

THE ROLE OF CHARLES I IN THE EVOLUTION OF TASTE AND COLLECTING IN
ENGLAND

By

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2008

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To my family and Matthew Guthrie, because God Only Knows

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my parents, whose love and support knows no bounds, for introducing me to art; for forcing a petulant eleven-year old girl to walk through the Musée du Louvre and Musée d'Orsay, for encouraging me to take my first art history class, and for providing me with the means and support to study abroad in Italy.

I thank Dr. Elizabeth Ross and Dr. Robert Westin, for their patience, guidance, and invaluable wisdom. I am eternally indebted to my former professors, who shared their knowledge and interests, and who challenged me to be a better student. I would especially like to thank Dr. Matilde Mateo, Dr. Marcia Robinson, Dr. Sara F. Mathews-Grieco, and Dr. David Stanley.

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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August 2008

Chair: Elizabeth Ross
Cochair: Robert Westin
Major: Art History

More influential in art collecting than any one country or institution are the individual collectors, inspired by everything from an intense passion for art to pure competition in acquiring vast and historically significant collections. Perhaps no better examples of these spirited collectors exist than those kings and nobles of Europe of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries. Owning a substantial art collection of good taste and high caliber provided rulers with certain amount of social elitism; their courts were celebrated as bastions of cultural advancement, allowing even the weakest ruler a certain sense of power.

The intent of this historical background is to illustrate the similarities, and differences, between the collectors of the Renaissance and Charles I of England; what he may have copied or been inspired with, and what he chose to ignore. Throughout his years as an art collector, Charles I was mainly concerned with two major ideas: the recognition of his ability to commission and effectively use blatantly propagandist paintings and his desire to amass a collection to compete with the Spanish and French. Charles and his courtiers brought to England, for the first time, the awareness of taste and the development of collecting habits similar to those in continental Europe. He was the leader in England of what R. Malcolm Smuts

calls the “subculture” of collecting; the idea that collecting art was connected to greater indications of taste and knowledge.

Charles’ influence and reputation as a collector would effect future English rulers, from King George IV to Queen Victoria. The collections formed by monarchs throughout the years can be evaluated as reflections of different ideas of kingship, or queenship, and the perceptions of royal rule through cultural achievement.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION: DEFINING TASTE

King Charles I of England, Scotland, and Ireland was, like many before him and many after him, a collector of art. However Charles' importance in art history lies not only with his collecting habits but with his role as the arbiter of taste in his kingdom. Drawing on the pre-existing notions of good taste established by the Renaissance, Charles collected art and patronized artists that conformed to the sixteenth century canon. He was also concerned with maintaining a collection that befitted his status as king, having personally seen the Spanish royal collection and having heard much about the French royal collection; these in addition to knowledge of the multiple Italian collections found amongst the princely houses and the Vatican. Yet Charles and his European predecessors were not unguided in their collecting as they followed certain rules and principles instituted by standards of good taste.

The overall concept of taste, good or bad, is a product of aesthetic relativism and entirely dependent upon social conditions; the voluptuous, Rubenesque standard of beauty can hardly be applied to twenty-first century notions of the ideal slim body. However taste is fluid and is therefore also a learned concept, occasionally dependent upon an individual faculty rather than strict guidelines. To take the example of Charles I, he learned what good taste was to others and then proceeded to develop his own. When taken in the European context Charles was a conformist in his taste, but within England the king was the model of taste for others. Taste is an approach to the assessment of art, qualitative in its purpose and resulting in the formation of a canon. The modern art historical canon is most often the basis of survey courses within the field of study; from Venus of Willendorf to Venus de Milo, Byzantine mosaics to medieval manuscripts, Giotto to Goya, many are included. The basis, in part, of such a canon comes from what is considered "good" art and "good" taste. Yet the canon has changed over the years;

Charles I was radically limited compared to modern collectors simply because the canon of his time dictated it so. Most important in Charles' canon were the Italian artists, Titian conveniently being the king's favorite, though contemporary Flemish artists like Van Dyck and Rubens were rapidly attaining a "must have" status. The importance placed upon Italian art in Charles' notions of taste originated with earlier collectors and the development of collecting in general.

Though there are many instances of monarchs and rulers collecting art during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, part of this thesis will focus on a select few exemplary collectors that set the precedent for Charles I. Isabella d'Este, a member of the Gonzaga family from whom Charles bought a bulk of art, is a unique example for the sheer fact of her gender; being a female had the potential for issues from which males were free. Her collecting habits were prodigious and she was one of many Renaissance collectors who married the dual purposes of a *studiolo* into one: the display of wealth and luxury goods combined with scholarly pursuits and studies. Likewise, Francis I of France, though having myriad reasons for collecting, was interested in humanist ideals and scholarship in addition to his princely requirements of material wealth. Though revived by Italians, Francis took the mantle of Classical glory for his own country in an attempt to create the premier artistic center in Europe, which would also be a reflection on his greatness as a ruler. Francis, along with Isabella, collected art that not only conformed to the standards of luxury that befitted their respective stations, but also art that reflected scholarly success.¹ Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor, collected similarly to Isabella and Francis, but he also had more of a taste for the bizarre and the rare as evidenced by his enormous *Kunstkammer*. Rudolf's preference for the Mannerist style indicates an additional interest in the scholarly and the intellectual; Mannerism, typified by symbolism and exaggerations, was

¹ An example of such would be the revival of Classical rules and standards, such as proportion and perspective.

intended for an intelligent audience. These three great collectors were part of a larger movement that established good taste among the European elite, and as such, set the precedent upon which Charles would base his ideas of taste and collecting.

CHAPTER 2 THE PREDECESSORS

The history of art collecting in the Western world is a long and storied one. More influential in art collecting than any one country or institution are the individual collectors, inspired by everything from an intense passion for art to pure competition in acquiring vast and historically significant collections. Perhaps no better examples of these spirited collectors exist than those kings and nobles of Europe of the 15th through 17th centuries. All of the major, and some minor, powers had at least one great collector and/or patron of the arts, though for purposes of this chapter the focus will primarily be on a select few, including the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II, Francis I of France, and several rulers of the Italian city of Mantua, culminating with Charles I of England at the core of this discussion.

The men and women examined here have been lauded as great collectors and patrons of the Renaissance, and their collections now fill museums around the world. Rudolf II, though an ineffectual ruler, amassed the largest *Kunstkammer* in Europe in addition to owning the greatest amount of Mannerist paintings outside of Italy. The collections of Francis I and the Gonzagas were likewise famous for their sheer size, but more importantly for their quality of Renaissance art works. The Valois and Hapsburg court culture and art collecting habits were heavily influenced by the diffusion of Italian Renaissance Classicism throughout Europe, a trend that Charles I would quickly follow. Subsequently, the idea of collecting and patronizing artists to indicate the good taste of the collector became more esteemed than acquiring art to display wealth (though this idea of “showing off” remained constant). Good taste was signified, among other things, by a collector’s or patron’s knowledge of Ancient Rome and to some extent Ancient Greece, and the two civilizations’ scholarly and artistic output; hence the revival of mythological themes in painting and sculpture, and classical proportions in architecture. As this revival began

and flourished in Italy, it was only natural for Italian art to diffuse through Europe as a greater extension of Classicism. Owning a substantial art collection of good taste and high caliber provided rulers with certain amount of social elitism; their courts were celebrated as bastions of cultural advancement, allowing even the weakest ruler a certain sense of power. Yet perhaps most important is the influence that these rulers/collectors had on each other, occasionally modeling their own collecting habits on predecessors and contemporaries, or even engaging in outright competition for the preeminent art collection. Such analysis can be best seen when looking at some of these collectors individually, and is particularly effective when comparing them to Charles I of England. The Gonzaga collection has its own long and complex history that is reflective of the changing trends and ideas of cultural affairs, and indicative of the evolution of art and artistic practices in Italy.

History of the Gonzagas

The Gonzagas were one of the great dynasties of the numerous Italian Houses, their longevity a combination of military prowess and advantageous marriage alliances. The family originally came to prominence in the twelfth century through the acquisition of estates and land, effectively earning themselves a place among the landed gentry. Having settled in Mantua permanently by the end of the thirteenth century the Gonzagas competed for power over the city with the Bonacolsi family,¹ eventually becoming the primary rulers of Mantua. Decidedly more pertinent to this discussion, however, is the enthusiastic patronage of the pictorial arts by several members of the family that led to the formation of an exceptional art collection. By the time of the sale in 1627, the Gonzagas had amassed a collection of thousands of works, either bought or actively commissioned by the family over the years. Some of the more famous paintings and

¹ Alte Pinakothek, *Tintoretto: the Gonzaga cycle*, (Munich: Hatje Cantz, 2000), 130.

sculptures include Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin*, Tintoretto's *Gonzaga Cycle*, Raphael's *La Perla*, Andrea Mantegna's *The Triumphs of Caesar*, a *Cupid* by Michelangelo that has since been lost, and the interior decoration of their palaces by Mantegna and Romano. The two most important patrons from the Gonzaga family during the early and High Renaissance were Ludovico II and Isabella d'Este. Indeed, Ludovico actively pursued artists and architects to build and decorate not only the ducal residences, but various churches and buildings in and around Mantua itself.

The first major work that Ludovico (Fig. 1) commissioned was a large scale mural decoration by Pisanello,² with a theme of the Arthurian legend. Though some of the murals remain unfinished, the Sala del Pisanello (Fig. 2) in the palace complex of Mantua was, by all accounts, an impressive sight to behold; the symbolic connotations of chivalry to the court and references to the famous Gonzaga relic of Christ's blood did not go unnoticed. When the papal court came to Mantua for the Church Congress of 1459-60, they brought with them Leon Battista Alberti who was to stay in Mantua after the papal court moved on and also to return on three different occasions in 1463, 1470, and 1471.³ Alberti was to rebuild the church of Sant'Andrea to house the Gonzaga relic and also to restore the Palazzo del Podestà. However, neither of these renowned artists would have influence in Mantua comparable to that of Andrea Mantegna, with forty-six years in the service of the Gonzaga family. The Camera degli Sposi is a small room in the ducal palace that Mantegna covered with frescoes, even on the ceiling, over a period of nine years, with various scenes celebrating the Gonzaga family. Though Ludovico was to die in

² See Joanna Woods-Marsden, *The Gonzaga of Mantua and Pisanello's Arthurian Frescoes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) for a full and extensive account of the Gonzagas' relations with Pisanello and the resulting Arthurian frescoes.

³ Alison Cole, *Virtue and magnificence : art of the Italian Renaissance courts* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 144.

