Welcome to *The Gettysburg Cabinet*. Students have curated this remarkable exhibition as part of a new team-taught course, ARTH/IDS 284 *Wonders of nature and artifice: the Renaissance quest for knowledge*. In both the course and exhibition, students have learned about the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge and the powerful dynamics behind scientific discovery and societal forces.

The students took as their starting point the Curiosity Cabinets and Chambers of Wonders from the days of the Renaissance. Such collections featured an astounding variety of works of nature and artifice, juxtaposed in ways we no longer see today. We can see this dynamic array in the images shown here of Ferrante Imperato’s Natural History Museum and a Flemish Baroque painting of Archduke Albert and Isabella visiting a collector’s cabinet. Among the bounty of these collections, we see alligators, marble statuettes, corals and shells, globes, exquisite paintings, monkeys, marvelous flowers, unusual clocks, birds, precious gems, skeletons and books. The Renaissance, known as a rebirth of Classical Antiquity, was also an age of global exploration, and collectors were driven by curiosity and a sense of wonder about what seemed to be an ever-expanding world. One result of this passion for collecting was to provide centers of study and source material for their quest to find order in nature.

In this same spirit, our students have brought together the College’s own wonders of nature and artifice for *The Gettysburg Cabinet*. Each student carried out research on an object or set of objects of their choice, and together they have presented highlights of their work in this catalog. Bridging the gap between the Renaissance and our own time was quite a challenge, but the students rose to the occasion marvelously. We were fortunate to have a recreation of a 17th-century Chamber of Wonders at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore for inspiration, and we would like to thank John Shields and Joaneath Spicer for their enthusiasm and guidance.

We hope you will enjoy the “wonders” of our own quest for knowledge and consider the richness of bringing together the different branches of human knowledge in the context of a liberal arts environment.

This endeavor was made possible by the generosity and support of many people across campus and beyond. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to Shannon Egan, Carolyn Sautter and our outstanding course Peer Learning Associate, Molly Reynolds, for their hard work over the past year. Items were generously loaned to the exhibition from István Urcuyo, Kazuo Hiraizumi, John Winkelmann, Stefanie Sobelle, Jack Ryan and three students in the class, Sara Ketelsen, Lauren Kauffman, and Josh Griffiths, as well as the History Department, Health Sciences Department, Biology Department, Physics Department, Special Collections and Musselman Library, the Schmucker Art Gallery, Gettysburg College and the teachers at the Stonewall Jackson High School, VA. We would like to gratefully acknowledge funding from the Johnson Center for Creative Teaching and Learning, Steve Gimbel and the National Science Foundation, the Schmucker Art Gallery and the Art and Art History Department, Gettysburg College. Nate Fitch and Molly Reynolds deserve credit for the photography in this catalog.


Students take inspiration from the recreation of a 17th-century Chamber of Wonders at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.

— Felicia Else, Associate Professor, Department of Art and Art History
— Kay Etheridge, Professor, Biology Department
Muscle Man
Anatomical Model
19th century
Papier-mâché
47” x 14” x 6.5”
Special Collections, Musselman Library,
Gettysburg College

As Europeans explored the globe, they encountered singular beasts, new plants, exotic peoples, and extraordinary objects. Cabinets of curiosities exemplified Europeans’ interest with marvelous natural and man-made objects. The proliferation of such cabinets was a distinctly Renaissance phenomenon, a manifestation of the period’s inquisitiveness, its preoccupation with understanding all aspects of the physical world, and its emphasis on individual human achievements.¹ The human body and its physiology became the fascination of Renaissance naturalists and artists. In 1548 Renaissance historian and poet Benedetto Varchi compared the appreciation of anatomy to the study of art, because both exhibited the remarkable artifice to which men of culture were innately drawn.²

The practice of anatomical dissections for medical education became more prevalent during the Renaissance. In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries university statutes in Florence, Bologna, and Padua and elsewhere decreed that dissections should be performed in the presence of students. Both a male and female body was to be dissected annually, with advanced medical students required to attend. The public anatomy was almost always performed in January or February due to the lack of refrigeration and normally lasted five to fifteen days.³ The anatomy theater was constructed in medical schools specially to house public dissections. The exhibitions had a strong moralistic message, and were intended to make the visitor reflect upon the mutability of human life and ponder upon Man’s transitory state.

Although public dissections were a useful learning tool, several factors made frequent dissections impossible. During the summer months, when dissection was not feasible, the anatomy theater was used as a museum. Various methods have been used throughout the history of medicine to circumvent the problems associated with the use of human cadavers, but the manufacture of models has been one of the most successful solutions. Models of the human body and its parts have been made of wood, wax, glass, and even preserved bodies. Using papier-mâché, naturalist Louis Auzoux constructed animal and human models to include parts that could be disassembled, allowing a hands-on experience, which he called “clastic”. The first complete clastic human model was completed in 1822, and five years later, Auzoux opened a factory for the production of anatomical models for medical, biological, and veterinary schools.¹

Muscle Man is a papier-mâché anatomical model that was used at Gettysburg College by Professor Stahley in his Anatomy, Physiology, and Personal Hygiene course in the late 1890s. It is 47 inches in height and was designed to be displayed vertically on a stand. Some muscles and blood vessels are labeled by name and others are numbered. Half of the face depicts the underlying muscular system and the other half shows the cranium and teeth. The top of the cranium may be disassembled to show the brain, which may also be removed to reveal the bottom of the cranial cavity. The anterior and posterior abdominal-thoracic plates are removable. Consistent with a majority of anatomical models of the time, the model does not have genitalia. Although the original accompanying document has not survived, directions for dissecting larger models came with each specimen. The model displays small hand symbols. According to a description by Auzoux, “an ordinal number preceded by the [hand] sign indicates that the piece upon which it is placed may be detached.” Anatomical models are still heavily used in the classroom today. The Anatomy and Physiology courses at Gettysburg College rely on plastic anatomical models to demonstrate the skeletal and muscular systems, sensory organs, and the human body in its entirety.

— Danielle Berardinelli

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Sea Stars and Coral:
Common rose coral (*Manicina areolata*), grooved brain coral (*Diploria labyrinthiformis*), boulder coral (*Montastrea annularis*), sea stars (*Asterias spp.*), chocolate chip starfish (*Protoreaster nodosus*), staghorn coral (*Acropora cervicornis*), white finger starfish (*Linckia laevigata*)
3.25” x 1.5” – 11” diameter
On loan from Dr. István Urcuyo and Biology Department, Gettysburg College

During the Renaissance, the quest for universal knowledge drove scholars, royals, and others to collect any and all curiosities that they could. There was a longstanding tradition of the oceanic environment mirroring the heavens, because the terrestrial earth was considered to exist between the two at the center of the universe. For this reason, there was great fascination with creatures of the sea. Additionally, religious beliefs may have contributed to a collector’s desire for these oceanic specimens; it is suggested that curiosities from the sea were associated with the great flood, making these collectibles spiritually significant. The collector’s ability to obtain and display items from the sea was seen as analogous to God’s power to “overturn nature’s lawful order and turn land into sea.”

Many felt that sea stars in particular exemplified the belief that “whatever is excellent in the Heavens there is a certain resemblance in the Sea, which is as it were the other’s looking glass.” These curiosities were also illustrated in at least one of Aldrovandi’s encyclopedic books; the images were made using woodcuts and showed both the dorsal and ventral views of a variety of brittle star. Additionally, sea stars bore extensive religious symbolism related to the Virgin Mary, ‘Star of the Sea,’ and this religious connection would have encouraged collection of sea stars during the Renaissance. These echinoderms were often collected in their dried form or preserved in jars by various methods.

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2 Ibid.
3 Ulisse Aldrovandi, *De animalibus insectis libris septem* (Bonon: Apud Clementern Ferronum,1638), 746.
Coral was another frequent component of Renaissance collections, and this may have been because collectors and naturalists were fascinated by its condition in addition to its origin. Coral presented a dilemma to the naturalists of the Renaissance, because it was viewed as being “between life and death” and seemed to combine the animal, mineral, and vegetable into one. Some collectors at the time believed that coral could be a missing link in nature, existing both as a plant and a living animal, but in truth being neither. In many texts, coral was classified as a plant rather than the animal it truly is; collected coral specimens are the accumulation of calcium carbonate skeletons of many animals living and growing together. Coral was believed to have various powers, both medical and magical. One example, listed in Gerald’s Herbal stated that some “hang it about the necks of such as have the falling sickness, and it is given in drinke for the same purpose.” Other medicinal purposes, as well as use as protection from diabolical monsters are cited. These beliefs, coupled with curiosity surrounding coral’s existence, contributed to its display in cabinets both in its natural form and with various levels of adornment, such as elevated on stands or carved into religious figurines, such as at Schloss Ambras.

