possession of Cosimo III and is recorded in *Inventario della Galleria del 1704*, n. 317, on which see Aschengreen-Piacenti 1966, *Due altari*. Aschengreen-Piacenti highlights the presence of a note inside the altar, which suggests that it was still in Danzig in 1669: "Das Ich Unterschriebener von Herrn Johan Adrian König dass Versetzte Pfandt von Herrn Petro Gatorio, gutt Volkommen undt Unversehret empfangen habe, tuhe ich mit Eigener Unterschrift bezeigen. Datum Dantzig den 24. Sept. Anno 1669 – Woycieck Zelesky MP; Hanns Steiniger MPia". I have yet to trace these persons.
51. On Trzebicki see Gaetano Platania, *Viaggi, mercatura e politica: due lucchesi nel regno dei Sarmati europei nel XVII secolo: Pietro e Tommaso Talenti* (Viaggi & storia, vol. 2), Viterbo 2003, p. 125; Trzebicki was deputy chancellor of the Polish Crown from 1652, bishop of Przemysl from 1655, and bishop of Crakow from 1658.
52. On Cybo's dealings see *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 72 vols, vol. XXV, Rome, 1960-2009, pp. 227-232, and Platania 2003, *Viaggi*, pp. 123, 137. For this object, see *Il Monastero di Santa Chiara*, ed. Annachiara Alabiso and Mario De Cunzio, Naples 1995, pp. 118-119.
53. The donation is discussed in Giacinto Gimma, *Della storia naturale delle gemme, delle pietre, e di tutti i minerali, ovvero della fisica sotterranea di Giacinto Gimma ... in cui delle gemme, e delle pietre stesse si spiegano la nobiltà, i nomi, i colori, le spezie, i luoghi, la figura, la generazione, la grandezza, la durezza, la madre, l'uso, le virtù, le favole; se al fuoco resistano; quali sieno nella Sagra Scrittura nominate; quali i simboli ... Si, da ancora la cognizione de' metalli, delle terre de' sali, de' solfi, de' bitumi ... di qualche si tratta nella storia de' fossili, che dalle pietre si formano; delle caverne, delle acque, e Ede' fuochi sotterranei, de' vulcani del mondo ... oltre alcuni trattati valevoli a dilucidare la storia tutta della minerale, ed altri, che della vegetevole, e di quella degli animali, sono proprj*, 2 vols, vol. I, Naples 1730, p.

393. My research has uncovered no Catherina married to Jan Zamoyski (1542-1605), Great Crown Chancellor and Great Crown Hetman or to Andrzej Zamoyski (1716-1792) Great Crown Chancellor, humanist and reformer. Caterina Zamoschi (Gimma's spelling) may refer to Katarzyna (née Ostrogska) (1602-1642) who married Tomasz Zamoyski (1594-1638), Deputy Grand Chancellor of Poland, in 1620. This places the donations between 1620 and 1642, possibly in 1633-1634 when the coronation of a new King in Poland (Wladyslaw IV Vasa) occasioned an embassy to Italy. On this event see Gigli 1994, *Diario*, vol. I, pp. 237 and 244. There were still two amber candlesticks in the treasury at Loreto in 1889: Julius Lessing, *Aus den Kirchenschätzen S. Nicolò in Bari und der Santa Casa in Loreto*, in: *Jahrbuch der Preußischen Kunstsammlungen*, vol. 10, 1889, pp. 151-154.
54. Gaetano Platania, *Le donne di Casa Sobieski nella Roma del Sei-Settecento*, in: *Donne di Potere Donne al Potere*, ed. Associazione F.I.D.A.P.A. – Sezione Viterbo, Viterbo 1999, pp. 150-151.