1478, Mantegna continued to work for the family, eventually painting the outstanding series *The Triumphs of Caesar* (Fig. 3). The immense series consists of nine canvases celebrating the military triumphs of Julius Caesar, though the direct allusions to the Gonzagas that existed in Pisanello's frescoes are absent. These nine works would also prove to be a sticking point in negotiations of the sale to Charles I, yet they all ended up at Hampton Court Palace where they reside to this day. Though building and art continued to be produced after Ludovico's death, it was his grandson's wife, Isabella d'Este, who brought the Mantuan court its celebrated artistic reputation.

Isabella d'Este (Fig. 4) was the eldest daughter of Ercole d'Este and Eleonora of Aragon, and sister to Beatrice d'Este, who, as the Duchess of Milan, presided over the short-lived but culturally productive court of Ludovico Sforza. Isabella became the Marchesa of Mantua upon her marriage to Francesco II Gonzaga in 1490, and quickly established herself as a patron of the arts and a lover of antiquity. She surrounded herself with "experts," who could advise her and further her education, and traveled frequently, most often to Rome where she could indulge in her taste for the Ancient. She took to traveling to Rome so frequently that she often went unofficially and by coach, in effect popularizing this habit to such an extent that she was listed as its "trend-setter" in a papal edict.⁴ Such was her passion for all forms of art that she filled both a *studiolo* and a *grotto* with "paintings and books (as often as not of a nonreligious nature), as well as antique coins, cameos, intaglios, and bronze and marble statuary."⁵ Her portrait was painted often and painted well, by Titian, Andrea Mantegna, and Cosimo Tura, and drawn by Leonardo

⁴ Cynthia Lawrence, ed., *Women and art in early modern Europe : patrons, collectors, and connoisseurs* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 71. Apparently the resulting traffic from so many people attempting to enter Rome by way of private coach was bad enough to force Pope Pius IV to resolve the issue by papal edict.

⁵ Ibid: 63.

da Vinci.⁶ Though she actively commissioned works from Mantegna, she was also one of the first courtly patrons to buy works of art simply for their perceived value, regardless of their respective subjects.⁷ The value of a work was largely determined by the eminence of its creator and the degree of success in the execution of the work. Also deemed valuable were rare and/or ancient objects, such as cameos and exotic shells. Isabella's collecting habits were, in part, a result of a lack of funds for her to pursue artists for residence at the court of Mantua; it was far cheaper to buy works outright. She was acutely aware of the iconography of her collection and controlled such aspects by personally deciding what to purchase. Some of the notable works of her collection included Mantegna's *Pallas Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue*, Perugino's *Battle of Love and Chastity*, Lorenzo Costa's *The Garden of the Peaceful Arts*, and Correggio's *Allegory of Virtue* and the unashamedly erotic *Allegory of Vice*.

Parallel to the emergence of the Renaissance was the development of a growing market for consumer goods, especially luxury goods, with which Isabella d'Este was very much involved by way of her *studiolo*. As the market for luxury goods increased so too did the refinement of consumption habits, and hence, the prevalence of collections and *studiolos*. Through this association with luxury, sophistication, and scholarship, collectors and amateur scholars were able to achieve a certain amount of "cultural capital."⁸ This particular asset, to keep in economic terms, is seen clearly by the collections of Francis I, Rudolf II, and Charles I and will be a constant theme throughout this thesis; owning collections brings cultural eminence and reflects, to some extent, the power of the owner. The Gonzagas, including Isabella, did not

⁶ Cole, *Virtue and magnificence : art of the Italian Renaissance courts*, 161.

⁷ Ibid: 164.

⁸ Stephen J. Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 39.

depend on the local Mantuan market for their luxury goods, but rather relied on consumer products available in the much larger neighboring city-states and other international trade centers, particularly Paris.⁹ As such, Isabella d'Este became renowned for her insistence on high quality products, as she wanted to stand out and visually project her status as Marchioness. Indeed, "her reputation for high standards and innovative design would become one of the most important defining characteristics of how she was perceived throughout her career."¹⁰ With the cognizance of public perception as part of her role, Isabella joined the ranks of fellow collectors and kings who patronized art not only because they enjoyed it, but because of the reputation that it earned them.

For Isabella d'Este and others, the consumer market for luxury goods could be fraught with difficulties that delicately balanced the potential magnificence certain products could bring their owner. Stephen Campbell broaches the subject of risk to social status, i.e. certain situations could actually harm an aristocratic buyer. For Isabella, the most obvious difficulty was her gender; if she had been found to publically engage in certain trades, her good name and honor would be at risk.¹¹ Italian aristocrats, Isabella included, also attempted to have a symbiotic relationship of sorts with the producers of goods, namely artists. This relationship was based on both parties receiving eminence by being associated with the other: the aristocrats enhance their collections while the artists enhance their reputations. As Campbell points out, this was not

⁹ Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy, 1400-1600* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 249.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 251.

¹¹ Campbell, 55.

always a functioning relationship since, to artists, money was often more important than name recognition.¹²

As art in Italy shifted to the more dramatic Baroque style, so too did the tastes of the Gonzagas follow suit, and they continued to employ or commission works from the finest artists of that period as well. Peter Paul Rubens enjoyed a time of employment at the Mantuan court, where he was accompanied by his then student, Anthony van Dyck. It is now known that Rubens was in fact primarily responsible for the Mantuan purchase of Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin* in 1607.¹³ Ferdinando I Gonzaga must have also moved in certain circles in the Roman art world, as it was he who, as Cardinal, achieved a pardon for Caravaggio from Pope Paul V.¹⁴ Ferdinando and his father, Vincenzo, were among the first Gonzagas to begin collecting art from Northern artists, Rubens surely the most prominent among them, but also including Paul Bril (a Flemish landscapist working in Italy) and Pieter Brueghel the Elder. This assimilation of Northern art into Italian collections reflected a new dynamic in taste and collecting that was open towards accepting as equally good art from outside of Italy. Similar to Frederico II's design of the Palazzo del Te, Ferdinando wished to create a ducal residence further away from the main city of Mantua, a vision that ultimately became the Villa Favorita. This baroque structure was filled with art; frescoes, paintings on canvas or wood, sculptures, and various decorative objects. Guido Reni, in particular, was a favorite of Ferdinando's, but was in high demand throughout Italy and was not able to complete as many works as Ferdinando wished. The works he did produce for the duke of Mantua were four panels depicting labors of Hercules, all of which were included in the sale to Charles I. Though Vincenzo I and Ferdinando I may have given the

¹² Ibid, 57.

¹³ Pamela Askew, "Ferdinando Gonzaga's Patronage of the Pictorial Arts: The Villa Favorita," *The Art Bulletin*, 60 (1978): 277.

¹⁴ Catherine Puglisi, *Caravaggio* (London & New York: Phaidon Press, 1998), 365.

Gonzaga collection even more esteem, they also plunged the ruling family into deep financial woes; Ferdinando, in particular, contributed to the Gonzaga's mounting debt by buying up art in bulk and spending an extravagant amount of money on his palaces in Rome and Mantua. Even before Ferdinando's death, there was talk of selling a portion of the collection,¹⁵ most likely the older works that were seen as unfashionable in the current atmosphere.

The Renaissance King

In the history of art, Francis I of France (Fig. 5) is best remembered for his prodigious collecting habits and lavish patronage of the arts, fashioning the royal château of Fontainebleau as one of the principal centers for art in Europe. As second cousin to Louis XII, Francis was the closest surviving male heir, and hence inherited the throne at the age of twenty in 1515; his claim to the throne was further cemented by his marriage to Louis XII's eldest daughter, Claude. Though he lived at court from a young age, the education of the future king was primarily overseen by his mother, Louise of Savoy. As the patron of a number of French humanists, she stressed the humanistic ideals in Francis' education, a fact which would eventually see him described as the consummate French gentleman in Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*.¹⁶ As Castiglione wrote:

For it is not long since I was in France, and saw this Prince in the Court there, who seemed unto me beside the handsomeness of person and beauty of visage, to have in his countenance so great a majesty, accompanied nevertheless with a certain lovely courtesy, that the realm of France should ever seem unto him a small matter. I understood afterward by many gentlemen both French and Italian, very much of the most noble conditions, of the greatness of courage, prowess and liberality that was in him: and among other things, it

¹⁵ Alessandro Luzio, *La galleria dei Gonzaga venduta all'Inghilterra nel 1627-28* (Rome: Bardi, 1913), 137.

¹⁶ Glenn Richardson, *Renaissance Monarchy: The Reigns of Henry VIII, Francis I and Charles V* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 12. Among the humanist scholars potentially involved in Francis' education were François Demoulins, Jean Thenaud and Symphorien Champier.

was told me that he highly loved and esteemed letters, and had in very great reputation all learned men...”¹⁷

From the beginning of his reign, the French king’s primary focus rested on collecting Italian art works and bringing Italian masters to the court of France, a focus brought on by a complex combination of admiration for and rivalry with Italy.¹⁸ A sense of independence and inventiveness could be found amongst the artists and scholars of France during Francis I’s reign, as Fontainebleau became the king’s favorite residence and there displayed the numerous works of art acquired from Italy. Among the more traditional art forms were bronze casts made from molds Primaticcio brought back from Rome following his journey in 1540. This single act enabled French and visiting artists to study sculptural masterpieces, such as the great equestrian portrait of Marcus Aurelius, the *Apollo Belvedere*, and the *Laocoön*.¹⁹ Classicism in France flourished during the reign of Francis I. Through his importation of Italian artists, and ultimately of the Italian Renaissance, the French king enabled his country to have a Renaissance of its own, culminating in the school of Fontainebleau. However, by using Italian, and therefore not French, artists to decorate his chateaux, Francis tied the development of French artistic culture inextricably to the Italians. Yet Henri Zerner has argued that the visual arts in France were always enthusiastically and successfully cultivated, but not in the traditional area of painting; stained glass, tapestries, and sculpture were all abundantly produced.²⁰

¹⁷ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Sir Thomas Hoby (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), 82.

¹⁸ Antoine Schnapper, “The King of France as Collector in the Seventeenth Century,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 17 (1986): 188.

¹⁹ Richardson, *Renaissance Monarchy: The Reigns of Henry VIII, Francis I and Charles V*, 185-186.

²⁰ Henri Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France: The Invention of Classicism* (Paris: Éditions Flammarion, 2003). Zerner analyzes various periods, styles, and locations throughout his book, and states in his introduction that his goal is to examine the French conception of art and the artist different from that of the Italian Renaissance.