The Gettysburg Cabinet showcases one dried white finger starfish (Linckia laevigata) and one dried chocolate chip starfish (Protoreaster nodosus), as well as two preserved sea stars (Asterias spp.) All of these samples were collected in Nicaragua by Dr. István Urcuyo of the Gettysburg College Biology Department. The coral specimens in The Gettysburg Cabinet include grooved brain coral (Diploria labyrinthiformis) and staghorn coral (Acropora cervicornis) of unknown origin belonging to the Gettysburg College Biology Department, as well as boulder coral (Montastrea annularis) and common rose coral (Manicina areolata) collected in Nicaragua by Dr. Urcuyo.

— Rebecca Deffler

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5 Patrick Mauries, Cabinets of Curiosities (Thames and Husdon, Ltd., 2002), 88-93.
8 Ibid.
10 Patrick Mauries, Cabinets of Curiosities (Thames and Husdon, Ltd., 2002), 88-93.
As European voyages increased in the Age of Discovery, so did the “rage to know” concerning strange people and strange customs; an appetite usually satisfied by collecting curiosities.\textsuperscript{1} Objects from Africa and the Americas further fueled the Renaissance passion to collect exotic and rare objects. “Natives” themselves were seen as subjects to be put on display. The Native American portraits, painted by Charles Bird King (American artist, 1785-1862), displayed in the Gettysburg Cabinet connect the spirit of inquiry of the Renaissance with the still present urge to preserve history.

\textsuperscript{1} Olive Patricia Dickason, \textit{The Myth of the Savage: And the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas}. (Edmonton, Alta., Canada: University of Alberta, 1984), 17.
Since antiquity, writers like Pliny the Elder established a notion of other races being monstrous or a “simulacra of humankind,” fueling centuries of Euro-centric racism. Coinciding with the idea of cabinets of curiosity, Europeans willingly (even eagerly) conceded the existence of monsters. They viewed inhabitants of the New World as a scientific interest and, consequently, explorers, merchants and, ultimately, settlers helped bring artifacts and ideas about Native American culture to European collections and cabinets. Cosimo de’ Medici, for example, came to own a number of garments and other items in featherwork. Such material quickly found its way beyond the princely setting into collections such as those of Ulisse Aldrovandi, Ferdinando Cospi, and Ole Worm.

Fascination with Native Americans and the New World continued into the 18th and 19th century. An admirer and supporter of the Native Americans, Thomas McKenney (a United States official who served as Superintendent of Indian Trade from 1816–1822), spent his tenure in office fighting to preserve their legacy through a gallery of paintings by various artists. McKenney enlarged his Indian archive with collection of books, maps, and other written material about the leaders and various tribes. He realized that the Indian way of life was changing and wanted to keep a pictorial record of their lives. He enlisted Charles Bird King to paint their portraits, two of which are included in the Gettysburg Cabinet.

When the process of lithography offered a medium to reproduce the images, McKenney began shipping the original paintings, a few at a time to Philadelphia. They were copied on canvas by Henry Inman, an artist and partner in the lithographic establishment of Inman and Childs. There portraits were published in History of the Indian Tribes of North America which contained biographies written by James Hall as well as the general historical sketches of the Indian tribes. The original collection of King portraits was transferred to the National Institute in 1841 and then in 1858 to the Smithsonian Institution. The Smithsonian fire of January 15, 1865, destroyed many of the portraits, but luckily, the Henry Inman copies of the King portraits survived and are able to be displayed here today.

The two hand colored lithographs of Wa-Pel-La and Push-Ma-Ta-Ha were a gift from Geoffrey Jackson, Class of 1991, to Gettysburg College, in October 2011. They were part of a gift to Special Collections of seven lithographs. I chose to display these two portraits in this cabinet because of the distinct contrast seen between the two Natives.

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2 Ibid.
4 Ibid., 342.
Wa-Pel-La is seen in traditional Native American dress and wearing the Peace Medal, an important symbol of the intended good will of the U.S. Government towards the Native American population. Wa-Pel-La’s, Chief of the Musquakeses, name signifies the Prince or Chief. He was the head man of the Musquaque or Fox tribe and a delegate who went to Washington in 1837 with Keokuk for a council held by the Secretary of War to reconcile the Sioux with the Sauks & Foxes.⁵

Push-Ma-Ta-Ha is dressed in his army uniform showing the assimilation that the Natives ultimately went through to become “proper citizens.” Few Choctaws from the early 1800’s are better known than Push-Ma-Ta-Ha. He negotiated several well-publicized treaties with the United States and led Choctaws in support of the Americans during the War of 1812. He is now buried in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C.⁶

— Madison Desmond

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⁶ Ibid.
Illustrated Reference Family Bible
1873
Leather with Gold Embossing
12.75” x 10” x 4”
Gift of Thomas Y. Cooper
Special Collections, Musselman Library,
Gettysburg College

In a time where religion dominated daily life, and exploration continued to reveal a more expansive world than ever imagined, curiosity cabinets thrived. The yearning to know all led to the collection of many items and rarities from all over the world. Collectors sought to mimic Noah’s Ark by “abstracting the essential components of Creation into the confines of a man-made space,” thus creating a microcosm of the universe.¹ The Bible displayed in the Gettysburg Cabinet evokes a time where the spiritual played a large role among the works of nature and art in Renaissance cabinets and collections.

Although Bibles themselves were not often collected, illuminated manuscripts were highly valued for both their spiritual and artistic qualities. The Renaissance thirst for knowledge rekindled an appreciation of the old; ancient texts, therefore, became exceedingly valuable.² Many individuals sought out biblical manuscripts written in languages such as Hebrew or Syrian for the beauty and mystery of the written language.³ In addition, many of these manuscripts were sumptuously covered. Some even had “treasure bindings” which could include minerals, precious metals, gems, and insets of ivory which further increased their worth.⁴

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² Ibid, 131.
³ de Hamel, *Bibles: An Illustrated History from Papyrus to Print*, 131.
⁴ Ibid, 45.
Emperor Rudolf II (1552-1612) collected many such manuscripts for his cabinet, the most famous of which was the Codex Gigas, known for its image of the Devil. These manuscripts functioned as a tangible representation of spiritual knowledge as well as an item of luxury and craftsmanship.

This passion for knowledge led to a fascinating blend of the Bible and the encyclopedia. In 1540, the Geneva Bible became the first to include encyclopedic elements such as maps of the Holy Land, charts of various kinds, and reconstructions of biblical architecture. As time went on printing became faster and easier, resulting in more Bibles that included increasingly more encyclopedic information.

By the 19th century “Family Bibles,” took this trend a step further, allowing owners to create their own encyclopedias of sorts. These Bibles incorporated pages for recording births, marriages, deaths, and family trees. A seeming tribute to how Renaissance cabinets delighted in the beautiful and rare, these Bibles were frequently ornately decorated both inside and out.

The Bible used in this exhibit is a perfect example of such a Family Bible from the 19th century. The cover of this Illustrated Reference Family Bible is leather, embossed with gold and is in rather good condition, clearly meant to be displayed rather than stored away on a shelf. Colored images of plants, animals, and biblical scenes such as the temple in Jerusalem still retain much of their original hue. The biblical text is the King James translation and includes the Apocrypha. Due to the Apocrypha’s placement, it is clearly a Protestant Bible. Inside are numerous tables, charts, maps, a concordance, an illustrated dictionary, and many more “study aids.” Also there are markings on a page dedicated to births and deaths.

The family of Thomas Y. Cooper donated this Bible among his many rare books given to Schmucker Memorial Library when his papers were given to the College in 1967. This Bible remains a palpable culmination of the Renaissance quest for knowledge and its interest in both the spiritual and natural world.

