The Kunst und Wunderkammer Burg Traunzitz is a branch of the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum.
www.bayerisches-nationalmuseum.de

Opening hours
April–September, daily 9 am – 5 pm
October–March, daily 10 am – 4 pm
Admission up to 30 minutes before closing time

Traunzitz Castle is closed on the following days:

Kunst und Wunderkammer accessible to wheelchair users
Touring the Castle (by guided tour only)
unsuitable for wheelchair users

Public transport
DB train to Landshut, Bus 7 (Kolbenstraße)
100 car spaces, 4 bus spaces in Hofgarten car and bus park

Cafeteria
Burgerbänke (during the summer open seven days a week)

Information
Burgverwaltung Landshut
Burg Traunzitz 168
84004 Landshut
Telephone (08 71) 9 24 31-0 and -44 (Infoline)
Telefax (08 71) 9 24 11-40
burgverwaltung.landshut@Flm.bayern.de
www.spital.aerztekammer.de

Kunst and Wunderkammer were the precursors of today’s museums. Their exhibits reflected the pre-scientific world-view held by the 16th century. At that time a plum stone intricately carved by an artist was considered just as much a marvel as an exotic animal that wore plate armour about its body.

The Kunst and Wunderkammer Burg Traunzitz recalls the great tradition of the Bavarian Kunstkammer established by the Wittelsbach dukes. As early as 1555, Duke Albrecht V had founded one of Europe’s most important Kunstkammer in Munich. Containing more than six thousand objects, it ranked alongside the Habsburg collections at Ambras Castle and those amassed by the princes elector of Saxony in Dresden.

Albrecht’s son, Crown Prince Wilhelm, emulated his father in Landshut. Wilhelm, too, collected ingeniously wrought, exotic and strange things, which he kept in the “Junge Kunstkammer” at Burg Traunzitz. When he moved as duke to Munich in 1579, he took the Landshut collection with him to unite it with his father’s Munich Kunstkammer.

The museum today – arranged according to archive records – shows what the “archives of ingeniously wrought and marvellous things, a complete treasure and costly stock, furnishings and paintings” were like at that time “so that by looking at them frequently [..] one can attain rapidly, easily and certainly an unprecedented new knowledge of things as well as admirable sagacity.” (Samuel Quirkeberg, counsellor to Duke Albrecht V, 1565)
Artificialia
Wondrous works of art

As far back as St Augustine, nature was “God’s first, true and always open book”. Anomalies, monstrosities and inexplicable natural phenomena had to be viewed as arcane references to God and as such appreciated but also feared. They certainly did not represent mere curiosities in the modern sense. There was not yet any systematic classification of flora and fauna, which was left to 18th-century scholars to develop. Consequently, natural specimens from the Renaissance were classified as belonging to the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms, both aquatic and terrestrial.

Recondite meanings and magic proper-
ties – stones revealing the presence of poison, roots used for magic potions, the horn of the unicorn – played an important role in the selection of natural marvels for Kunst and Wunderkammer.

Exotica
Fantastical things from foreign lands

Since the discovery of America and the landing of the Portuguese in India, captains and merchants had brought back exotic riches and exotic things, flora and fauna “von den newen Inseln” (from the new islands). Objects of material value such as gold, precious stones and spices made up the bulk of such imports yet coveted rarities from heathen lands reached European ports as extra cargo. From Lisbon, Antwerp, Genoa and Venice, they were distributed to the art and marvels cabinets of Europe. The missionaries accompanying the explorers also sent their patrons exotic things. With branches in all new areas, South German banking and mercantile houses such as the Fuggers and Welsers were responsible for conveying the bulk of the exotica to art cabinets.

Painted portraits in Kunstkammer were esteemed more for the sake of the persons portrayed than for the artistic achievement they represented. The medium of sculpture, which could be viewed in the round, ranked higher on the aesthetic scale than paintings.

Naturalia
Marvels of Nature

Nearly all princely Kunst and Wunder-
kammer fall into one of four categories: artificialia, naturalia, exotica and scientifica.

Artificialia denotes in this structure artificial, manmade things, which, in their most precious form, a naturally beautiful material attains aesthetic perfection by being skillfully worked. Rock crystal cups, alabaster vessels or amber cabinets are art works of this kind.

Appreciation of natural beauty is charac-
teristic of Renaissance art, as is shown by animal motifs executed in bronze. Interest in artistically representing nature was rooted in knowledge of antiquity: rediscovered Greco-Roman sculpture, the publication of ancient buildings and ornaments as well as ancient coins bearing portraits conveyed to princely collectors the aesthetic values of antiquity. Painted portraits in Kunstkammer were esteemed more for the sake of the persons portrayed than for the artistic achievement they represented. The medium of sculpture, which could be viewed in the round, ranked higher on the aesthetic scale than paintings.

Scientifica
Science classifies marvels

“Everything that can be measured should be measured.” This challenge, voiced by Nicholas of Cusa back in the mid-15th century, was met in the Renaissance. Developments in astronomy, physics, navigation and cartography were linked with a flowering of scientific instrument-making. Attempts to establish coordinates, either for ascertaining the determinants of personal destiny or for taking bearings on land and sea, led to scholarly research.

The implements used for it and the results from it were collected in art cabinets. Magnificent timepieces and automata, sophisticated astrolabes and compasses, maps and globes were, as a matter of course, included in the inventory of princely Kunstkammer. Astonishment at the world’s marvels gave way to the will to understand them rationally and classify them systematically. Princely collectors not only admired the complex mechanisms and the aesthetic of the new instruments but also expected from them the possibility of gaining knowledge within the framework of a world-view based on causality.