Francis' desire for Italian art was indeed based upon competition and appreciation, but also emphasized the king's other motive of projecting an imperial monarchy through Renaissance Classicism. As the first important Italian works in the king's collection were gifts from Pope Leo X and Francesco Gonzaga,²¹ it is highly likely that he may have been spurred on by the knowledge of other collections, as his in comparison must have seemed quite lacking while in the early stages. Indeed, as Janet Cox-Rearick states, "the very act of collecting art in France in the early sixteenth century was Italian-inspired, inseparable from the assimilation of Italian humanism and art forms."²² As such, some of his loftier ideas are well known, including his attempt to bring Michelangelo to Fontainebleau and the failed operation to dismantle Leonardo's *Last Supper* from the walls of Santa Maria delle Grazie to bring to France, though he was successful in bringing Leonardo himself to the French court. Among the paintings Francis was able to acquire were Michelangelo's *Leda*, numerous works by Raphael and his studio that included the *Belle Jardinière*, and upon Leonardo's death his *Mona Lisa*, *Virgin of the Rocks*, and *Virgin and Child with St. Anne*. These, and many others, would come to form the basis of the Louvre's collections. While a general consensus among historians states that Francis could not conquer Italy and therefore compensated by bringing Italian taste to his court, he also used his collection for what has been called "politique culturelle."²³ This use of cultural politics enabled the king to powerfully assert his authority in a visual and aesthetically pleasing manner. Though Francis may have considered himself to be in competition with the far more illustrious Italian and Hapsburg collectors, he inspired Henry VIII of England to at least meet the standards

²¹ Richardson, *Renaissance Monarchy: The Reigns of Henry VIII, Francis I and Charles V*, 184.

²² Janet Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1995), 65.

²³ *Ibid*, 67. The author also asserts that Francis considered prestigious paintings and sculptures to be able to bring fame to their owner, which would add even further to the king's attempts to use his collection as a demonstration of royal power.

set by the French, if not surpass them entirely in terms of tapestry collecting.²⁴ Yet Italian Renaissance art was not as widely received in England, no doubt primarily due to the new and overwhelming force of Protestantism, and therefore never lodged in English artistic practices as it did in France. However, like Charles I of England among English kings, Francis is considered the first French king whose informed taste led him to see works of art as unique to each artist, leading him to request specific works by specific artists, as opposed to focusing on the practical nature or religious purpose of an artwork.²⁵

Rudolf and the *Kunstkammer*

Prince Rudolf of Hapsburg (Fig. 6) was the eldest surviving son of Maria of Spain and Emperor Maximilian; sent to the court of Philip II of Spain, his maternal uncle, at the age of eleven, Rudolf became exposed to the renowned and expansive Spanish royal collection. Upon Rudolf's arrival in Spain in 1563, he developed a close bond with his uncle the king, based upon their shared love of building collections and decorating palaces.²⁶ Though Philip's collection included masterpieces by Titian, Raphael, Rogier van der Weyden, and Hieronymous Bosch, it was his staggering accumulation of relics that may have had the most influence on Rudolf and his own future collecting habits. Rudolf II, as previously mentioned, was the owner of the largest *Kunstkammer* in Europe; rather than painting or sculpture, though he certainly acquired many such items, Rudolf was fascinated by unusual objects, minerals, bones, specimens, etc. Though religious in nature, Philip II's enormous collection of relics undoubtedly played a role of

²⁴ Richardson, *Renaissance Monarchy: The Reigns of Henry VIII, Francis I and Charles V*, 187. By the time of his death, Henry VIII had over 2000 individual tapestry pieces, widely ranging in date and style.

²⁵ Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures*, 67. Francis had a far more personal relationship to the art that he owned, very similar to Charles.

²⁶ Philip Blom, *To Have and To Hold: An Intimate History of Collectors and Collecting* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2002), 30. At the end of Philip II's life, his collection of relics totaled over 7,000 items, among which could be found various body parts in addition to several pieces of the True Cross and the Crown of Thorns, and vials of the Holy Family's and saints' blood. Much of Philip's relic collection was acquired after the death of his fourth wife and niece, Anna of Austria, when the king turned to his religion as a means of comfort.

some sort in Rudolf's near obsessive collecting for his *Kunstammer*. It must be said that Rudolf II did not collect art solely as a means of competing with other rulers or nobles, but rather amassed his collection in part based on his sheer love and interest of art and fantastical objects, much to the detriment of his political responsibilities. However, Rudolf freely used his collections as a diplomatic tool, to convey a message that,

“as suggested in contemporary writing...a prince expresses his *virtus*, his worth, in his collections. And so just as Rudolf II demonstrated one of the imperial virtues, his magnanimity, in the gifts he sent to other courts, he may be said to have exhibited his magnificence in his collections.”²⁷

As the Holy Roman Emperor, and thus the first among other European rulers, Rudolf also established his collection as a means to express his preeminence as the “first” collector of Europe, a position appropriate to his status in protocol.

Soon after Rudolf II's return from Spain, he began acquiring objects while still a prince, influenced by his exposure to the Spanish collection and to the collection of his paternal uncle Archduke Ferdinand, with whom Rudolf stayed during his journey home. Seven years after being crowned Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolf moved his capital from Vienna to Prague and found Prague Castle less than adequate for holding his collections, thus initiating a building campaign that would eventually add a wing onto the existing structure, now known as the Spanish Hall.²⁸ This entire wing was devoted to housing Rudolf's collection, comprised of the Hapsburg collection he inherited as well as items he acquired and commissioned. While a full inventory of such a massive group is far too extensive to list here, some highlights from the collection include: paintings, drawings and prints; several Seychelles nuts with gold

²⁷ Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, “Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II: The *Kunstammer* as a Form of Representation,” *Art Journal* 38, 1 (1978): 22-23. Interestingly, this idea is contradicted in Antoine Schnapper's article “The King of France as Collector in the Seventeenth Century,” which claims that the attempts to give Rudolf's collection an imperial significance are quite weak.

²⁸ Blom, *To Have and To Hold: An Intimate History of Collectors and Collecting*, 39-40.

embellishments; several carved rhinoceros horns, often with embellishments; exotic arms and armor, including a suit from a Samurai; bezoars and other items thought to possess magical qualities; and musical instruments.²⁹ Perhaps due to the Hapsburg “madness” or due to Rudolf’s fascination with everything exotic, he developed a deep and lengthy interest in magic, alchemy, and the occult; his relics were not Christian in nature, but classical, among them the jawbone of a siren who attempted to lure Odysseus and a nail from Noah’s ark.³⁰ The *Kunstkammer* was seen as a microcosm of the world, and the symbolism is quite significant, as it suggests that since Rudolf had this microcosm in his care, as Holy Roman Emperor he had much of the Western world in his care as well.

Much like Francis I, Rudolf used his collection, specifically the works of Italian or Italian-trained artists, to further the conception of the Holy Roman Emperor as a man of great taste and discernment. One of the most fascinating and compelling portraits of a ruler was painted for Rudolf by Arcimboldo, depicting Rudolf in the guise of Vertumnus, the Etrusco-Roman god of the seasons (Fig. 7). What is unusual about this portrait is not the persona that Rudolf assumes, but rather the physical way he is portrayed in a sort of anthropomorphic composition of fruit, vegetables, and other objects conjoined to form a likeness of the Emperor.³¹ Rudolf as Vertumnus is meant to suggest that, much like the way he ruled over multiple states, so too did he rule over the seasons, and to a greater extent, the elements; the infinitely cyclical aspects of

²⁹ Eliska Fucikova, ed., *Rudolf II and Prague: The Court and the City* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1997), 469-572. This exhibition catalogue provides an extensive list of items that Rudolf collected with images for each piece.

³⁰ Blom, 42. This is in direct contrast to his uncle, Philip II’s, massive collection of relics, which were entirely Christian in nature. Rudolf is thought to have held very little religious conviction, fascinated as he was by magic and alchemy, going so far as to become actively involved himself rather than supervising alchemists and scholars. Their ultimate goal, like all alchemists, was to find the Philosopher’s Stone and hence Rudolph’s cabinet became an active laboratory.

³¹ Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister, and City: the Art and Culture of Central Europe, 1450-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 191.

the seasons indicates the eternal rule of the Hapsburgs. While it may be tempting to see this portrait as humorous in intent, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann has concluded that:

Arcimboldo's painting relies on the conception of a system of correspondences between microcosm and macrocosm, the Aristotelian theory of the elements, and the Renaissance notions of physiognomy.³²

Hugh Trevor-Roper goes so far as to state that Rudolf designed his collection to serve as propaganda for the house of Hapsburg, seeing his collection as a monument to the famed dynasty.³³ The Emperor's great interest in art that is now known as Mannerist in style is reflective of Trevor-Roper's theory. Mannerist art,

“favored the intellectual ‘concetti’ and ‘artificiality’ of a self-referential art delighting in exaggerations, deformations, anamorphoses, hieroglyphics and secret codes, in the monstrous and the paradoxical...”³⁴

Such art was made to be understood by the intellectual elite and by connecting himself so directly to the style through portraiture, Rudolf was elevating himself and his family to the ranks of the highly educated and highly discerning. By evoking a Classical god to signify his status, Rudolf firmly cemented his position as a man of great taste, as the compelling and frankly bizarre imagery of Arcimboldo's portrait of the emperor soon found its way into collections in Dresden, Munich, Liechtenstein, and Spain.³⁵

³² Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, “Arcimboldo's Imperial Allegories,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 39, 4 (1976): 275-276. Through this statement, Kaufmann summarizes the research and work of Sven Alfons, Pavel Preiss, and R. J. W. Evans.

³³ Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Princes and Artists: Patronage and Ideology at four Hapsburg courts, 1517-1633* (London & New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 108.

³⁴ Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, “Giuseppe Arcimboldo: Court Artist, Philosopher, “rhétoriqueur”, Magician or an Entertainer?” in Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, ed., *Arcimboldo: 1526-1593* (Milan: Skira Editore, 2007), 15.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 191.

The Role of Charles as Collector

The intent of this historical background is to illustrate the similarities, and differences, between the collectors of the Renaissance and Charles I of England; what he may have copied or been inspired with, and what he chose to ignore. Charles remains a complex historical figure in almost all realms of his personality and choices, but there is no question that he had a deep and abiding love and appreciation for the beauty of art, both in the traditional sense and in the elaborate masques the Stuart court enacted. Like Francis I, Charles actively recruited artists to come to his court, famously employing Anthony Van Dyck and Peter Paul Reubens. Whitehall, though not as illustrious as Fontainebleau, became the primary focus of Charles' interests, housing the most important works of his collection and having Rubens beautifully embellish its surfaces. The *Kunstammer* was a trend that never fully developed within the English royal collection, as they consistently tended to prefer the more traditional art forms such as painting, sculpture, and tapestries, in particular. Henry VIII was unable to compete with his French and Spanish counterparts and their voracious collecting, but he did "out-collect" them in tapestries, having over two thousand individual pieces at the time of his death.³⁶ With such knowledge, Charles seems to have little in common with Rudolf II, yet both men shared a frankly obsessive passion for the collections they acquired over their lifetime, preferring "the world of arts to the administration of the kingdom."³⁷ Certainly Charles attempted to emulate the collecting of these two men, but his connection to them is more important in regards to the *evolution* of collecting and tastes by European rulers.