—Jill Duranko

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6 Lori Anne Ferrell, The Bible and the People (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 82.
7 Ibid, 135.
8 The Apocrypha, also called the Deuterocanon or “second cannon,” means “hidden,” and refers to a selection of books outside of the traditional biblical cannon. These books are accepted as Scripture for Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox churches.
9 In Protestant Bibles the Apocryphal books are traditionally kept together and placed in between the Old and New Testament, whereas Catholic Bibles place the Apocryphal books in their canonical order.
Ferdinando Andreini (Italian, b. 1843)

*The Bather*

Late 19th Century

Marble

35” in height

Schmucker Art Gallery, Gettysburg College

Carved from white marble, *The Bather* is a small statuette of a young woman discarding her garment as she steps into a pool of water, shown by ripples and foam at the edge of the rock. On her head she wears a tiara with a *fleur de lis*, an age old symbol of Florence\(^1\), emblazoned on it. She is shapely and naturalistic; she is an idealized woman who displays perfect features, appropriate for her status as a Goddess.

In the Renaissance, collections of art and artifice were means to understand the world and show others how wealthy and learned the collectors were. Included in these collections would be statues, sometimes small scale reproductions of famous works. Such statues can be seen in paintings and prints depicting collections. For example, Ole Worm (Danish, 1588-1655) had a miniature of Giambologna’s *The Rape of the Sabine Woman*, visible on the shelf in the image of his collection.

*The Bather* is exactly the type of sculpture that collectors like Rudolf II would have liked to receive. Rudolf II (1575-1612), Holy Roman Emperor, King of Hungary, Bohemia and Archduke of Austria, had an extensive and varied collection that included numerous statues and paintings. He had a taste for women, and an easy way to gain access to the otherwise reclusive Emperor was to present him with a gift with erotic or sensuous appeal.\(^2\)

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His court artists would include images of nudity or near nudity in pieces that did not require it by subject or tradition, like *The Triumph of Wisdom*, which shows a bare breasted Athena. ³

Renaissance scholars revered the works of antiquity, especially Aristotle and Pliny. In their collections they would have copies of classical works, as well as statues and paintings by artists of their own time that illustrated ancient stories such as Giambologna’s *The Rape of the Sabine* or *The Transformation of Actaeon* by Pietro Solari. Gods and goddesses were often sculpted nude, emphasizing their perfection. Our *Bather* follows in the tradition of artistic female nudes that goes back to Praxiteles.⁴

*The Bather* may be a representation of Diana goddess of the hunt stepping into her bath before the transformation of Actaeon. Diana was shown wearing a tiara or diadem, often with lunar or floral designs.⁵ In the myth, Actaeon sees the Diana while she is bathing. Enraged, Diana transforms Actaeon into a stag. He is then chased and devoured by his own hunting dogs. Diana was a goddess, representing the hunt, the moon, and childbirth. As a powerful goddess of the hunt she was usually shown fully dressed with her bow at the ready and an animal, usually a deer or dog, at her side.⁶ Our statue shows the Goddess at her most vulnerable, neither dog nor bow at her side, as she steps into her bath moments before Actaeon shows up, only her godly power at her disposal.

At the base of the statuette is an inscription that reads “Ferdinando Andreini Firenze.” Andreini was an Italian sculptor, born in 1843. He worked in Florence and studied under Ulysse Cambo. At the age of seventeen he started exhibiting his works in salons, especially those in Florence and Turin. *The Bather* is one of a collection of nude or nearly nude female figures done by Andreini near the end of the nineteenth century.⁷ The statue in our collection was a gift to the Art and Art History Department of Gettysburg College. Though the College has been in possession of the statue for many years, no records have been found to document the identity of the donor.

— Peter Flood

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³ Ibid, 67.
⁵ *Greek Gods and Heroes.* (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1962), 32.
⁶ *Greek Gods and Heroes*, 30.
⁷ Arcadja.com
Unknown Italian artist

*Faith*

Date unknown

Oil on panel

22” x 17” unframed, 31” x 25” framed

Gift of Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Zimmerman
Special Collections, Musselman Library, Gettysburg College

Very little is known about this refined Italian portrait, which was donated to Gettysburg College in 1931. A pious woman, with her hands delicately folded in prayer, gazes heavenward as her eyes roll up towards the high right of the painting. A small inscription serves as the image’s only identification: “Faith by Italian Artist / Given by Dr. & Mrs. Jeremiah Zimmerman.”

Paintings were objects of great value to the Renaissance collector, especially in Italy. In their Tribuna in Florence, the Medici featured prominent works of art by masters such as Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian, and Dürer.¹ Paintings expressed wealth, intellect, and power, but they also could express religious convictions.

The Roman Catholic Church had long believed in the use of images as powerful teaching tools, but the Counter-Reformation and the Council of Trent from 1545 to 1648 made this practice even more important. Catholic paintings, with their narratives of biblical scenes, saints’ lives, and allegories reflected the urgency of a new religious mission: to encourage believers to remain in the Church.² In their *kunstkammern*, collectors of both scholarly and royal status could show their support for the Church and its cause.

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In the Italian Renaissance and Baroque periods, “Faith” was personified as a beautiful, pious woman, much like the oil painting in *The Gettysburg Cabinet*. From 1400 to 1650 there were a number of consistent attributes associated with the representation of Faith in Italian painting. She frequently holds a chalice and cross as symbols of Christ’s sacrifice, which can be seen in the *Faith* panel of *The Three Theological Virtues* series by an unknown Umbrian artist, dated to 1500. Often she is gazing upward, sometimes with a halo, as portrayed in Titan’s *Faith Adored by Doge Antonio Grimani*.

Gettysburg College’s portrait, however, is more comparable to Francesco Furini’s *Faith*, completed in 1633. Furini’s painting focuses on Faith’s facial and upper body. She is wrapped in a white mantle that exposes her left shoulder and part of her breast, which illustrates Furini’s classical influence. The left shoulder of Gettysburg’s *Faith* is also bare, though not as sensually as Furini’s *Faith*, and is wrapped in a green mantle with a white underside. Both paintings have dark, flat backgrounds, reminiscent of those used by Caravaggio and his workshop; furthermore, both figures are portrayed with delicate, almost glowing skin. Furini’s *Faith*, however, is set in profile and is gazing to the left of the painting; she is also holding a gilded chalice. Gettysburg’s *Faith* is fully facing the viewer, and is gazing upward over her left shoulder, presumably towards heaven. Caravaggio’s works may have also inspired this direct and straightforward representation. She holds neither a chalice nor a cross but instead conveys her piety through her heavenward expression and arrangement of her hands in prayer. The tight brushwork and dark background are similar to that of Caravaggio.

This work is not dated, with the exception of its tentative donation date of 1931. Donor Jeremiah Zimmerman, who graduated from Gettysburg College in 1873, is well known for giving over 75,000 books, pamphlets, maps, and artworks from his own collection to Schmucker Memorial Library, which opened in 1930. In *The Gettysburg Cabinet*, *Faith by Italian Artist* alludes to the presence Christianity would have had in curiosity cabinets. Here, Faith presides over nature and artifice, praising all of God’s creation.

— Emily Francisco

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4 “Several oil paintings” are referenced in a 1931 Gettysburg College Alumni Magazine article. These oil paintings were included in a donation along with a number of watercolors and porcelain objects (Gettysburg College, “Dr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Zimmerman: An Appreciation.” *Gettysburg College Alumni Magazine – The Gettysburg College Bulletin Alumni Number, June, 1931. 6/1931*. GettDigital: Historic Gettysburg College Publications, Special Collections / Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Accessed 10/23/12.
Assorted Insects
6.5” by 8.5” to 18” by 23”
On loan from Stonewall Jackson High School,
VA and Biology Department, Gettysburg College

The Renaissance marked a time when knowledge was valued above all things, and the collection and documentation of knowledge gave a citizen nobility and respect. The study of insects was one of many areas of study that became more prevalent in the Renaissance, and it was both reflected in and inspired by the curiosity cabinets that displayed many collections of insects.