55. Archivio Biblioteca Uffizi, Ms. 95, *Inventario della Galleria* (1753) reproduced online at: [http://www.memofonte.it/home/files/pdf/lorenese\\_1753\\_95.pdf](http://www.memofonte.it/home/files/pdf/lorenese_1753_95.pdf) 17.11.2013. Entry 985 reads: "Una cassetta impiallacciata d'ambra a spartimenti che alcuni sono bassorilievi d'avorio bianco con fondo di tabi" nero a onde, con colonnette e figurine d'ambra gialla e bianca con rosette simili e s'apre davanti con due sportelli con coperchio sopra fermo a sepolcro con quattro gigli e un cavallino d'avorio in mezzo, con figura sopra d'ambra gialla che rappresenta S. Casimiro, foderato dentro di velluto rosso cremisi, con palline sotto d'ambra gialla alta braccia 1/3 [19.3 cm], larga soldi 9 [26.1 cm] e lunga soldi 19 [55.1 cm]. Inventario vecchio n. 335. See most recently Marilena Mosco, *Maria Maddalena of Austria. Amber*, in: *The Museo degli argenti: collections and collectors*, ed. Marilena Mosco and Ornella Casazza, Florence 2007, pp. 96-107, p. 104 (fig. 9) on this object. The same object is recorded as having been in the chapel in Archivio di Stato Firenze, *Guardaroba Medicea*. 1090, f. 3 (n. 11), see K. Aschengreen-Piacenti, *Il Museo degli Argenti*, Florence 1967, pp. 158-160, Nr. Inv. Bargello 1917 (1) 77. Entry 951 in the 1753 inventory refers to a small box with the portrait of King Sigismund in its lid.
56. Archivio di Stato Firenze, Guardaroba Medicea 152, Inventario di Robe portate di Francia la Serenissima Madama Cristiana di Lorena Gran Duchessa di Toscana, state donate in vita dalla cristiana madre del re Enrico, stimate l'anno 1589 dal signor Bernardo Vecchietti e Giaches e parte da Benedetto e Vincenzo Buonmattei (1589) f. 51, reproduced in: Paola Barocchiani and Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà, *Collezionismo mediceo e storia artistica I: Da Cosimo I a Cosimo II (1540-1621)* 2 vols, vol. I, Florence 2002, pp. 377-382 I. Document also cited in Aschengreen-Piacenti 1966, *Due altari*, p. 163.
57. Discussed in Johann Georg Keyssler, *Travels through Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy, and Lorrain: Giving a true and just description of the present state of those countries; their natural, literary, and political history; manners, laws, commerce, manufactures, painting, sculpture, architecture, coins, antiquities, curiosities of art and nature, &c. Illustrated with copper-plates, engraved from drawings taken on the spot. By John George Keyssler, Fellow of the Royal Society in London. Carefully translated from the second edition of German*, London: printed for A. Linde, 1756.
58. Maria Concetta Di Natale et al., *Splendori di Sicilia: arti decorative dal Rinascimento al Barocco*, Milan 2001, p. 379 (cat. no. Argenti 37) and *Wunderkammer siciliana alle origini del museo perduto*, ed. Vincenzo Abbate, Palermo et al., 2001, pp. 141-144 (cat. no. I.42); The Polish connection with the island began in 1636 with Urban VIII's proclamation of St Casimir of Poland as the compatron of Palermo; this saint's cult was particularly supported by the Palermitan convent of San Nicola da Tolentino dei Padri Agostiniani Scalzi.
59. Archivio di Stato Firenze, Guardaroba Medicea 190, Inventory of 1595-1597, f. 9 for an amber rosary, and two amber crucifixes, possibly the "crucem et globules aliquos succini, quod in ... ducatu ad litus maris Baltici reperitur et in Italia, ut refertur, rarum esse solet" sent by Johann Friedrich of Pomerania in June 1578. The accompanying letter is reproduced in Martin Wehrmann, *Beziehungen pommerscher Fürsten zu Florenz*, in: *Baltische Studien* Neue Folge 18, 1914, pp. 57-82, here pp. 64-65. The objects may have been sent in relation to the letter of two years before in which Johann Friedrich asked Francesco to allow one of his subjects to study at the University of Siena.