³⁶ Richardson, *Renaissance Monarchy: The Reigns of Henry VIII, Francis I and Charles V*, 187. Among this collection included the School of Raphael tapestries, the cartoons of which eventually bought by Charles I while still Prince of Wales. The influence of these cartoons and their subsequent display are discussed in further detail in Chapter Two.

³⁷ Schnapper, "The King of France as Collector in the Seventeenth Century," 187.

Throughout his years as an art collector, Charles I was mainly concerned with two major ideas: the recognition of his ability to commission and effectively use blatantly propagandist paintings and his desire to amass a collection to compete with the Spanish and French. Charles was not raised as the Prince of Wales and he is often noted by historians for his rather unremarkable qualities, so it is unsurprising that the majority, if not all, commissioned images of the king reflect Charles' constant need of validation. As opposed to glorifying his own accomplishments and person, Charles often conjured the success of his father and father-in-law to imply an inherited greatness as king, which can be seen in paintings by Van Dyck, Hendrick Pot, and most effectively in Rubens' *Apotheosis of King James I*. Perhaps because of the lack of attention and praise that Charles received as a child, he was an extremely defensive adult, particularly when any of his policies were questioned; this character flaw stemmed from Charles' unwavering beliefs in his God given rights as a monarch.³⁸ As such, his portraits by Van Dyck have become some of the most iconic images of a monarch, illustrating an image of a king who, with a sense of instinctive sovereignty, is fulfilling the destiny he assumed upon his brother's death. Though Charles' portraits are not overly complicated in their symbolic imagery, every major surviving portrait of the king is a clear glorification of and insistence upon his right to rule.

Portraits of Charles I have been analyzed extensively, and the general consensus rules that almost every single painted image of the king was carefully and purposefully constructed to convey his power and magnanimity. While this was not unusual among kings, few had the good fortune of having a court painter like Anthony Van Dyck. For these purposes, I will limit my discussion to one portrait painted by Van Dyck, *Equestrian Portrait of Charles I* of about 1637-38 (Fig. 8). Firstly, it is important to note where Charles himself chose to place this portrait: at the end of the long gallery at Hampton Court. Such a place of prominence enhanced the

³⁸ Richard Cust, *Charles I: a Political Life* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd., 2005), 30.

emotional effect of the portrait, not just to convey majesty to those present at court, but to “reassure” Charles, in a way, of his own power and abilities as monarch. An equestrian portrait like this of Charles easily evokes similar images, such as the bronze statue of Marcus Aurelius in Rome or Titian’s portrait of Emperor Charles V. In this portrait by Van Dyck, Charles is shown as the divinely anointed king, one who does not accept man-made limits on his authority (and indeed he did not): “He is not just the warrior poised for war, but the knight ready to ply the long sword that rests across his horse’s flank in the service of justice, true religion and true love.”³⁹ Charles also established his connection to great rulers like Marcus Aurelius and Charles V, claiming an inheritance or association with their power through the commonality of the equestrian portrait. Charles’ attempt to conjure rulers of the past, or to bestow upon himself the mantles of his father and father-in-law, actually has the opposite effect of their intent. Because Charles was a largely ineffectual ruler, these grandiose images only remind the viewer how unsuccessful the king really was; Charles’ biggest accomplishment was his art collection, which is excellent for art historians but highly unfortunate for those who lived as his subjects.

Charles’ need for approval also played a distinctive role in his collecting habits, as having the best collection in England and one of the best in Europe completely fed into his yearning to appear as kingly as possible. His exposure to other collections in England was quite expansive, as many court nobles, advisors, and family members shared the passion for art. Charles saw the Spanish collection during his foolish attempt at securing a bride and certainly heard stories of the French collection, through his advisor the Duke of Buckingham and numerous members of his wife’s retinue. Yet undoubtedly the most pivotal event in Charles’ life as a collector was his

³⁹ Charles Carlton, *Charles I: the personal monarch* (London: Routledge, 1995), 146.

acquisition of the Gonzaga collection. At the time, the acquisition of the Gonzaga collection through English agents was a coup over all the collectors of Europe. Those who could afford to buy the collection wanted it, and those who couldn't desperately wished they had the funds. The hundreds of works immediately became the core of the royal collection upon their arrival in England, and they only fuelled Charles' passion even further before he was to become embroiled in civil war.

While many patrons and collectors commissioned and acquired art that was in fashion, or simply available, their tastes and collecting habits could also be quite indicative of personal characteristics and interests of an individual: Rudolf II's fascination with the occult was reflected in his *Kunstkammer*, while Isabella d'Este's love of antiquities is clearly seen in her *grotto*. Charles I, whose complex personality will be examined in greater detail in later chapters, seems to have had the original Napoleon complex; he was a short and physically unremarkable man, who spent his entire life overcompensating for his own perceived weaknesses. Leaders of any era are acutely aware of their public perception; those who choose to ignore the public often do so at their own peril, as Charles I of England and Louis XVI of France could attest. Therefore, I would propose that the art collections of these rulers are more often than not a reflection of their power and prestige that indulges their interest in art as an afterthought. While there are always exceptions to everything, the majority of rulers during the time period under discussion are continually attempting to prove to their public, their contemporaries, and themselves, that they are powerful rulers, deserving of their privileges; whether or not this was true is immaterial. Charles I of England certainly falls under this category and now that a greater understanding has been developed regarding Charles' predecessors in collecting, we must look at the king himself and focus on the evolution of his collection and connoisseurship.

CHAPTER 3 THE COLLECTING AND PATRONIZING OF ART BY CHARLES AND HIS COURTIERS

The evolution of taste and collecting in Renaissance England reached an extremely significant and sudden climax with the accession of the Scottish Stuarts to the throne of England. Prior, England had never been seen as a great importer of Italian Continental art, and therefore artistic tastes and traditions were mainly developed on the fringes of the Italian Renaissance. Several factors contributed to England's isolation: primarily its geographical location, but also the disruption that was caused by the War of the Roses and the Hundred Years' War, in addition to the religious upheaval of the Reformation. As such, England's answer to Isabella d'Este, Francis I, and Rudolf II arrived on the cultural scene at a later time. Charles I of England is best remembered, unfortunately, for causing a civil war and for being the only English monarch since Anglo-Saxon rule to be executed by his or her own people. However Charles is important here because of the pivotal role that he plays in English cultural achievement and knowledge; Charles and his courtiers brought to England, for the first time, the awareness of taste and the development of collecting habits similar to those in continental Europe.

Other Major Collectors in England

In general, the collecting practices in England followed the same pattern that was exhibited in Italy and in the courts of major ruling powers:

Immediately after the intense humanistic scholarship and artistic creativity of the fifteenth century, it was during the sixteenth century, also in Italy, that the collecting of art and antiquities was validated as an activity worthy of the greatest individuals and ultimately of the state itself.¹

Prior to the fifteenth century, owning a collection meant that an individual, or state, had amassed literary or historical materials, decorative objects, relics, or a treasury of objects made from

¹ Edward Chaney, ed. *The Evolution of English Collecting: Receptions of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods* (New Haven & London: The Paul Mellon Center for Studies in British Art and the Yale Center for British Art, 2003), 25.

precious materials. That is not to say patrons or collectors did not own paintings or sculpture, but they simply did not have them in the large numbers that would be seen in later centuries. England had a long-standing practice of importing cultural goods and artisans from other areas of the continent, mainly from the French and Netherlandish territories. Because England could not truly cultivate a significant artistic exchange with Italy until the Stuart dynasty, it was the sixteenth century that saw the developments of cultural and artistic relationships between Italy and the great powers of Continental Europe.

Prior to the Italian Renaissance and its overwhelming influence on European culture, England was a chief foreign benefactor of "...France as mediator of verbal culture and the artistically overmighty Netherlands as provider of material culture."² From France, the English primarily imported printed books and manuscripts of myriad subjects and translations; from the Netherlands came luxury textiles, illumination, and paintings. Any Italian influence on England was primarily confined to the international scholarly community in their study of humanism, as this initial exploration in the Classics during the fifteenth century was not accompanied by the interest in the visual antiquities like in Italy or France. However, minor Italian artists were invited to the island on several occasions during the reigns of Henry VII and VIII; Elizabeth's excommunication by the Pope and greater interest in music and plays ultimately made Italy and its visual arts more unfashionable than ever. Yet with all the religious and political upheaval caused by the Reformation, Italian artists, art, and cultural influences still managed to make an appearance in England, the precursors to the major collectors and patrons of the seventeenth century.

² Catherine Reynolds, "England and the Continent: Artistic Relations" in Richard Marks and Paul Williamson, eds., *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547* (London: V&A Publications, 2003), 79. See for a short, but detailed account of artistic relations between England and the continent during the 14th through 16th centuries.

Now proven that Charles I was not unique in his interest and collecting of ancient and Italian works, the trend began with the Tudor period and was present among Charles' contemporaries, including Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, and George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, where the sport of collecting flourished. Though notoriously frugal, Henry VII was nevertheless a patron of Italian culture, building a hospital inspired by Santa Maria Nuova in Florence, and employing Italian artists, such as the sculptors Benedetto da Maiano and Guido Mazzoni.³ Cardinal Wolsey, an advisor to both Henry VII and VIII, continued his king's relations with Italy, undoubtedly spurred on by the personal benefits a Cardinal would obtain by cultivating good relationships with Rome especially. Wolsey built the first Renaissance palace in England at Hampton Court and commissioned Giovanni da Maiano to create ten terracotta roundels to embellish the palace.⁴ In addition, Wolsey and the other executors of Henry VII's will commissioned Torrigiano to build tombs for the Tudor family.

As previously mentioned in Chapter Two, Henry VIII very much attempted to compete with Charles V and Francis I, yet he simply did not have the same development or awareness of taste; he reserved Holbein for portraits and favored battle scenes by unknown Northern painters. However, Henry was incredibly fond of tapestries and a major and quite notable purchase by Charles' ancestor was the set of tapestries entitled *Acts of the Apostles* (Fig. 9); while woven in Brussels, the design was taken from cartoons produced by the school of Raphael. Though it is unknown when these tapestries were purchased, an inventory of Westminster Palace from 1542 lists them in the king's possession.⁵ It is therefore unsurprising that Charles, while Prince of

³ Ibid, 32.