The collection of insects was a very specialized and complicated process that required patience, perseverance, and a good eye. Because most insects are very small, early naturalists were only able to collect the adult forms of species. Equipment that was required to collect insects included durable clothing, vials to put specimens in, handy tools like knives and shovels to help dig up earth or scrape off bark, and nets. The “fly net” was the most widely used net in the Renaissance and it allowed collectors to scoop up all of the insects in a given area. Nets, however, were not useful for collecting insects that rested on surfaces, and in these cases instruments similar to tweezers were used. Sometimes naturalists used lanterns and dead carcasses to attract insects.¹

An important man who studied insects in the Renaissance who was inspired by curiosity cabinets was Jan Swammerdam. Swammerdam’s father owned an apothecary that included a collection of rare foreign items.² Jan’s exposure to collections at a young age inspired him to create his own insect collection. Once he had an impressive and well-developed collection, he began to study insect morphology, anatomy, and life cycles under microscopes. In order to focus on parts of the insect he was observing, he used several different techniques to accentuate parts of the anatomy. Swammerdam injected colored liquids into the insects to highlight the vessels, put colored glass in the background, and dried out the insects to help him observe their anatomy.³ He also dissected specific parts of the insects, like their eyes, to understand their function and the way in which those particular parts worked.⁴

⁴ Ibid.
Maria Sibylla Merian (German, 1647-1717) is one of the most respected natural historians and artists from the early eighteenth century. She was trained as an artist by her stepfather, but even when she was young it was clear that she enjoyed painting insects more than still-lifes. Although Merian had been collecting and observing insects for many years, it was not until she was in her early fifties that she and her daughter traveled to Surinam to study insects. Her decision to travel was influenced by several occurrences, but the most important factor was her visits to several curiosity cabinets in Amsterdam. The cabinets in Amsterdam contained a wide variety of natural and man-made objects, insects included, and their owners were wealthy and powerful members of the community. The two collections that inspired Merian the most were those of Nicolaes Witsen and Agneta Block. Nicolaes Witsen had an especially large collection of Surinamese items that surely sparked Marian’s idea to travel. Witsen’s various items from Surinam gave Merian an idea of where to go and an idea of who would be interested in her findings once she returned. Agneta Block’s collection mostly included insects, paintings, and a tropical garden.

Merian’s studies focused on the life cycles of insects and their ecology, rather than the discovery of species. She wanted to know how they reproduced, what they ate, and how they changed throughout their lives. When she returned home, she wrote and sold uncolored and colored copies of her book *Metamorphosis* based on her findings in Surinam. Many copies of the book were purchased by collectors who valued the observations that Merian made. Both Swammerdam and Merian’s visits to the curiosity cabinets sparked their interest to study insects.

These particular collections of insects have been created by the Biology department at Gettysburg College and several teachers at Stonewall Jackson High School. These boxes feature butterflies, beetles, moths, and many other species. The collections range in size between 6.5 inches by 8.5 inches and 18 inches by 23 inches. The Butterfly Collection, which is 6.5 inches by 8.5 inches, is the smallest collection and has several butterflies preserved inside. Although they are not from the Renaissance, they are good examples of what the insect collections may have looked like in the curiosity cabinets.

― Devin Garnick

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6 Blumenthal, 49.
7 Ibid.
9 Blumenthal, 50.
Chinese Jade Carvings
Pheasant and Elephant: Ch’ien Lung Dynasty; 
Lion: Shun Chih Dynasty
Jade
4.75” x 2” x 1 in; 2.3” x 1” x 0.8”; 3.9” x 3.1” x 2.3”
Gift of Frank H. Kramer
Special Collections, Musselman Library,
Gettysburg College

The quest for knowledge during the Renaissance caused the European powers to stretch their control all over the world. This meant spreading their control to worlds that were previously unknown such as the Americas, Africa and Asia. In these newly found worlds, explorers collected anything that they could ranging from living specimens to ethnographic artifacts.¹ Artifacts from Asia were highly esteemed in Renaissance Europe, and porcelain, silk, paintings, ivory and mother-of-pearl were often traded; jade, however, was not. Jade did not become popular in Europe until the 19th century, so having a jade carving in a Kunstкамmer like this exhibit would have been an extraordinary rarity. Jade is a hard stone that comes in a variety of color, the most common of which is green. Jade has been used as a carving material by many cultures for millennia, but it has always held a special place in China.²

Jade has had a special place in Chinese Religion for over 7000 years. It has been the preferred medium of sculpture in any religious artifact in Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. Jade was not traded by the Chinese due to its religious significance. In Chinese thought, jade carries positive characteristics that represent the best in man – loyalty, faithfulness, exquisiteness, mysteriousness, benevolence, intelligence, righteousness, propriety and musicality – and even paradise itself.³

The three jade statuettes used in this exhibit represent animals – the lion, the pheasant and the elephant. They were donated to the Gettysburg College Special Collections at Musselman Library by former professor of

Education Dr. Frank H. Kramer. Dr. Kramer was an avid collector of Asian art who used his collection to teach courses on the Appreciation of Asian Art. The lion came from the Shun-Chih period, which lasted from 1643-1661. Both the pheasant and the elephant statuettes come from the Chi’en Lung Period, the dynasty in China that lasted from 1735-1796. The Ch’ien Lung Period was the most productive period for jade carvings; there was not a period before this or after this where the carvings were so plentiful, so detailed and so beautiful.

The animals in these three statuettes were important to Chinese religion and thought. The pheasant, for example, was often used as a symbol for the empress. This bird was also thought to have been the phoenix of ancient lore, which meant that the pheasant had supernatural powers. The phoenix presided over the southern quadrant of the heavens and it represented the sun, peace, and beauty. The elephant also had many symbolic meanings throughout Chinese history. It was used in ancient China as a war machine, yet it also represented, strength, sagacity, prudence, power and energy. To Buddhists, the elephant stood for much more. It represented one of the Seven Treasures of Buddhism, and has been depicted in Chinese art offering flowers to the Buddha. The final animal represented here is the lion, a common and important symbol in Buddhism for many years, representing the law and protection. It is not uncommon to see a lion statue outside of buildings that are sacred to Buddhism such as temples and tombs. The lion is so important to Buddhism that Buddhists feel that the Buddha was reincarnated ten times as a lion.

Although these incredible statues may not have been common in Renaissance Cabinets, they represent the fascination that Renaissance Europe would have had with the alluring curiosities of the East. They probably would not have understood the important connotations these animals and even the medium carried, but they would have been greatly appreciated for their beauty and exoticism.

— Joshua Griffiths


5 Maude Monell Vetlesen, Chinese jade carvings of the xviiith to the xixth century, in the collection of Mrs. Georg Vetlesen; an illustrated descriptive record compiled by Stanley Charles Nott, (London: BT Batsford, 1939), 1-35.

6 Charles Williams, Chinese symbolism and art motifs, (Boston, MA: Castle Books, 1990), 253-255 and 322-326.

7 Ibid.

8 Charles Nott, Chinese jade throughout the ages, a review of its characteristics, decoration folklore, and symbolism, (Tokyo, Japan: 1936), 78-80.
Ammonite fossils
From Madagascar
One whole ammonite 4” in diameter;
One half of an ammonite 7 3/8” in diameter
On loan from Dr. Kazuo Hiraizumi,
Biology Department, Gettysburg College

Fossils and their counterparts were objects of speculation during the time of the Renaissance curiosity cabinets. Today similar objects are on display in museums throughout the world. The amount of knowledge available to describe and understand fossils’ origins and creation is what has changed in that time. This knowledge is in part thanks to some of the greatest Renaissance minds. They studied fossils and tackled the question of their origin, even though this often conflicted with contemporary religious views. One of the first steps in the process of identifying fossils was to study the form. Even today the shapes, colors, and sizes of fossils amaze their audience and it is no wonder that they fascinated the natural historians and artists of the Renaissance. In accordance with the fossils’ marvelousness, they were included in great variety in Wunderkammern, Kunstkammern, and curiosity cabinets. Not surprisingly, fossils make an appearance in almost every visual record of a Renaissance cabinet.