60. For this see, Archivio Biblioteca Uffizi, Ms. 76, *Inventario della Galleria* (1638-1654) reproduced in: Paola Barocchi and Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà, *Collezionismo mediceo e storia artistica. II: Il cardinale Carlo Maria Maddalena, Don Lorenzo, Ferdinando II, Vittoria della Rovere, 1621-1666*, 3 vols, vol. II, Florence 2005, pp. 558-688, f. 25v.: "Una lumiera grande a tre palchi, con otto viticci per palco d'ambra gialla, con aovati e tondi pieni di figurine e storioline d'ambra bianca, e un'aquila sopra che la par che la rega attaccata nel mezzo a detta Tribuna, numero 1". See also Aschengreen-Piacenti 1966, *Due altari*, p. 163 and Marilena Mosco, *Maria Maddalena of Austria. Amber*, in: *The Museo degli argenti: collections and collectors*, ed. Marilena Mosco and Ornella Casazza, Florence 2007, pp. 96-107, p. 99, who gives the date as 1589. This appears to be too early. See Archivio di Stato Firenze, Guardaroba Medicea 336, *Debitori e Creditori della Guardaroba*, quoted in Ornella Casazza, *Le ambre di Maria Maddalena d'Austria al Museo degli Argenti*, in: *Ambre: trasparenze dall'antico*, ed. Maria Luisa Nava and Antonio Salerno, Milan 2007, pp. 39-47, here p. 40 for the payment made for "un campanello bello per una lumiera d'ambra di peso 22 libbre" in 1618. Unlike the other ambers in the Tribuna, the chandelier was given pride of place. It hung above the original location of the Tempietto until 1649 on which see Scott J. Schaefer, *The Studiolo of Francesco I de' Medici in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence*, Thesis submitted for the Doctor of Philosophy, Bryn Mawr College, 1976, p. 75. Richard Lassels saw it in its new position in 1650 when he visited the Galleria on his way to Rome: Richard Lassels, *The voyage of Italy, or A compleat journey through Italy: With the characters of the people, and the description of the chief townes, churches, monasteries, tombes, libraries, pallsaces, villas, gardens, pictures, statues, antiquities: As also of the interest, government, riches, force, &c., of all the princes*, Paris 1670, pp. 167-168. Like the Tempietto, it had been relocated to the Gabinetto di Madama: Archivio Biblioteca Uffizi, Ms. 95, *Inventario della Galleria* (1753) reproduced online at: [http://www.memofonte.it/home/files/pdf/lorenese\\_1753\\_95.pdf](http://www.memofonte.it/home/files/pdf/lorenese_1753_95.pdf) 17.11.2013, Entry 2865. This room had a south-facing window and the chandelier was hung directly in its light. Descriptions of the chandelier by those who saw it not only help us to locate it but also to gain an accurate picture of its real appearance. According to the above-mentioned Lassels, the chandelier was inlaid with "a world of little figures". He believed these to be of marble or wax but they were probably bone amber. According to Johann Georg Keyssler, who saw the Medici chandelier in 1729/30, the "little world of figures" Lassels had mentioned were actually the "heads of princes and princesses of [the] illustrious house [of Brandenburg]" from whom the chandelier had been a gift, see Keyssler 1756, *The travels*, p. 431. Lassels too, had heard that the chandelier had been a gift but from quite another source entirely. It had been presented to Mathias de' Medici by the duke of Saxony, Johann Georg, who had been given it by Sophia "Duchess of Lüneburg", the wife of Georg Friedrich. This story was also current in 1730; Giacinto Gimma was repeating it as Keyssler was telling his version, see Gimma 1730, *Della storia naturale*, p. 393. It was, however, Keyssler's variant which Giuseppe Bianchi noted when he prepared his *Catalogo Dimostrativo* (Archivio Biblioteca Uffizi, Ms. 67, *Il Catalogo Dimostrativo*, Giuseppe Bianchi, 1768). Already over a hundred years old by the time Bianchi wrote above it, the chandelier's arms had become broken and it was beginning to fall apart. It was moved again, this time to the guardaroba for safekeeping, where all traces have since vanished, see Aschengreen-Piacenti 1966, *Due altari*, p. 163. Bianchi too believed that the chandelier had been a gift from the house of Brandenburg. For him, the eagle with sceptre surmounting it provided the proof. According to Bianchi, the roundels also contained likenesses of personages from this family; indeed, they formed a genealogy. But Bianchi's account is no more authoritative than Keyssler or Lassels for it too is also filled with errors. One is Bianchi's contention that King Frederick Wil-

- helm I, "father of the present King of Prussia", had given the chandelier to Cosimo III. Their reigns, however, do not coincide. Bianchi clearly had the wrong Cosimo in mind or he had counted Cosimo Pater Patriae as the first duke. A second undated document anonymously corrects this; here the chandelier is described as having been given to Cosimo II by the duke of Brandenburg (Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze, Magliabechiano XII, 34, ff. 254-60, Galleria (undated) reproduced online at: <http://www.-memofonte.it/home/files/pdf/galleria.pdf> 17.11.2013). This agrees with what is known about the counterweight commissioned in 1618 and is probably the closest we can come to the truth. Which duke is meant? It can only have been Johann Sigismund, Elector of Brandenburg.