⁴ Alfred Higgins "On the Work of Florentine Sculptors in England in the Early Part of the 16th Century," *Archaeological Journal*, 51 (1892): 201.

⁵ Tom Campbell, *Henry VIII and the Art of Majesty: Tapestries at the Tudor Court* (New Haven and London: The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2007), 262.

Wales, purchased the cartoons from which Henry VIII's tapestries were woven so they could be used at the tapestry factory at Mortlake, just outside of London.⁶ The tapestries were purchased on Charles' behalf, and as the transaction occurred around the same time as the Prince of Wales' trip to Spain, it is unlikely Charles had a personal involvement with the sale to the degree that would be shown in his later years. Though connected through their purchases of a tapestry set and its cartoons, Henry VIII and Charles I exhibited very different ideas of what they considered to determine high artistic value. The Tudors valued the tapestries for their material worth, in the precious metals and silks used and in the expense of the labor intensive process. Charles, however, in his identification with the Italian ideals of taste and connoisseurship was more interested in the connection to artistic genius; in this case the cartoons, having been directly produced by the school of Raphael, were closer to the "genius" than the tapestries, removed from the original designers' hands by the workers at a tapestry factory. In the Tudor and Stuart eras, collecting was not restricted to the monarch and his or her upper echelon of advisors, rather it was a habit that was steadily developed by aristocrats as well.

A notable family of the Tudor and Stuart periods, the Cecils, was known for their generous patronage of the arts, and Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, is seen as the immediate predecessor of the Earl of Arundel in terms of collecting. Lord Salisbury (Fig. 10) originally came to power as the Secretary of State for Elizabeth I in the twilight of her reign, eventually becoming a close advisor to Henry, Prince of Wales, connected in their shared love of art.⁷ However, Robert Cecil rarely commissioned works directly from artists, choosing to focus on purchasing and collecting

⁶ Sharon Fermor and Alan Derbyshire. "The Raphael Tapestry Cartoons Re-Examined," *The Burlington Magazine*, 140, 1141 (1998): 238. Information taken from the Victoria & Albert Museum's official website reveals that they were bought in Genoa in 1623 for £300. The cartoons are still a part of the royal collection, but they have been on loan to the V & A since the 1800s.

⁷ Pauline Croft, ed., *Patronage, culture, and power : the early Cecils* (New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art [and] the Yale Center for British Art [by] Yale University Press, 2002), xiv.

art; though, when works were commissioned, they were usually portraits intended for state purposes. Salisbury was therefore not as knowledgeable in the arts as Arundel, and he was far more interested in architecture. The majority of his collection was actually purchased on his behalf by Henry Wotton, the ambassador to Venice.⁸ One such painting by Palma Giovane entitled *Prometheus Devoured by the Eagle*, was in the Cecil collection by 1608 and very likely encouraged Prince Henry and eventually Prince Charles to collect Venetian art; indeed, an inventory of Prince Henry's collection made a year after his death lists this particular painting among many others.⁹ No doubt it was presented to the young prince by his advisor, as by 1611, the Venetian ambassador was reporting home that Henry was spending much of his time adorning his picture galleries, the majority of which were filled with works that had been created in Venice.¹⁰

One of the most celebrated collectors in the history of art is Thomas Howard, 2nd Earl of Arundel, (Fig. 11) who amassed a superb art collection of all media and periods, as well as a library full of books and medieval manuscripts. Howard was a member of one of the oldest families in the English peerage, a direct descendant of the Dukes of Norfolk who unfortunately had lost their dukedom when the 4th Duke conspired against Queen Elizabeth and was executed for treason. Due to his family's recent troubles Arundel was not in the financial position to make any impact on the art market, yet his fortunes increased greatly when he married Lady Aletheia,

⁸ Susan Bracken, "Robert Cecil as Art Collector" in Pauline Croft, ed., *Patronage, culture, and power : the early Cecils* (New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art [and] the Yale Center for British Art [by] Yale University Press, 2002), 124-125. Lord Salisbury had arranged for Wotton's appointment as ambassador, so his efforts in collecting on the Venetian art market are largely seen as repayment for Salisbury's good favor.

⁹ Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London: Pimlico, 2000), 185.

¹⁰ Chaney, *The Evolution of English Collecting: Receptions of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods*, 49.

the daughter of the very wealthy Earl of Shrewsbury.¹¹ His esteem at court was also growing, as he became an influential advisor, along with the Earl of Salisbury, to Henry, Prince of Wales, who shared Arundel's love of art. Yet Arundel's taste would not become fully developed until he made a trip to the Continent, which first occurred in 1612¹² and numerous times thereafter. A born Catholic, his religion prevented him from fully participating in the mainstream politics of his youth, thus enabling him to have time with which to develop his taste and connoisseurship. While he nominally converted to Anglicanism in 1616, his connection to Rome only furthered his interests and his absorption of the late Renaissance aesthetic during his travels.¹³

Though he continued to be an important courtier in the reign of James I, it was not until after the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham that Arundel exerted any influence over Charles I's tastes or collecting habits.¹⁴ By the end of his life, Arundel had amassed the largest collection of Hans Holbein paintings totaling over thirty,¹⁵ along with works by Titian, Tintoretto, Giorgione, Raphael, Correggio, Romano, Veronese, Bassano, Teniers, Dürer, Rembrandt, and several notebooks by Leonardo, among many others.¹⁶ While Arundel's close

¹¹ David Howarth, *Lord Arundel and his circle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 14. According to the author, the majority of the wealth from Lady Arundel's family was generated by the numerous estates they owned with large forests and mining interests. The Arundel's collection was primarily formed by the funds that Aletheia brought to their union.

¹² *Ibid*: 31

¹³ Chaney, *The Evolution of English Collecting: Receptions of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods*, 41.

¹⁴ Howarth, *Images of rule: art and politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649*, 250. Howarth asserts that it was simply Arundel's formality and rigid character that made Charles I more inclined to Buckingham's flair and vivacious personality; indeed, the king was much more pliable in general after the assassination, to his advisors and to his long-suffering wife.

¹⁵ Howarth. *Lord Arundel and his circle*, 69. Arundel's voracious collecting habits of Holbein works is most likely due to family pride; Holbein painted many portraits of Arundel's ancestors and related associates, and Arundel made every effort to obtain as many of them as he could.

¹⁶ Lionel Cust and Mary L. Cox. "Notes on the Collection of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel and Surrey, K. G.," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 19 (1911): 282-286. This article provides a partial inventory of

connection with the Stuarts brought him professional success, it also doomed his collection to suffer the same fate as the royal collection, to be sold off following the deaths of Lord and Lady Arundel. Arundel is a vital figure in the evolution of taste and collecting in England, as he represents the developing connoisseurship of art and taste that came primarily through contact with the courts and culture of continental Europe. His slightly older counterpart, the Earl of Salisbury, lacked the knowledge and taste for collecting, and as such, Arundel is one of the first to develop an English interpretation of Renaissance Classicism. Arundel's love and avid collecting of antiquities enabled others in Britain to view Classical works, and to assimilate such ideas into their own collecting habits, a privilege which few had seen unless they visited Italy. Indeed, one of the most famous portraits of Arundel, by Daniel Mytens, shows the famed collector at the end of a gallery of classical sculptures (Fig. 12). The Earl remains an important historical figure not for his role at the Stuart courts, but because he was a great collector and "a pioneer of taste,"¹⁷ a direct contrast to his occasional rival, George Villiers, the 1st Duke of Buckingham.

George Villiers (Fig. 13) was born to the son of a minor nobleman, but found royal favor soon after his introduction at the Stuart court and progressed through the ranks of the peerage so rapidly that by his death, he was one of the highest ranking subjects in the country. Much has been made over Villiers' relationship with James I, and the relationship between the two seems to have frequently vacillated from lovers to father/son. He was created Earl of Buckingham in 1617, Marquess of Buckingham in 1618, and finally Earl of Coventry and Duke of Buckingham

Arundel's goods dating from 1655. The notebooks and drawings by Leonardo can be found in the collection of Devonshire and in the Royal Collection.

¹⁷ Howarth, *Images of rule: art and politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649*, 259.

in 1623.¹⁸ Perhaps unsurprisingly, he was also the most unpopular man among his fellow courtiers, and his influence over James was smoothly and skillfully applied to Charles as well. As previously mentioned, it was Buckingham who accompanied Charles on his foray to Spain, and he also was the proxy groom for Charles during the marriage ceremony to Henrietta Maria.

The Duke's collecting habits suggest that Buckingham saw art as a means to acquire social prestige and as decoration, for he left all the collecting duties up to his personal art dealer, Balthazar Gerbier,¹⁹ and displayed as much as he could in his living quarters at Whitehall where members of the court could easily see the amassed art. The entirety of Buckingham's collection was built up between 1618 and 1628,²⁰ during which art in England began to be treated as a commodity, valued even more highly if it came with an important provenance. For instance, if a painting had been previously owned by the Medici or by a Pope, or had been mentioned by Vasari, it was of higher value to collectors than an obscure work previously owned by a person of little historical consequence. An inventory taken at the Duke's official residence, York House, includes thirty Rubens and works by Van Dyck, Titian, Bassano, Tintoretto, Mytens, Holbein, Veronese, Giorgione, del Sarto, Correggio, Raphael, and Orazio Gentileschi.²¹ Like the other great collections in England, a balance, albeit tilted, existed between the Italian artists and the artists from Northern Europe. It is also important to note that the presence of Orazio

¹⁸ Cust, *Charles I: a Political Life*, 4.

¹⁹ Brotton, *The sale of the late king's goods: Charles I and his art collection*, 80. Gerbier was an unremarkable Dutch artist who had come to England with a diplomatic envoy in 1616. Buckingham unapologetically used his political connections to allow Gerbier access to some of the finest collections on the Continent. Funds were never an issue for the Duke either, as Brotton states, and his most extravagant purchase was Titian's *Ecce Homo* for £275, which at that time, was an unheard of amount of money to pay for one painting.

²⁰ Philip McEvansoneya, "Italian Paintings in the Buckingham Collection," in Edward Chaney, ed., *The Evolution of English Collecting: Receptions of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods* (New Haven & London: The Paul Mellon Center for Studies in British Art and the Yale Center for British Art, 2003), 315.

²¹ Randall Davies, "An inventory of the Duke of Buckingham's pictures, etc. at York House in 1635," *Burlington Magazine* 10, 48 (1906): 379-382.