One particularly fascinating type of fossil is that of the extinct ammonite; these fossil shells are relatively easy to find but require special care to display and maintain.\(^1\) It was because of their spiral pattern that prior to Robert Hooke’s (1635-1703, English) work ammonites were “serpent stones” and were in fact cursed snakes. Hooke was one of the first people to acknowledge that these were not snakes, and gave a description of the ammonites that resembles the modern definition of fossils.\(^2\)


In ammonites there are differences in mineralization and opalization (the rainbow sheen) that assure that no two are exactly the same. The shell and its compartments are a mold for the fossilization that occurs inside and when split open, the colors and textures displayed have taken the shape of their compartments in a seemingly artificial manner. The outside of the ammonite, when polished, reveals a beautifully patterned shell, often including an “oak leaf” pattern and opalization. The overall spiral form, a product of the growth pattern, draws the eye through the surface of the shell. It is because of all of these aesthetic qualities that they were, and still are, used to make jewelry. Many of the fossils are works of art in their own right as a culmination of natural activities and the human act of cutting, polishing, and displaying. This technique is reminiscent of the Renaissance gardens with a “third nature”, described “...as a product of nature as artist, acting on art, as well as of man modifying nature”.

Perhaps it was the mystery of fossils’ origins that led to collection and subsequent illustration or perhaps it was the almost alien beauty they exhibited. It was most likely a combination of mystery and beauty that drove naturalists and artists alike to explore fossils, and these same forces drive scientists and artists today.

The ammonites on display are on loan courtesy of Dr. Kazuo Hiraizumi from the Department of Biology at Gettysburg College. The ammonite painting is a self-made work exploring the process of natural history illustration.

— Lauren Kauffman

3 Kazuo Hiraizumi, personal conversation, October, 2012.
Snake Skeleton
8.5” x 3”
Biology Department, Gettysburg College

Cabinets of curiosities played an important role in the knowledge of nature during the Renaissance. The cabinets contained a multitude of naturalia and artificialia, and reptiles were displayed in various cabinets for differing reasons. Naturalia in cabinets were used as a form of knowledge and teaching for many scholars, students, and even the general public.¹

The reptile specimen in the Gettysburg Cabinet is a snake in skeletal form that appears to be slithering with its mouth open, as if it were about to bite someone. The snake is fairly small, 8.5 in x 3 in and has a diameter of no wider than 1 in. The snake is wider at the head and its body tapers down to a very thin point at the end of the tail. Its skeleton is white and although it has been skinned and cleaned it contains the essence of a live snake. This specimen was used as a teaching implement for Biology courses.

Certain reptiles meant different things to visitors of collection cabinets. Snakes were included because they were known to be venomous and this was a reminder of the mortality of humanity, something the cabinets often included in their many themes.² Interestingly, the cathedral of Seville suspended a crocodile from the ceiling as a symbol of evil; this may indicate one reason for the inclusion of crocodiles and serpents, and why many of them were hung on the ceiling of cabinets.³ These early ideals could have come from the Bible and the reference to the devil as a serpent. Snakes were feared because of this evil undertone and their ability to cause death and pain.

Apothecaries, early pharmacists, collected the largest number of naturalia specimens. Their cabinets contained more reptiles than the princely cabinets like those of Emperor Rudolf II and the Medici, but reptiles could also be found in scholarly cabinets and collections of private citizens. The apothecary Ferrante Imperato had a

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cabinet in 1599 that contained a large crocodile hanging from the ceiling. In 1610, the physic Garden of Leiden University possessed rattlesnakes, crocodiles, and a large turtle shell. Ole Worm’s scholarly cabinet of 1655 included two large turtle shells, a crocodile, and multiple lizards, and Basilius Besler, classified by himself as a pharmacist, chemist, and cultivated admirer of botany, had a collection in 1622 that included a crocodile, lizards, snakes, and a turtle. The Library of Sainte-Genevieve in Paris in 1692 contained a marine turtle shell and a crocodile in the quadruped section.

The encyclopedias of natural history displayed some of the beliefs Europeans held regarding reptiles during the Renaissance. In Edward Topsell’s natural history on serpents, it was stated that serpents were created by God and ruled by men, and that the devil had entered into the serpent. Europeans during Renaissance believed serpents could devour men, women, children, oxen, sheep, goats, and more. The inclusion of serpents in the cabinets showed a triumph of man over evil. Interestingly, it was believed that a burned and boiled serpent could help with a toothache and the fat of a snake combined with verdegrease could help to heal a rupture in the eye. Another reptilian subject in Topsell’s encyclopedia was the crocodile. Crocodiles were said to love their females and display jealousy. Topsell also mentioned that if a man winks at a crocodile with his left eye and stares at it with his right eye, the crocodile would run away. Modern natural history books do not include the myths of Topsell’s book. They typically only include the organism’s origin, life cycle, form and function, role, and the different species are given and described. There are however, modern publications similar to the Renaissance natural history books that contain myths, appreciations, and other information that would have been included in the natural histories.

The snake specimen obtained for the Gettysburg Cabinet has been in the Biology Department’s possession for decades. It originated from the Carolina Biological Supply Company in North Carolina. The snake was used as a teaching implement; something the students could see and feel, not unlike how specimens were used in the Renaissance cabinets.

— Rose Kell

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8 John Winkelmann, Biology Professor, personal conversation, October 2012.
Dicranurus monstrous trilobite  
Devonian Period  
5.5” x 5” x 2.5”  
On loan from Dr. Kazuo Hiraizumi,  
Biology Department, Gettysburg College

The cabinets of European aristocrats were frequently adorned with exotic animal specimens, lavish art, and intricate artifacts from foreign lands. Also tucked away in the drawers of collectors, such as Conrad Gesner, John Woodward, and Athanasius Kircher, were items of disputed identity and origin. These objects were called fossils; however, the term had a different meaning during the Renaissance. The word fossil simply meant ‘dug up,’ so any object that was excavated was considered a fossil.¹

The interest in fossils appeared in the journals of classical scholars, such as Pliny, and these petrified specimens are also mentioned in the journals of Leonardo Da Vinci. Da Vinci did not attribute these oddly shaped rocks to divine showmanship or humor,² rather he thought that their peculiar placement on the earth was due to the planet going through many changes during its long history.³ Da Vinci’s innovative hypothesis concerning fossils may not have influenced Renaissance thought though, because most of his journals were not found until much later in history. Therefore the scholars of the Renaissance were left with classical influences to help create their own hypotheses.

There was no single prevailing Renaissance theory as to what the fossils were. Some collectors, such as Athanasius Kircher (1601-1680), believed that the fossils were of inorganic origin and were symbols of the unchanging order of the earth.⁴ Others, like John Woodward (1665-1728), believed fossils could be explained

by the Great Biblical Flood and other forces on the mineral kingdom. Still others thought the fossilized remains were bones of mythological creatures, and they were therefore placed in the cabinets next to next to mystical items, like the unicorn’s horn.

The fossils represented in the Gettysburg Cabinet embody different Renaissance thoughts regarding these mysterious creatures. The *Dicranurus monstrous* trilobite, an extinct marine arthropod is a fearsome creature, with its devil-like horns and spindly protrusions. This trilobite is an excellent example of a fossil that puzzled the scholars of the Renaissance because it had no analogous creature still in existence. Though some fossils perplexed the collectors, other fossils were at least partly understood. The ammonite, an extinct cephalopod mollusks, itself was known to be a shell-inhabiting creature; however scholars mistook its impression for the underside of a coiled snake. Still other fossils, like the mako and megalodon shark teeth were less mysterious because they resembled animals still in existence. In books by Conrad Gesner (1516-1565) and Nicolas Steno (1638-1686), one can find drawings comparing the fossil teeth to modern day sharks. Although they acknowledged that the teeth resembled those of existing sharks, there was more dispute over the large fossilized teeth of the megalodon. The teeth were called tongue stones because they were thought to be petrified dragon tongues. However, Steno argued that the tongue stones were actually the teeth of a giant shark.

The fossils displayed in this exhibit are being loaned by two different collectors. The *Dicranurus monstrous* trilobite, the Harpactocarcinus punctulatus crab and shark’s teeth belong to Dr. Kazuo Hiraizumi. Dr. Hiraizumi is a Biology professor at Gettysburg College who began collecting fossils as a hobby after starting at the College. The other items, such as the ammonite and the shark tooth in the matrix are from my personal collection. I began collecting fossils at the age of four due to my future aspiration to become a paleontologist.