61. Johannes Voigt, *Fürstenleben und Fürstensitte im sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, in: *Historisches Taschenbuch*, vol. 6, ed. Friedrich von Raumer, Leipzig 1835, pp. 201-371, here p. 365.
  62. Hermann Ehrenberg, *Die Kunst am Hofe der Herzöge von Preussen*, Leipzig 1899, p. 156.
  63. Rohde 1937, *Bernstein*, pp. 22-23, 45; Reineking von Bock 1981, *Bernstein, das Gold der Ostsee*, p. 69 (fig. 64); and, most recently, *Cranach und die Kunst der Renaissance unter den Hohenzollern. Kirche, Hof und Stadtkultur: eine Ausstellung der Stiftung Preussische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg in Kooperation mit der Evangelischen Kirchengemeinde St. Petri-St. Marien*, Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009, pp. 244-245 (cat. no. V. 39-40). It is unclear if these plates are related to the large piece of amber in the possession of Königsberg notary Jacob Stolz, which was turned into twelve plates and reported by Matthaeus Praetorius. See Karl Gottfried Hagen, *Geschichte der im Jahr 1803 in Ostpreußen gefundenen großen Börnsteinmasse und Vergleichung derselben mit andern, deren in Acten und bei Schriftstellern erwähnt wird*, in: *Beiträge zur Kunde Preussens*, vol. 6 (6), 1824, pp. 507-523.
  64. *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, Vienna 1894, doc. 12154, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1593, Inventarium, so auff gottselig absterben weiland der allerchristlichsten Khünigin Elisabeth zu Frankreich, n. 40: "Ein Drinkgeschier mit seiner Hull von ganzem Augstein, so die Herzogin in Preussen verehrt; geschätzt per 60 fl.", and doc. 12158, dated 6th September 1593, Verzeichnis deren stuck, so die kais. maj. aus der konigin in Frankreich seligen verlassenschaft begern, unnumbered "Ein Drinkgeschier mit seiner Hull von ganzem Agstein, so die Herzogin in Preussen verehrt, geschätzt per 60 fl" sent to Rudolf II.
  65. *A Catalogue of the Lansdowne Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London 1819, Num. 74, 69, letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> June 1593 concerning Dr Michael Peiscer, physician to the Marquis of Brandenburg, who brings a letter for the queen. Cf. *A Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library deposited in the British Museum*, London 1802, Vespasian, F. III, 163, Junii 1595. Sophia of Bruns. Luneb. ... to Q. Eliz. Recommending Dr. Peiscer, ...
  66. M. T. W Payne, *An inventory of Queen Anne of Denmark's 'ornaments, furniture, household stuffe, and other parcells' at Denmark House, 1619*, in: *Journal of the History of Collections*, vol. 13 (1), 2001, pp. 23-44.