Gentileschi at the Stuart Court can be attributed to Buckingham, as Gentileschi arrived in England under the Duke's employment.²² Buckingham's great interest in Italian art is most likely not due to his tastes, what he enjoyed or disliked, but rather because it was popular among nobles in England, and perhaps more importantly, because Italian paintings dominated the collections of the French and Spanish courts, both of which he had observed first hand. In actuality, Italian paintings were popular among English noblemen because they were first popular among their Italian, French, and Spanish counterparts; the English were enthusiastically playing catch up. So arguably, the Duke was attempting to emulate, if not best, the foreign courts rather than his fellow English nobles. By the time of his death, Buckingham, along with Arundel, was the only collector in England who could compete with the royal collection in terms of number and quality.

Charles I as Collector and Patron

Born in Scotland in the year 1600, the second son of James VI of Scotland and Anne of Denmark, Charles was a sickly, unremarkable child who was not supposed to be king. His older brother Henry, Prince of Wales had a vibrant personality, a talent for sport, and was very popular amongst the court and general population. Henry was also a great patron of the arts, no doubt spurred on by his advisor Lord Arundel, but clearly influenced by his mother as well. Anne of Denmark (Fig. 14) had a passionate love for the arts and introduced the foundation for the competitive nature of collecting in the Stuart court that would materialize during Charles' reign; Paul Van Somer, Anne's designated painter, even walked in her funeral procession.²³ The queen was also responsible for the Stuart court's major cultural innovation, the masque, where she

²² Jeremy Wood. "Orazio Gentileschi and some Netherlandish Artists in London: The Patronage of the Duke of Buckingham, Charles I and Henrietta Maria," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 28, 3 (2000-01): 111. Buckingham first encountered Gentileschi while in France to act as proxy groom in the wedding of Charles I and Henrietta Maria. Gentileschi was employed at the French Court.

²³ Howarth, *Images of rule: art and politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649*, 127.

continually used the theme of a dynastic Anglo-Scottish union.²⁴ Henry (Fig. 15) inherited Anne's passion, acquiring a superb collection of coins and medals, and paintings and sculptures to adorn his three residences: St. James's, Richmond, and Berkhamstead.²⁵ While his wife and son were certainly more prolific in their collecting and artistic interests, James I was not without his cultural contributions; the king appointed Inigo Jones as his Surveyor of Works and established the Mortlake Tapestry works, keeping in line with the Tudor era artistic practices. Yet the death of Henry in 1612, most likely from typhoid fever, was a devastating blow to the royal family and Stuart court as the twelve-year old Charles had still to impress anyone or grow beyond the sickly boy from Scotland. Indeed, there is a now well-known anecdote that when Charles was installed as the Prince of Wales in 1616, the Bishop of Ely accidentally prayed for *Henry*, Prince of Wales, and not Charles.²⁶ While his family may have cultivated Charles' early interests in art, the further development of his taste was influenced by his advisors and a misguided attempt at chivalry.

Unquestionably the singularly most influential event of the development of Charles' tastes and collecting habits was his unconventional visit to Spain, orchestrated as the ultimate romantic gesture to claim the Infanta Maria as his bride. When Charles assumed the title of Prince of Wales, and therefore heir to the throne after the death of his brother, it was quickly realized that marriage negotiations for the prince had a suddenly high priority. Though Catholic, Spain was seen as a good match for diplomatic purposes; England had a long-standing tempestuous relationship with the Iberian nation, and King James I and his advisors were eager

²⁴ Karen Hearn, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1996), 18. Masques would become even more popular and ostentatious during the reign of her son, Charles I, though the main theme changed to glorifying Charles and his divine right to the throne.

²⁵ Howarth, *Lord Arundel and his circle*, 27.

²⁶ Charles Carlton, *Charles I: the personal monarch* (London: Routledge, 1995), 9.

to dispel any frictions and unite the two countries. Unfortunately, Spain was far from eager to marry off King Philip IV's youngest sister to a Protestant country, and asked for several demands from the English government regarding their policies towards Catholics before agreeing to a marriage contract.²⁷ As a young man of twenty-two, Charles, Prince of Wales, set out for Spain accompanied by the Duke of Buckingham, convinced of his undying love and devotion for the Infanta Maria, and determined to bring his bride back to England with him. The strict formality of the Spanish court must have appealed to Charles, as he implemented similar practices and behaviors in his own court; in Madrid, only the royal party ever sat in chairs, while in Whitehall only the Queen was allowed to sit in Charles' presence.²⁸

Though Charles may have failed to secure a wife, he was exposed to one of the premier art collections in the world, having been enriched by centuries of Hapsburg patronage. Above all, Charles coveted works by Titian,²⁹ of which there were over a dozen in the Spanish royal collection, as well as numerous paintings dispersed among the elite private collectors of Spain. During his brief stay in Spain, Charles was given Titian's *Portrait of Charles V with Hound* by the Spanish king, but also purchased Titian's *Woman in a Fur Wrap* and the *Allegory of the Marquis of Vasto*.³⁰ Perhaps inspired by the quality of the Spanish collection, Charles also

²⁷ John Elliott, "A Troubled Relationship: Spain and Great Britain, 1604-1655," in Jonathan Brown and John Elliott, eds., *The sale of the century : artistic relations between Spain and Great Britain, 1604-1655* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 23-27. Among these demands was the revocation of penal laws against Catholics, a feat James I could not have accomplished without the approval of Parliament. Also included were the requirements that the Infanta be free to practice her religion, that her Catholic attendants go unmolested, and to raise her children as Catholics until they reached a certain age.

²⁸ Peter W. Thomas, "The Tragedy of Absolutism," in A. G. Dickens, *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage and Royalty, 1400-1800* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), 193.

²⁹ Jonathan Brown, "Artistic Relations between Spain and England: 1604-1655" in Jonathan Brown and John Elliott, eds., *The sale of the century : artistic relations between Spain and Great Britain, 1604-1655* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 45.

³⁰ Ibid: 45

acquired several Correggios, a Veronese, and Gianbologna's *Samson Slaying the Philistine*.³¹

When Charles and the Duke of Buckingham returned to England, they did so without a new Princess of Wales but with a tidy bounty of new works to absorb into their respective collections. In the years that followed, long after the breakdown of marriage negotiations, Charles continued to have copies done after the Titians he saw and admired in the Escorial.³²

When Charles did marry, albeit by proxy in 1625, his wife was Henrietta Maria (Fig. 16), a princess of the blood of France and a Catholic. Negotiations with France concerning the marriage treaty also included requests for a certain amount of religious freedom for the French princess, and were secretly agreed upon by Charles, by then king, and his advisors.³³ Again the Duke of Buckingham was involved, and on this occasion, he acted as the proxy groom and was Henrietta Maria's official guardian for her journey to England. While in France, the duke would have had ample opportunity to acquaint his self with the superb French royal art collection and undoubtedly shared his experiences with Charles. David Howarth has noted:

History was repeating itself. A hundred years earlier, Henry VIII had been spurred on by awareness of the visual splendor of the courts of Francis I and Charles V. And so in 1627, at the onset of a new reign requiring a new means toward regal splendor, Charles bought the Gonzaga collection; having seen in Madrid and heard from Paris of the value his 'cousins' of France and Spain placed upon art.³⁴

Charles's desire to form an art collection comparable to the French and Spanish royal collections led to his acquisition of the Gonzaga collection and influenced the king's personal taste, which by 1627, was highly developed by his experiences with all of the aforementioned influences.

³¹ Ibid: 50

³² Elizabeth du Gue Trapier. "Sir Arthur Hopton and the Interchange of Paintings between Spain and England in the seventeenth century," *Connoisseur*, part I (1967): 239-43.

³³ Robert Gray, *The King's Wife: Five Queen Consorts* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1990), 70.

³⁴ Howarth, *Images of rule: art and politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649*, 252.

Acquiring the Gonzaga Collection

In 1625 Charles I sent his Master of Music, Nicholas Lanier (Fig. 17), to Italy with the purpose of scouting and purchasing works of art to add to the royal collection. Though the king's choice may seem unusual, Lanier "came from a family that had faithfully served the court since 1561 and could be trusted in matters of honesty and good taste".³⁵ More importantly, he could easily travel between the ruling territories without having to worry about the usual diplomatic necessities and formal court introductions. Lanier's first stop was Venice where he was greeted by the English ambassador, Sir Isaac Wake, who in turn, introduced Lanier to Daniel Nys, an art dealer who had previously acquired works for Sir Dudley Carleton and Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel.³⁶ While on his way to Rome, Lanier intended to stop at Mantua and was introduced to Ferdinando, Duke of Mantua, and the duke's Grand Chancellor, Count Alessandro Striggi; it was during this brief stay that initial discussions began concerning the potential sale of a portion of the Gonzaga collection.³⁷ Though he remained in Italy for less than a year, Lanier managed to acquire £2,000 worth of art during his stay, excluding the superb portrait that a young Anthony van Dyck painted for him, and also brought to Charles the news that Nys was in negotiations for works from the Gonzaga collection.³⁸ Once the particulars had been settled between Nys and Striggi, Lanier once again left for Italy in 1627 to secure the deal and handle the financial matters.

³⁵ Ian Spink, "Lanier in Italy," *Music & Letters* 40, 3 (1959): 242.

³⁶ Lionel Cust. "Notes on Pictures in the Royal Collections-XXVII: The Mantua Collection and Charles I," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 24 (1914): 255.

³⁷ Spink, "Lanier in Italy," 243-244. This conclusion is reached based upon surviving letters between Daniel Nys and Chancellor Striggi, indicating the success of the visit. It was at this time that both Lanier and Nys either realized or were explicitly told that more of the Gonzaga collection was available than what had previously been thought. Nys, for the most part, henceforth assumed the unofficial role of chief negotiator for England, and began extensive correspondence with Striggi.

³⁸ Brotton, *The sale of the late king's goods: Charles I and his art collection*, 116-117.