— Sara Ketelsen

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6 The unicorn’s horn was a narwhal’s tusk. See Paula Findlen, *Possessing nature: museums, collecting, and scientific culture in early modern Italy*. (University of California Press, 1994), 3.
8 *Dicranurus monstrous* trilobite lived during the Devonian period which was about 360 million years ago.
10 Ibid, 28.
Mercury was an Ancient Roman Olympian god, who was the messenger of the Gods. He was frequently portrayed with wings on his cap and heels to signify his swiftness. The brass Mercury statue presented in the Gettysburg Cabinet exemplifies the god’s quickness, a copy of one of the most famous statue from the Renaissance. Mercury leaps forward on his left leg while gracefully pointing upward with his right arm, creating a lifelike and elegant silhouette. The lower part of the statue’s base is decorated with images of cherubs playing flutes. The upper section of the base transforms into a head that is breathing onto Mercury’s foot. The head personifies one of the “winds”. The statue has several distinct features; in Mercury’s right hand he holds what appears to be a vial and in the left he holds his attribute, the caduceus, now a symbol of modern medicine. The statue has some tarnish that developed from improper storage before its acquisition by Gettysburg Special Collections.

2 Peta Motture, Large Bronzes in the Renaissance, (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2003), 129.
This *Mercury* statue is a copy after a celebrated design by Giambologna, (Flemish, 1529-1608), created around 1564.⁴ Giambologna designed this statue as part of a fountain for the Medici in the Villa Medici in Rome.⁵ The head represented below symbolized the figure being “exhaled, purified, unburdened.”⁶

This statue was a popular one among wealthy collectors’ cabinets of the Renaissance, the Medici and Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II, (Austria, 1552-1612). Documentation shows that the Medici gave this statue as a diplomatic gift to Emperor Maximilian II, showing its political and social importance.⁷ Emperor Rudolph II was so fond of Giambologna’s work that he attempted to persuade him to join his court. Though unsuccessful, he instead invited Giambologna’s skilled student, Adriaen de Vries, and had to be satisfied with his copy of Giambologna’s *Mercury* statue.

Both the original and the statuette in The Gettysburg Cabinet show the god in this dynamic pose, as though running or flying. The Gettysburg Cabinet *Mercury* differs from Giambologna’s statue through the addition of a vial he holds, absent in the Giambologna’s original, along with the addition of the cherubs encircling the lower base. The Gettysburg Cabinet *Mercury* statue is 2ft, 7.8 inches; the original Giambologna bronze *Mercury* statue was just under six feet high.⁸ The Gettysburg *Mercury* statue is brass with some form of golden coating. A similar copy of Giambologna’s *Mercury* statue is on display at the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., made circa 1780 – c. 1810 and stands nearly six feet high.

Gettysburg College’s Special Collections acquired the *Mercury* statue from alumnus Dr. Jeremiah Zimmerman in 1933. Dr. Zimmerman was a generous alumnus who donated 75,000 books and artifacts. He valued history and believed in expanding the library to create a place for students to obtain knowledge. The *Mercury* statue is usually on display in the Reading Room in Gettysburg College’s Special Collections.

— Marissa Mellan

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⁵ Motture, *Large Bronze*, 129.
Chinese Checkers Set
21st Century
Various stones and goniatite fossil
9.5” diameter
On loan from Dr. Kazuo Hiraizumi, Biology Department, Gettysburg College

Until just prior to the Renaissance period, the prevailing attitude about nature, and art was that they were two different entities. The relationship between nature and artifice became more connected; as a result, objects that took on both natural and artificial attributes were filling collection cabinets during the Renaissance. The arrangement of objects accentuated the means by which nature and art interacted, creating an allegory, symbol, or other meaning for the collector. This was a wonder in itself, but even more so were objects that fused art and nature in and of themselves.¹

Some objects were highly ornate and luxurious, incorporating gems and gilded materials around some otherwise ordinary looking pieces from nature while others were believed to be made from exotic or fabled specimens and possessing medical and magical properties.² For example, a 17th-century cup was made from rhinoceros horn and decorated with two warthog tusks (then believed to be from a dragon).³ Additionally, a bezoar stone cup (ca. 1600) was believed to render poisons harmless when poured into the cup.⁴ Another interpretation of the symbolic importance of these objects is that the objects expressed an unattainable beauty of the uncontrollable force of nature which, suggested at the wealth and power of those who could contain it in their collections.⁵ However, despite the supposed superfluity of these objects, artisanal pieces often were made into items that may have been put to practical use. Various

² Ibid, 280.
metals, stones, and other precious items, valued both for their luxury and their ability to bring out the beauty of the nature that existed within them, were crafted into goblets, plates, containers, and other decorative pieces in ways that distinctly emphasized their naturalness. Ultimately, the display and purpose of an object were decided by the collector.

The items on display are present-day decorative stone pieces, carved out of marbleized fossil beds from the Sahara Dessert, and containing different kinds of fossilized cephalopods from the Devonian period (ca. 417-354 Ma.). Many of these objects contain either fossilized orthoceras or goniatite in a black marble matrix and, much like the objects of the Renaissance, carry some sort of mysticism in their appearance. Other objects were composites of different parts that best fit the shape and design of the desired product. The item pictured here is a Chinese checkers set made from various stones and corresponding matching marbles. The Chinese checkers board measures approximately nine and one-half inches in diameter and is octagonal in shape. Each adjacent tile in the checkers board is made of a different stone and includes marbles made from the same stones used to make the tiles. One tile in the center row is even made from a similar kind of black marble as the plates, and goblets and its matching marbles contain goniatite fossils within them as well. Although these objects are more contemporary, they still reflect the Renaissance spirit of the interaction of both the natural and the artisanal. The formation of these objects is not an easy task and many pieces are appended with either clay or other smaller pieces; however, the beautiful polished finishes on these pieces make the artistic process to achieve this effect appear seamless.

These objects were loaned from the personal collection of Dr. Kazuo Hiraizumi, Associate Professor of Biology at Gettysburg College. An ardent collector of such objects, Dr. Hiraizumi is particularly interested in the craftsmanship and natural beauty of these artifacts.

— Dina Mohamed-Aly

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7 Dr. Kazuo Hiraizumi, Associate Professor of Biology at Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA, email and personal interview by the author.
Capuchin Monkey skeleton
Twentieth Century
Approx. 11” long
Biology Department, Gettysburg College

Cebus Capucinus, or Capuchin monkey, is a primate species native to Central America.¹ Capuchins usually have cream-colored fur around their faces, with dark brown fur covering the rest of their bodies. Weighing between three and nine pounds, the Capuchin monkey is a small animal surviving on an omnivorous diet of fruits, plants, and insects.² Characteristic of New World monkeys, the Capuchin has a long, slender tail used to wrap around tree branches. With an unusually large brain, they are considered the smartest species of New World monkeys.³

The Capuchin skeleton featured in this exhibition, courtesy of the Gettysburg College Biology Department, is posed gingerly on a branch. Its elongated finger bones resemble those of humans, allowing a firm grip while climbing. The monkey is positioned in mid-stride, its slender tail curving delicately around the branch.

The name “Capuchin” was devised by New World explorers who first discovered the monkey in the 15th century. Noting a patch of dark brown fur on top of the monkeys’ head that resembled a hood, they named the species after the Friars Minor Capuchin, an order of Franciscan friars who wore dark, hooded robes.⁴

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² Ibid.
⁴ “Capuchin Monkeys.”
In the Middle Ages, monkeys and apes developed significant symbolic associations in art and literature, often representing evil and the devil. Because of their anthropomorphic characteristics, monkeys were said to be the imitator of man. This linked them to the Antichrist, the imitator of God, and ultimate symbol of evil.\(^5\) In the Renaissance, monkeys commonly symbolized folly and irrationality.\(^6\) Sixteenth-century Flemish painter Pieter Brueghal was fond of allegory, and often included monkeys in his paintings. In a 1562 painting, Brueghal painted two monkeys chained and imprisoned, warning viewers against the ill-effects of a sinful, foolish lifestyle. Simultaneously, Renaissance aristocracy began to adopt monkeys as pets, often treating them as servants. Ulisse Aldrovandi, a sixteenth century natural historian, wrote of a monkey in the West Indies who performed duties for his master. According to Aldrovandi, the monkey would be sent to retrieve wine from a local shop, carrying “a flask in one hand and money in the other.”\(^7\) Flemish artist Anthony Van Dyck also recorded the presence of monkeys as court pets. In his portrait of *Henrietta Maria and Sir Jeffrey Hudson*, 1633, a playful monkey scampers across the shoulders of Sir Jeffrey, the court dwarf.