  67. Ekkehard Schmidberger, *Schatzkunst 800 – 1800. Kunsthandwerk und Plastik der Staatlichen Museen Kassel im Hessischen Landesmuseum Kassel*, Wolftrathshausen 2001, pp. 176-177 (cat. no. 71), cf. pp. 178-179 (cat. no. 72), Reineking von Bock 1981, *Bernstein, das Gold der Ostsee*, p. 32; Rohde 1937, *Bernstein*, p. 28; Pelka 1920, *Bernstein*, p. 39. Other gifts which have a connection with or will probably be traced back to the dukes of Prussia when more research has been done are a gamesboard given to her husband the Elector of Saxony by Magdalene Sibylle of Brandenburg-Bayreuth, the granddaughter of the incapacitated Albrecht Friedrich, whose wife had sent amber to her cousin Rudolf II; an amber gamesboard was given to Johann Friedrich, Duke of Württemberg, who married Barbara, Margravine of Brandenburg, the daughter of Georg Friedrich's heir, Elector Joachim Friedrich, in 1609.
  68. Tesdorpf 1887, *Gewinnung*, p. 41-42; see also Pelka 1918, *Die Meister der Bernsteinkunst*, pp. 24-32; Pelka 1920, *Bernstein*, p. 42; Rohde 1937, *Bernstein*, p. 40; and Reineking von Bock 1981, *Bernstein, das Gold der Ostsee*, p. 36.
  69. See for example, the medal with a likeness of Georg Friedrich von Brandenburg, Inv. Nr. Med9121 in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.
  70. Schmidberger 2001, *Schatzkunst 800 – 1800*, pp. 252-253 (cat. no. 110). See also the altar probably given by Friedrich Wilhelm as a wedding gift to his sister Luise Charlotte at the time of her marriage to Duke Jakob of Kurland in 1645: *Bernstein für Thron und Altar: das Gold des Meeres in fürstlichen Kunst- und Schatzkammern*, ed. Wilfried Seipel, Milan 2005, pp. 113-114 (cat. no. 85).
  71. Joachim Müllner, *Drechsler-Kunst. Von Ihrem Ursprung Alterthum Wachstum Aufnahm und hohen Nutzbarkeit*, 1653, p. 290: "Was ist wohl auff der Welt / darauff die Potentaten / Als einer Übungs-Lust / am meisten sind gerathen? / Das ihnen mehr beliebt und sonders wohl gefiel / Vor vieler Wissenschaft / vor aller Lust und Spiel. / Es ist die Drechsler-Kunst / mit kurzten zu bemelden / Die schöne Übungs-Lust / so vieler Cronen-Helden ... Daß er den Bernstein wust / so zierlich wohl zu drehen / Den Gott in seinem Land meist läßet nur entstehen / Als oft der linde West / die wilde See durchstreicht / Das sich diß Wellen-Gold / so dann in Menge zeigt / ... Preiswürdig's Preußner Land / was Ruhm gebühret dir? / Dein reicher Bernstein Strand geht allen Strömen für / Weil keiner dir sich gleich / an solchen Uffer Schätzen / Daran dein Chur-Haupt sich pflegt künstlend zu ergötzen".
  72. See the ambers in: III, Inv. 49, Armadio 155, Inventory of Cardinale Francesco Barberini (1649) reproduced in: Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, *Seventeenth-century Barberini documents and inventories of art*, New York 1975, pp. 218-262; Frederick Hammond, *The Artistic Patronage of the Barberini and the Galileo Affair*, in: *Music and science in the age of Galileo* (University of Western Ontario Series in the Philosophy of Science, vol. 51), ed. Victor Coelho, Dordrecht et al., 1992, p. 82.
  73. For a discussion of the relationship between Chigi and the Barberini see Irene Fosi, *Fabio Chigi und der Hof der Barberini - Beiträge zu einer vernetzten Lebensgeschichte*, in: *Historische Anstöße: Festschrift für Wolfgang Reinhard zum 65. Geburtstag am 10. April 2002*, ed. Peter Burschel and Mark Häberlein, Berlin 2002, pp. 179-196. Although Chigi did discuss gifts from the Emperor in his diaries (7th May 1649) he did not mention amber per se, see, for example, Sforza Pallavicino, *Vita di Alessandro VII, ... libri cinque del cardinale Sforza Pallavicino, ... con discorso di Pietro Giordani su la vita e su le opere dell' autore...*, 5 vols, vol. I, Milan 1843, pp. 132-133 on a "credenza d'argento". On the pyx discussed, see *Bernstein für Thron und Altar* 2005, pp. 58-59 (cat. no. 28), and Wolfram Koepppe, *Die Lemmers-Danforth-Sammlung Wetzlar. Europäische Wohnkultur aus Renaissance und Barock*, Heidelberg 1992, pp. 496-498 (cat. no. G0 33).