The negotiations between Daniel Nys and Chancellor Striggi were not excruciatingly long, but they were intense. And the two men volleyed several offers between them, resulting in Nys acquiring more for the royal collection than anyone had anticipated. It was in the best interest of both parties for the negotiations to flow smoothly and quite rapidly, for Ferdinando had died at the end of 1626, resulting in a succession crisis over the ducal seat of Mantua; Ferdinando's successor, Vincenzo II, wanted to acquire as much funds as possible to prepare for potential military action. The first group of works that Nys had negotiated to purchase included several Correggio allegories, a dozen works by Titian, nine works by Pieter Brueghel the Elder, a Raphael, a Reni, and a Romano.³⁹ For many collectors, this initial acquisition would have been more than satisfactory, considering works by the majority of those artists had never before been seen in England. The second group Nys was only able to purchase because Vincenzo II had died soon after taking control of the dukedom, and his heir, the Duc de Nevers, was willing to part with far more of the collection than his predecessor, including over 100 statues and Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar*.⁴⁰ Once everything was finalized and all debts had been paid, which was not until 1633, the grand total for the Gonzaga collection was estimated at £26-28,000.⁴¹ As for public opinion of the collection once it reached the final destinations, the varying reactions were not surprising; members of the court and fellow art collectors themselves, as well as the court

³⁹ Ibid: 118-119

⁴⁰ Cust, "Notes on Pictures in the Royal Collections-XXVII: The Mantua Collection and Charles I," 256.

⁴¹ Brotton, *The sale of the late king's goods: Charles I and his art collection*, 142. The author states further that the first group of works totaled near £15,000, while the second was a minimum of £11,500. None of these sums include the cost of travel or insurance. In today's currency, the collection would have been purchased for £3.7-4 million, however that number does not account for the increase in value of all art from this time period. I have chosen to use this sum because it is from the most recent publication, a book which focuses solely on the sale, but I have found other estimated sums as well.

Simon Thurley estimates slightly more than £15,000 in *Hampton Court: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven & London: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2003), 113; David Howarth estimates £18,000 total in *Images of rule: art and politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 252.

painters, were thrilled with the acquisition and marveled at the new Italian works, while the conservative Puritan groups were dismayed at the cost and at the Catholic themes of many of the works. As for Charles, the king was very pleased with his newfound wealth of art and placed many of the new works in prominent positions throughout his various households.⁴² The decision to purchase the Gonzaga collection was not out of character for Charles, as he had been interested in art for much of his life, influenced heavily by his mother, brother, and his visit to the Spanish court.

When all of these factors are taken into account, the acquisition of the Gonzaga collection by Charles I seems inevitable. Though the citizens and art lovers of the Continent despaired at the thought of such a collection going to England of all places, the king and his fellow connoisseurs had diligently been developing their knowledge and tastes for years. The most recognizable names in Italian Renaissance art had been cultivated or patronized by the Gonzagas for centuries, and Charles not only inherited the fruits of their labors, but also attempted to nurture the talents of such notables as Rubens and Van Dyck. Had his life not been abruptly cut short, it seems highly likely that Charles would have continued in his collecting habits; had his collection not been sold off, the current British royal collection might rival the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the preeminent art collection in the world. The presence of the Gonzaga collection, coupled with the other great collections of England, created a new and lasting interest in the Renaissance and Italianate taste in English society, perhaps best seen in the long-standing British love affair with antiquities. Most pertinent to this discussion is that merging the collection from Mantua into the already impressive English royal collection caused Charles, for the first time, to be considered among the ranks of the previous royal collectors he

⁴² Simon Thurley, *Hampton Court: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven & London: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2003), 113-114.

so admired and emulated. Charles was considered to be an art connoisseur and man of great taste not only among his own country, but throughout Europe as well. The growing importance of art in the international courtly and aristocratic societies had an impact on more than interior décor, but also intellectual values and social interactions. In addition to the more traditional academic subjects, a knowledge of painting was being added to the list of skills that courtiers and well-rounded gentlemen had to master to succeed in society.⁴³

The years following the acquisition of the Gonzaga collection saw a continuation of patronage and collecting, by Charles, Henrietta Maria and their courtiers. Much in the same way that Prince Henry urged the Florentine ambassadors to send over architectural models and bronzes, Charles encouraged the papal nuncio to import sixteenth and seventeenth century paintings. In the same vein another ambassador to Venice, Basil Lord Fielding, sent as many choice works that he could acquire to Henrietta Maria, Arundel, and the king himself.⁴⁴ During his five year stay in Italy, Lord Fielding also attempted to acquire yet another collection for Charles almost as impressive as the Mantuan pictures, belonging to the merchant Bartolomeo della Nave,⁴⁵ in addition to several other minor Venetian collections. Charles also famously organized a commission to have his portrait bust sculpted by Bernini, whose renowned reputation had most of the English collectors longing for his work. In the process, one of Anthony Van Dyck's most celebrated paintings, and one of the most famous portraits of the

⁴³ R. Malcolm Smuts, "Art and the Material Culture of Majesty," in R. Malcolm Smuts, ed., *The Stuart Court and Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 111.

⁴⁴ Chaney, *The Evolution of English Collecting: Receptions of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods*, 56. Lord Fielding was the son of the Duke of Buckingham's sister, and was ambassador to Venice by 1634.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 57.

king, was created: *Charles I in Three Positions*,⁴⁶ from 1635 (Fig. 18). The bust was so well received that Henrietta Maria immediately commissioned her own, though due to the onset of political crises and eventual civil war, her portrait bust was never made.

Commissioned Art and Artists in England

Though much of this chapter has focused on collecting, Charles was also a patron of artists and fortunately for the king, he managed both to secure Anthony Van Dyck as his court painter and to employ Peter Paul Rubens in perhaps the most significant commission that Charles gave in his life. It is important to note that both painters, though neither was Italian, came to England extremely well-traveled and knowledgeable about court tastes and cultures throughout Europe; both had been to Italy and undoubtedly were influenced by Italian art. As mentioned in Chapter One, Van Dyck had an extremely prolific output while he was in England, painting for the royal family to be sure, but also many courtiers as well. His most famous portraits of the time spent in England are, undoubtedly, the portraits of the king. The connection to Titian's iconography in the portrait of Charles V has already been explained, but the influence of the great Venetian can be seen in an additional portrait of Charles I, now in the Louvre, entitled *Charles I à la Chasse* of 1635 (Fig. 19). Though this painting is full of rich symbolism, it is the submission of the horse that reflects a theme Titian used often in his portraits of the Hapsburgs. Van Dyck was unable to paint the horse to scale, since rendering the animal as such would have dwarfed the figure of the king. The horse is shown in a pose of submissive obedience to the king; Titian employed the same technique using great hunting dogs:

⁴⁶ This painting is one of the simplest portraits of Charles that was ever painted, yet functions as an important work in the historically significant representations of Charles as martyr. Supposedly, when Bernini unpacked the painting upon its arrival in Italy, he experienced a sense of foreboding and sorrow. As such, when Charles was executed and Bernini's bust destroyed in the fire that took Whitehall, this anecdote was frequently repeated as a means of supporting the cult that developed around Charles. This group held Charles as a martyr, comparable in some sense to Christ as Charles died for his people; imagery of Charles' execution in the years immediately after bears startling resemblance to scenes of Christ's Passion.

Such stage-props suggested the social superiority of the sitter because hunting was the preserve of the great, but also because an animal subdued was testament to how the sitter subdued not only his own passions, but a world over which he had been given command.⁴⁷

When Rubens was commissioned by Charles I, he too frequently utilized heavily iconographic themes.

Rubens first arrived in England in 1629 as an ambassador for Spain to discuss a possible peace treaty with England; perhaps due to Charles' well-known interest in art and Rubens' career as a painter, a treaty was quickly signed. After his visit to the English court Rubens wrote in his letters:

...this island, which merits, to my mind, the interest of every gentlemen, not only for the amenity of the landscape, the beauty of the nation, and the splendor and brilliance of the material culture, which appears to me extraordinary, being that of a wealthy people luxuriating in the deepest peace, but also for the incredible number of excellent paintings, statues and ancient inscriptions which are to be found at this court.⁴⁸

This observation marks the incredible achievements of Charles and his courtiers, who at this point in time could readily compete for the title of most cultured court in Europe. Indeed, in another letter Rubens declared, "Nor have I ever seen in one place so many excellent pictures by masters of the first rank as in the collections of the King and of the late Duke of Buckingham."⁴⁹ It was most likely during this visit that Charles approached Rubens to paint scenes for the ceiling of the Banqueting House at Whitehall. The paintings were finished by August 1, 1634⁵⁰ and installed by 1635. The *Apotheosis of James I* is the dominating scene of the ceiling, as James, supported by Justice and sustained by Religion, is lifted up to receive a heavenly crown, held by

⁴⁷ Howarth, *Images of Rule*, 135. This work has most likely always been in France, probably sent by the king himself as a diplomatic portrait. Howarth suggests that Hyacinthe Rigaud used this portrait as a starting point for his richly powerful full-length portrait of Louis XIV.

⁴⁸ See Peter Paul Rubens, *Letter to Pierre Dupuy* in Jacob Burckhardt, *Recollections of Rubens* (New York: Phaidon Press, Ltd., 1950), 229.

⁴⁹ See Peter Paul Rubens, *Letter to Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peiresc* in Jacob Burckhardt, *Recollections of Rubens*, 230.

⁵⁰ Sir Oliver Millar, "The Whitehall Ceiling," *Burlington Magazine*, 98 (1956): 261.

Victory (or Peace) and Wisdom in the form of Minerva. The painting is a celebration of James' great achievement of uniting the crowns of England and Scotland, thereby creating peace between two countries with a long history of war and violence. To what extent Charles was motivated by love for his father, or by the constant need for validation and glory, is unknown, but that fact cannot be ignored that Charles, as James' son and heir, benefitted from the glorification of the Stuart dynasty.

During the 1630s, patronizing and collecting the arts was frankly Charles' chief preoccupation. As Charles Carlton states, "...collecting was the hobby he enjoyed as a time when he had neither the need, nor the inclination, to spend much energy governing England."⁵¹ In 1629, Charles dissolved Parliament as was his Royal Prerogative, and ruled without recourse until 1640; historians typically refer to this eleven year period as the Personal Rule, or the Eleven Years Tyranny. Much fuss has been made over the perceived cultural (i.e. art and music) and entertainment (i.e. masques) extravagancies of the Stuart court, though in reality, when compared to other Baroque courts they appear to be on par. Though Charles was criticized (then and now) for spending such large sums of money on art, he was actually quite frugal in comparison with other courtly events. For example, James I spent almost £100,000 on his daughter Elizabeth's marriage celebrations; this more than doubles the combined cost of the Gonzaga collection and the Banqueting house.⁵² The issues that many English citizens and politicians had with Charles was not that he spent his money on collecting art, but that he did so when such money could have gone to the aid of several military measures that turned out to be debacles. Most of these occurred in the 1620s under the hopelessly inept leadership of Buckingham and would have gone

⁵¹ Carlton, *Charles I: the personal monarch*, 144.

⁵² R. Malcolm Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 131.

to aid Protestant causes, hence the later allegations of Catholic sympathizer that were thrown at Charles.