Today, Capuchin monkeys still appear in art and literature. In popular twenty-first century films, Capuchins have served as loyal sidekicks. In Disney’s *Pirates of the Caribbean* series, Captain Barbosa’s pet monkey “Jack” is a tiny Capuchin. Likewise, in *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark*, a Capuchin monkey saves the hero’s life by eating a pile of bad dates meant for Jones. Capuchins are also the famed monkey sidekick to organ grinders.\(^8\)

With a long history rooted in symbolism, Capuchin monkeys are a prized New World species known for their intelligence and human-like characteristics. In the Renaissance, particularly, the monkey was an important implement in moralistic art and literature, but it also represented a new era of discovery and progressive thinking.

— Joanna Myers

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8 “Capuchin Monkeys.”
T.S. & J.D. Negus
Break-circuit chronometer
19th Century
Rosewood, Brass
Case: 7.5” x 7.5” x 7.5”
Clock face: 4.75”
Special Collections, Musselman Library, Gettysburg College

With the invention of his chronometer in the mid-18th century, an Englishman by the name of John Harrison solved the centuries-old problem of how to calculate time and longitude accurately and efficiently while at sea. Since one degree of longitude equals four minutes, sailors determined their positions by calculating the time difference between their ship and a point on land whose time and longitude they knew. The marine chronometer enabled sailors and explorers to calculate their longitude with an unprecedented degree of accuracy, thereby spurring on a new era of maritime exploration.

Until John Harrison’s breakthrough, seafarers relied on measurements of the heavens or on pendulum clocks to tell time while at sea. To determine time via the former method, mariners consulted an instrument called the clock of heaven, which reflected the position of the sun, moon, and stars. Mariners then coordinated these positions with tables of logarithms. This procedure often exceeded four hours and was nearly impossible on cloudy or overcast days. The latter method, which was the use of pendulum clocks, was far less tedious but no more accurate than using measurements of the heavens; the rolling motions of ships altered

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2 Ibid, 89.
the pendulum’s swing, and constant fluctuations in temperature caused the timepiece’s metal parts to expand or contract, both of which rendered its display inaccurate.

Well before Harrison’s invention, Renaissance collectors such as the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II (1552–1612) treated timepieces as objects of curiosity and wonder. A zealous collector of clocks, Rudolf II elevated their status in the context of collections by patronizing clockmakers such as Jost Bürgi (Swiss 1552-1632). Relationships such as this led to the invention of a clock that measured seconds, a technological advancement that proved invaluable to the precise timing necessitated by the marine chronometer.

The chronometer that is part of the Gettysburg Cabinet is a product of the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Marked with the serial number 1568, the instrument-making company T.S. & J.D. Negus produced this object in New York City. The most striking similarity between this chronometer and Harrison’s original version is the use of brass, whose light weight and malleability were ideal for instrument-making. Unlike the original design, T.S. & J.D. Negus’ version of the marine chronometer is encased in a rosewood box. Harrison’s original design featured only its basic mechanisms and a metal front piece, a utilitarian approach that might have served to reduce the object’s weight. Eventually, advances in technology, particularly the advent of electricity, enabled the creation of more compact mechanisms and increased design options.

The advent of electricity can be seen in the Gettysburg chronometer, whose mechanisms are battery-powered. Because of this, the chronometer in this collection possesses features that Harrison’s creation lacked, namely two green, silk-covered wires. These wires, which are housed in the case’s uppermost compartment, form a circuit with the chronometer’s battery and a brass knob mounted on the rosewood case.

This object came to the Gettysburg Cabinet by way of Gettysburg College’s Physics Department, where it was used as a teaching implement. It was retired from its didactic purpose and had been on display in Masters Hall before being sent to Special Collections.

— Sean Pethybridge

4 Ibid, 82-83.
Willem Blaeu (Dutch, 1571-1638)
*Asia noviter delineata – General Map of Asia*
(reproduction)
1643 – 1650
Engraving, hand colored
16.25” x 22”
Gift of John Stuckenbg
Special Collections, Musselman Library,
Gettysburg College

After Portuguese and Spanish explorations opened the world to other European powers, several states established colonial empires that remained powerful for centuries. The Dutch, with their widespread shipping and trading endeavors, created a corporate colonial empire through the Dutch East and West India Companies.¹ By the middle of the seventeenth century, only the English were rivals to the Dutch in controlling the seas. In the midst of this naval expansion, the Dutch espoused a tradition of cartography to guide them in their capitalistic ventures around the world. These maps were one way through which the Dutch could exert their authority and prestige, as they became marketable throughout all of Europe.²

Many Renaissance owners of cabinets of curiosities would express knowledge of the known world by owning and collecting maps such as these. Jan Brueghel the Elder painted *The Archdukes Albert and Isabella Visiting a Collector’s Cabinet* (Flemish, 1621-1623) which is on display in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.³ This painting illustrates both a map and a globe resting prominently on a table in the front of the room. People could view a representation of the world in maps, both literally and figuratively, and they thus mimicked the goal of numerous cabinets in serving as a microcosm of the cosmos, or a *teatro mundi*. For a collector, a map was essentially a “reduction that represents the ultimate in scaling down.”⁴ Just as collectors sought to gain and propagate knowledge through accumulating rare and exotic animals, plants, and other objects from the far corners of the world, maps served to assert this knowledge in a cartographic form.

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³ This work by Jan Brueghel the Elder is on display at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland.
The Gettysburg Cabinet features three Dutch maps from the Republic’s time as a naval world power. Due to the high demand for Dutch maps throughout Europe, mapmakers such as Willem Blaeu (Dutch, 1571-1638) often included subtle features that symbolically represented Dutch power and prestige. Blaeu’s Asia noviter delineata, or general map of Asia, illustrates this symbolic Dutch clout on two levels. Blaeu depicts five Dutch ships roaming both the Indian and Pacific oceans, illustrating the widespread naval presence of their overseas Empire in the East. In addition to the five ships, there is also a depiction of the Greek god Triton in the Indian Ocean, reflecting the Renaissance drive to reinvigorate the Classical world in works of art. Triton, who is shown as a merman blowing his conch shell, is known as the messenger of the sea. In Greek mythology, he would blow his conch shell to either raise or calm the waves, creating a sound so alarming that all the surrounding giants and sea creatures would flee in terror. By adding Triton to the array of Dutch ships sailing the Eastern waters, Blaeu likens the Dutch East India Company to this Greek god, warning enemy ships to beware of the ever-increasing Dutch presence in these waters.

Alongside the message of a naval supremacy, there is also a subtler message of natural and geographic knowledge that asserts Dutch authority in the Far East. Three naturalistically illustrated animals—an elephant, a camel, and a lion—are strategically placed in areas formerly considered to be the inaccessible, far-reaching lands that “haunted human imagination,” with their races of marvelous and monstrous creatures. By treating each of these three animals with naturalistic detail, even on a small scale, Blaeu shows that the Dutch have acquired an acute awareness for the natural world in exotic and distant places. This pictorial paraphernalia echoes the similar trend in collectors’ cabinets in that they both illustrate an ultimate quest for knowledge through the natural world.

This map, along with the other two shown, is part of Gettysburg College’s Stuckenber Map collection. John Stuckenberg, who devoted his life to “intellectual, ethical, and religious pursuits,” was an avid collector of maps throughout his lifetime. He donated his map and atlas collection to Gettysburg College upon his death in 1903, which included three seventeenth century atlases and over 500 other maps from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. This reproductions came to the Gettysburg Cabinet from the History Department of Gettysburg College.