  74. Inv. nr. HG 11965 in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.
  75. See Grabowska 1983, *Polish Amber*, p. 19, for gifts of amber commissioned from Georg Schreiber made to de Mesmes and George Douglas as a gesture of thanks for their involvement in peace negotiations after the Swedish-Polish war. See also Eugen von Czihak, *Der Bernstein als Stoff des Kunstgewerbes*, in: *Die Grenzboten. Zeitschrift für Politik, Literatur und Kunst*, vol. 58, 1899, 2. Vierteljahr, pp. 179-88, 288-97, and Rohde 1937, *Bernstein*, p. 34.
  76. Pelka 1920, *Bernstein*, p. 46. Jeanette Falcke, *Studien zum diplomatischen Geschenkwesen am brandenburgisch-preußischen Hof im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Quellen und Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preußischen Geschichte, Bd. 31), Berlin 2006, pp. 72, 112, 259-260. See also Susanne Netzer, *Bernsteingeschenke in der preussischen Diplomatie des 17. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, Bd. 35, 1993, pp. 227-246. A general discussion of gift-giving in which amber was also involved is in: Hans Ottomeyer, *Bernstein und Politik – Staatsgeschenke des preußischen Hofes*, in: *Luxus und Integration. Materielle Hofkultur Westeuropas vom 12. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte, Bd. 32), ed. Werner Paravicini, Munich 2010, pp. 139-48, this was originally published as Hans Ottomeyer, *Bernstein und Politik – Staatsgeschenke des preußischen Hofes*, in: *Bernstein in der dekorativen*

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77. Netzer 1993, *Bernsteingeschenke*, p. 230. This throne is discussed in *Bernstein für Thron und Altar* 2005, pp. 80-1 (cat. no. 58a-d), and by Winfried Baer, *Ein Bernsteinstuhl für Kaiser Leopold I. Ein Geschenk des Kurfürsten Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg*, in: *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, vol. 78, 1982, pp. 91-138.
78. Jutta Kappel, *Bernsteinkunst aus dem Grünen Gewölbe*, Dresden et al., 2005, pp. 68-69 (cat. no. 13).
79. Reineking von Bock 1981, *Bernstein, das Gold der Ostsee*, p. 33.
80. Rohde 1937, *Bernstein*, p. 41; Daniel Alcouffe, *Les gemmes de la Couronne*, Paris 2001, pp. 365-366. Falcke 2006, *Studien*, reproduces extensive archival evidence for the production and transport of the frame. She describes it as no longer traceable, but the the mirror frame may, in fact, have been one of the two sent with a French embassy to the king of Siam in 1687. The embassy, reported upon in the *Mercur de France* also carried with it two amber caskets and a boat-shaped amber vessel decorated with bacchanals given to Louis XIV sometime between 1680 and 1684; see Pelka 1920, *Bernstein*, p. 51. Given the type of gifts that Friedrich Wilhelm was making, it seems likely that he was the source of a table fountain given to Ferdinando II de' Medici, on which see Rachel King, *Baltic Amber in Early Modern Italy*, Thesis presented for the Doctor of Philosophy, University of Manchester, 2011, pp. 246-248.
81. *Urkunden und Aktenstücke zur Geschichte des Kurfürsten Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg*, 23 vols, vol. XIX: Politische Verhandlungen, ed. F. Hirsch, Berlin 1906, pp. 262, 272ff, and 286, cited in Netzer 1993, *Bernsteingeschenke*, p 232; cf. Falcke 2006, *Studien*, pp. 242-243.