— Josh Poorman

5 Hyginus, Poetical Astronomy, 2. 23.
As European powers increased the exploration and exploitation of the New World, Asia, and Africa, a fervent attention to objects from so-called “savage” cultures manifested itself in cabinets of curiosity. Objects of nature and artifice were abundant, such as intricately carved ivory tusks and gazelles and primates, which were popular live exhibits. The African masks on display in the Gettysburg Cabinet reflect the ambition of the Renaissance collector to possess and exhibit every bit of the world; however, the mask in African cultures serves a spiritual function. Traditional ceremonies are individual to each people and have been performed for centuries. During these rituals, which often involve some sort of dance or repetitive action, a mask is used to transform the wearer into a certain spiritual being. This enables the participant to commune with the spirits, be they ancestral or from a pantheon of gods. These practices are imperative for increasing and continuing the life force of the community and the natural resources on which it depends. African masks do not follow the Western tradition of naturalism, instead conveying abstract representations of animals and spirits. The masks were crafted by skilled artists and meant for one individual wearer. For this reason no two are exactly alike.

Masks and other objects from the continent were decontextualized in their transport to Europe; removed from their original environment, they became exotic décor or specimens of natural wonders for European private collections. Such items would reinforce the contemporary perception of Africa and its peoples. Ancient texts molded the educated Renaissance citizen’s vision of Africa, for example Pliny’s Natural History described it as “strange beasts and weird men living in a land of burning heat.”

European powers maintained such views while exploiting the commercial and cultural resources found on far-off continents. For example, in his mid-fifteenth century observations taken during the exploration of the West African coast, the Venetian merchant Alvise da Mosto described Senegambian women as ‘ready to sing and dance,’ but that ‘their dances are very different from ours.’ In the European mind, Africa (as well as the New World, explored almost contemporaneously) embodied the exotic; and its people, the savage. An emphasis on the difference in costume, art, ritual, and skin color between Europeans and Africans resulted in this idea of savagery, despite the many similarities between some African and European societies.

The tradition of curiosity about “primitive” aspects of African art and the continent itself is the source of numerous contradictions. For instance, the long history of enslavement of black Africans exacerbated during fifteenth century explorations is coupled with the Western appreciation of a visual aesthetic that was one of the most important influences in 20th century Modern Art. Imperial expansion into Africa continued, and shifts of power brought more European nations to the continent. Twentieth century European artists launched revolutionary art movements after having seen an influx of tribal arts in European ethnographic displays. European artists found themselves drawn to art characterized by abstraction and raw visual power, so different from naturalistic European conventions of sculpture and art.

Because the African masks used in this exhibit are 20th century productions sold to tourists, they exist as the culmination of the visual tradition of representing African art in a Western space. The smaller mask with rounded, incised red earlobes is small enough to handle easily; not the correct dimensions to function as a real ritualistic piece in ceremony, it is meant for dramatic decoration. Sharp angles form its abstract features. The mouth is open, with neatly carved front teeth, and there are thin slits for eyes under heavy incised lids. The angles of the cheeks are high-lighted with the same red, and like the other mask, the top of the head is painted

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6 Ibid, 15.
red and slopes upward toward a protruding head piece. The larger piece is closer to the size of a “real” African mask, one used in ceremonies and for its traditional purpose; its length would cover the face of a wearer. However, there are no markings on the back, or any indication of a mechanism for wearing the mask, ceding the conclusion that this too is simply a tourist object, a simplification of a revered object. It is not as pointed as the other work, instead featuring elongated, pulled features and a more lifelike face carved in high relief at its top. Amy Trevelyan, a former art history professor at Gettysburg College who specialized in Native American art, acquired these masks for the Schmucker Gallery collection because of their well-respected formal style. These 20th century masks, individual in their form and function, stand as a tactile testament to the Western curiosity with the African continent that began during Renaissance explorations and continues through the present day.

— Molly Reynolds
Preserved *Tetradontidae* (pufferfish)
20th century, acquired in Florida, United States
Specific origins unknown, but family native to Pacific and Indian Oceans
22” x 16” x 6”
On loan from Jack Ryan, Vice Provost, Gettysburg College

As the wonderment of cabinets of curiosities captivated Europeans during the Renaissance, many species of fish were heavily sought after for these collections. Fish were a frequent subject of scientific inquiry during the 16th and 17th centuries, due to their heavy symbolism and representation at the time. Fish were not only collected and displayed, as seen in The Gettysburg Cabinet, but they were also represented in Renaissance paintings, as decoration in apothecary shops, and in books. Europeans viewed fish, indeed all areas of nature, as reflections and expressions of the intentions of God. As religion was such a significant part of peoples’ lives, so too were fish an important symbol of God’s work, seen in the teachings of Jonah and the whale as well as Saint Peter paying taxes on a fish that had swallowed a silver coin.1 Grotesque fish and aquatic singularities were common themes of morals in the 16th and 17th century, like sharks as a sign from God to amend monstrous sins. Sometimes fish were even used by political powers to symbolize their strong coastal territories.1,2

Fish references were not limited to Renaissance Europe. Fish were also studied and documented in the antiquity of Rome, Greece, Japan, and in the Far East. There was an ancient idea that all creatures on Earth had an aquatic counterpart, which was still explored at the time of cabinet collecting.3 An example of this counterpart relationship can be seen in The Gettysburg Cabinet. Great naturalists like Ulisse Aldrovandi and Conrad Gesner

3 Walsham, “Vox-Piscis”.

Schmucker Art Gallery   41   The Gettysburg Cabinet
referred to the pufferfish as a grotesque representation of a human head. Bartolomeo Passarotti made this comparison in his painting *Fish Markets* with the juxtaposition of a pufferfish and a peasant’s head. This objectification of the lower class was a source of comedy for the wealthy during the Renaissance. The paintings of markets by artists like Passarotti were portrayed to the same extent and detail as actual markets in Europe. In a way such paintings were evocative of cabinets of curiosities because fish were often at the foreground, displayed on the plane to allow for maximum view. Fish played a large role in commerce during the 16th and 17th centuries. Merchants at the fish market were collectors in their own right because they tracked and identified the fish they caught and sold.

Another area of commerce reflective of collecting during the Renaissance was the apothecary shop. Apothecaries used shop design to showcase their knowledge and attract potential customers. This was accomplished by using rare fish as drug jars and by suspending singularities from the ceiling, such as pufferfish. An additional inspiration for collectors were the nature catalogues published by naturalists or collectors like Gesner and Ferrante Imperato. These detailed accounts of nature allowed for the spreading of knowledge contained in cabinets throughout Europe. This was particularly helpful with the transmission of fish knowledge, due to the difficulty of their preservation and transport.

The 16th and 17th centuries are filled with numerous examples of the perceptions, portrayals, uses, and collections of fish throughout Europe. Fish were collected for their uses or exoticism and these accounts of fish were only a small part of the wondrous world of cabinets of curiosities. The Gettysburg Cabinet contains two, dried pufferfish, both a brown color, with spots, protruding spines, and gaping mouths. The smaller specimen possesses a shorter tail, as well as less protuberant mouth and eyes. Both specimens belong to the family *Tetradontidae*; the species are likely different based on observation of size difference and tail shape. Although it is fairly certain these are different species, it wasn’t unheard of to mistake fish from the same species as

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8 Arianna Faber Kolb, *Jan Brueghel the Elder*.
different due to sometimes careless preservation techniques during the Renaissance. The Gettysburg Cabinet’s fish skeleton is derived from a garfish of the *Lepisosteidae* family. These fish have both an endo- and exoskeleton and both are preserved nicely here.

Jack Ryan, the Vice Provost of Gettysburg College, acquired then loaned the pufferfish specimens, while the Vertebrate Zoology division of the Biology Department owns the garfish skeleton. These specimens are from the 20th century, but they act as evidence that curiosity about marvelous aquatic creatures was widely prevalent during the Renaissance, and this inquisitiveness continues today.

— Shane Swink

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12 Andrew Campbell, and John Dawes, *The Encyclopedia of Underwater Life.*
November 16 – December 8, 2012

Curated by Danielle Berardinelli, Rebecca Deffler, Madison Desmond, Jill Duranko, Peter Flood, Emily Francisco, Devin Garnick, Joshua Griffiths, Lauren Kauffman, Rose Kell, Sara Ketelsen, Marissa Mellan, Dina Mohamed-Aly, Joanna Myers, Sean Pethybridge, Joshua Poorman, Molly Reynolds and Shane Swink under the direction of Felicia Else, Associate Professor, Department of Art and Art History, and Kay Etheridge, Professor, Biology Department