82. On this tankard: *Bernstein für Thron und Altar: das Gold des Meeres in fürstlichen Kunst- und Schatzkammern* 2005, pp. 46-50 (cat. no. 19).
83. For this story, see Philipp Hainhofer, *Des Augsburger Patricier's Philipp Hainhofer Beziehungen zum Herzog Philipp ii. von Pommern-Stettin, Correspondenzen aus den Jahren 1610-19* (Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte und Kunsttechnik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit, Neue Folge, Bd. 6), ed. Oskar Doering, Vienna, 1894, pp.152-153, 160-166, 168-169, 188-189, 191-195, 208-210, 213-216.
84. Meissen porcelain was known as 'porcelaine de Saxe' in France from its inception onwards. This set it apart from 'porcelaine de Chine' and 'porcelaine de Japon'. It was not usual to refer to Meissen, as we do today. For some examples of this use see Julia Weber, *Meißener Porzellane mit Dekoren nach ostasiatischen Vorbildern Stiftung Ernst Schneider in Schloss Lustheim*, 2 vols., vol. I, ed. Renate Eikermann, Munich 2012, pp. 121-124, Sources 1 and 2. On this usage in the Ottoman Empire, see Ömür Tufan, *Die Meissener Porzellansammlung der osmanischen Sultane*, in: *Königstraum und Massenware : 300 Jahre europäisches Porzellan* (Schriften und Kataloge des Deutschen Porzellanmuseums, Bd. 102), ed. Wilhelm Siemen, pp. 32-37, esp. p. 36.

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## Abbildungen

Fig. 1: Source: Marilena Mosco & Ornella Casazza, *The Museo degli Argenti. Collections and Collectors*, Giunti Firenze Musei (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2004), 5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2007, p. 101.

Fig.2: Source: Marilena Mosco & Ornella Casazza, *The Museo degli Argenti. Collections and Collectors*, Giunti Firenze Musei (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2004), 5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2007, p. 104.

## Zusammenfassung

This essay explores the issue of cultural identity and cultural identification with respect to one material: amber. Prior to the discovery of the new world and for quite some time afterwards, the primary source of amber in fifteenth-, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe was Prussia. Few Europeans, however, really understood much about its source. Indeed, few seem to have shown any interest in knowing more. This paper explores the ways in which people outside of Prussia acquired amber and whether these connections and routes led to the linking of the material with the region or not. The early modern understanding of amber's geographical origin is contrasted with amber's situation after 1900. The advent of notions of geographical indication at the end of the nineteenth century, coupled with the growth of national manufacturing pride emerging at the International Fairs in the decades after 1851, appear to bring about the first strong claims concerning amber's nationality. The years after 1914-1918 war, which saw Prussia cleaved from Germany according to the Treaty of Versailles, give birth to the notion of amber as German, a status which was heavily emphasised under the National Socialist dictatorship. Since 1945, and especially in recent years, amber has become the Polish material par excellence. Highlighting recent nationalistic narratives, its aim is show that amber had plural cultural identities in the early modern period and that this ambivalence allowed amber to be draped with a variety of meanings which were cast off and replaced by others, or which existed simultaneously. It was only in the last century that strong claims were made to the actual ownership of the material and that people, with the rise of the notion of nation and national, have been able to link a nation with the material.

## Autorin

Rachel King studied modern and medieval languages at the University of Cambridge, design and the decorative arts at the Royal College of Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum and art history at the University of Manchester. Her AHRC-funded PhD dealt with objects made from amber and collections of them in the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and saw her spend time at the British School at Rome and in Berlin on a scholarship from the Studienstiftung des Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin. Having worked at a number of UK museums, she was a junior curator with the Staatliche Bayerische Sammlungen und Museen from 2011 to 2013, where she worked to produce exhibitions on subjects ranging from seventeenth-century silver to handbags. She has been a member of the department of Art and Design at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh since June 2013. Her areas of specialism are sculpture and objects in organic materials, as well as precious and semi-precious stones.

## Titel

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