What emerged in the Jacobean period...was not just a fashion for collecting but a special subculture, which linked appreciation for art to foreign travel, diplomacy and new forms of knowledge. Like any subculture associated with a powerful elite, this one soon acquired imitators, so that viewing pictures and watching artists at work became fashionable diversions.⁵³

Charles I of England, through all his other faults, remains one of the greatest collectors of art in early modern history. His blatant preference for the Italian tradition and the influence of Classicism that accompanied it provided Charles with the culture and taste that he required to be seen, in his own eyes as well as by others, as a great monarch, similar to Philip IV, Francis I, and Rudolf II. Charles is similar to his collecting predecessors in that the development and acquisition of his collection was incredibly personal. Isabella d'Este, Francis I, and Rudolf II all were heavily involved in their own collections, that is to say, while they may have had agents purchase items on their behalf, they rarely, if ever, gave their agents *carte blanche*. The opposite of this would have been the Earl of Salisbury, as art was purchased *for* him rather than *by* him. Though Charles was surrounded by advisors and fellow collectors, he remained very involved in collecting and commissioning works rather than leaving it to others. Charles was the leader of what R. Malcolm Smuts calls the "subculture" of collecting; the idea that collecting art was connected to greater indications of taste and knowledge. The effects that Charles and his importation of the Italianate had on England and the royal court are wide and varied, yet simultaneously difficult to pinpoint accurately, as the interruption of the Commonwealth and its destruction and/or sales of art works caused an otherwise linear progression to abruptly halt.

⁵³ R. Malcolm Smuts, "Art and the Material Culture of Majesty," in R. Malcolm Smuts, ed., *The Stuart Court and Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 100.

CHAPTER 4 IDEAS IN TASTE AND COLLECTING AFTER THE EXECUTION OF CHARLES I

Cultural affairs in England were thrown into a sudden standstill following the end of Charles I's Personal Rule. Politics, religion, and military affairs began to dominate the once peaceful landscapes of England and Scotland, forcing the arts into a much less significant role. Following the execution of the king, much of his collection was sold off to other collectors in Europe, particularly in Spain. The heavily Puritan Commonwealth under the rule of Oliver Cromwell was, in a sense, a reaction to the perceived excesses of the king, including his love of art. This particularly conservative time in English history saw a sudden shift in the ideas of taste and connoisseurship, since, with the Puritan rule, such artistic ideals were not valued and certainly not practiced. Patronage and collecting, therefore, only experienced a revival after the restoration to the throne of Charles II, the eldest son of Charles I and Henrietta Maria. Charles II received gifts of art from other collectors and nations as an attempt to "re-stock" the royal collection, in addition to buying back whatever he could. However, England would not see such a collector as Charles I until the later reigns of George IV and Queen Victoria. The later monarchs shared similarities and differences with Charles I, but for the most part all three exhibited clear ideas of their personal taste and the role they should have when acquiring art and caring for the Royal Collection.

The Effects of Civil War

The English Civil Wars of the 17th century were the culmination of a series of events that led to the outbreak of violence and sedition against the king. Since the Scottish Stuarts ascended the English throne in 1603, it had been the dream of both James I and Charles I to unite England, Scotland, and Ireland into a new single kingdom. There was understandable parliamentary hesitance in an action of unification as well as objections by the citizens, as a long history of

conflict between the three territories had previously prevented such a move. Vital to understanding the Royalist position of the Civil War is the knowledge that Charles I, like his father, subscribed to the belief of the divine right of kings. Therefore, Charles considered any objection to the institution of his monarchical rights as an insult. Prior to the outbreak of Civil War, the Parliament of England had very little power other than some financial control; monarchs usually only turned to Parliament when they required funds and/or an increase in taxation. Parliament was called and dissolved on the will of the monarch, and hence Charles was able to have the Personal Rule. In his earliest years as king, Charles allowed his favored advisor, Buckingham, to run several woefully inept military missions. During the Personal Rule, he antagonized many with his means of raising funds, as he was reluctant to reconvene Parliament. However, his greatest folly came in his attempt to control aspects of the church, specifically the Church of Scotland. Charles, after several battles with Scotland, was forced to pay war-expenses and agree not to interfere with the Church of Scotland, rather humiliating for a king that subscribed to divine right.

From 1640-1648, England, Scotland, and Ireland were participants in what has been called the English Civil Wars or the English Revolution. Charles continually attempted to assert his authority as monarch, often at times when it was the least advantageous for him to do so. This stubborn and ill-advised nature resulted in roughly five years of battle, costing many lives and large amounts of money; one of the many problems for Charles was that, as king of Scotland he was required to supply funds for their army, but as King of England he had to raise funds for the English army to defend the country from the Scots. The mistreatment of Parliament by the king only further exacerbated tensions in the country. Eventually, Charles was held as prisoner at his former royal residences, moved between Hampton Court, Windsor Castle, St. James Palace, and

finally to Whitehall. During his trial, Charles remained as obstinate as ever, refusing to enter a plea with the claim that a court deriving its power from the barrel of a gun had no jurisdiction over a monarch that had been anointed by God; by refusing to enter a plea, the court holding the trial of the king ruled that his silence was a tacit confession.¹ King Charles I of England, Scotland, and Ireland was executed on January 30, 1649.

The political crises of the 1640s caused an abrupt halt in cultural affairs and artistic development in England. Charles I stopped collecting altogether by 1642, when he fled London on January 10 leaving most of the Royal Collection behind. Royalists had the option of supporting Charles or leaving England for a self-imposed (or forced) exile, the latter being the more popular choice. “While it is true therefore that some were moved to give up all else to save their lives or preserve their freedom, the exile of most was motivated by duty to caste and loyalty to monarchy.”² Thomas Howard, the Earl of Arundel, was made Commander-in-Chief of the army raised to put down rebellion in Scotland, and though he had never been a military man, as the Earl Marshal of England and head of the aristocracy, Charles apparently considered Arundel the natural choice. However, his shortcomings as a military leader were quite apparent and the Earl of Arundel left England for the last time in February of 1642, escorting Princess Mary to live with her husband, William of Orange. While he managed to take many pieces from his collection with him, Arundel left most of his belongings behind, eventually selling off the majority of his works to pay debts and raise money for the Royalist cause.³ Accompanying Arundel and Princess Mary was the queen, Henrietta Maria. The queen, once an avid collector

¹ Sean Kelsey, “Politics and Procedure in the Trial of Charles I,” *Law and History Review* 22, 1 (2004): 18.

² P. H. Hardacre, “The Royalists in Exile during the Puritan Revolution, 1642-1660,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 16 (1953): 354. Hardacre estimates several hundred royalists living in exile during the Revolution.

³ Howarth, *Lord Arundel and His Circle*, 212.

and patron in her own right, spent a year in Holland raising funds and support for the crown's cause, going so far as to pawn the crown jewels.

With a Puritan fervor spreading through England, there were surprisingly few cases of iconoclasm against the properties of the crown during the Civil War, though such examples include: an altarpiece by Rubens in Somerset Chapel thrown into the Thames in 1643; St. George's Chapel at Windsor was badly damaged; and paintings in St. James's Chapel were defaced.⁴ However, these acts of destruction are paltry compared to other instances of iconoclasm that occurred during the Civil War.

Parliamentarians came to see the papists as their true target, and by this they meant not just Roman Catholics, recusants, or such groupings, but anyone or anything that violated their idea of true religion. Their aim was simple and strict: a bare church room, with no stained glass, no altar, no hangings or paintings or any kind of color or representation...⁵

In Suffolk, the decorations in 150 churches were destroyed, similarly 200 at Haverhill, while relics were destroyed and crosses taken down.⁶ Images of the king were also subject to defamation and destruction, particularly public statues. However, the most important and influential act of the Civil War concerning the Royal Collection was, as it has been termed, the sale of the century.⁷

⁴ Lucy Whitaker and Martin Clayton, *The Art of Italy in the Royal Collection: Renaissance and Baroque*, (London: Royal Collections Enterprises Ltd., 2007), 28.

⁵ Diane Purkiss, *The English Civil War: Papists, Gentlewomen, Soldiers, and Witchfinders in the Birth of Modern Britain* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 197.

⁶ *Ibid*, 204.

⁷ This term was coined as the title for an exhibition at the Museo Nacional del Prado, which focused on the artistic relations of England and Spain during the first half of the 17th century. The main events that are highlighted include Charles' trek to Spain in 1625, and the sale of major works during the Commonwealth Sale of 1649-50 to the king of Spain, a major beneficiary of Charles I's misfortunes.

The Sold Collections

1649 is a particularly important year in the long and storied history of England, as it marks the first and only time a ruling monarch was executed by his or her subjects in the early modern era, in addition to the loss of one of the greatest cultural and artistic treasures in Europe, that being the Royal Collection. Though contemporary eyes may regard this act of Parliament with incredulity, the Commonwealth had justifiable cause for selling off what was considered to be a provocative symbol of the monarchy. Not only was the sale used for symbolic purposes, to eradicate traces of the monarchy and dispose of Italian works considered Catholic in nature, but the new government had bills to pay. In one fell swoop, Parliament rid the country of the personal estate of the royal family and perceived Catholic imagery, and paid the back wages of the thousands of former household servants.⁸ It was a powerful act that spoke to the extent the new government was willing to go as a means to establish a new rule.

Two weeks before the execution of Charles I at Whitehall, the House of Commons of the English Parliament ordered on January 17, 1649 that an inventory of the Royal Collection be made for purposes of dispersal. A little over two months later, Commons determined to sell the personal estates of the king, queen, and crown prince, with the only exceptions being the Royal Library and its furnishings; the act was formally passed and published in July of 1649.⁹ The lists of works incorporated the inventory of Whitehall Palace conducted by the collection's curator Abraham van der Doort in 1640. Overall, the surviving lists of works indicate that some 1, 570 paintings were put up for sale, valued at a price of £37, 000.¹⁰ The sale was publically

⁸ Jonathan Brown, "Artistic Relations Between Spain and England, 1604-1655," in Jonathan Brown and John Elliott, eds., *The sale of the century : artistic relations between Spain and Great Britain, 1604-1655*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 60.

⁹ Whitaker and Clayton, *The Art of Italy in the Royal Collection: Renaissance and Baroque*, 60.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 28.

advertised and the proceedings occurred without any protest, even when the majority of the collection left England permanently, bought by foreign agents. The Commonwealth Sale remains one of the greatest transactions of the historical art market, not only for the number of works that were available, but because the quality was incredibly high as well. The lack of protest on the part of the English people regarding the sale of the Royal Collection indicates that indeed, the collection came to represent the monarch. Once seen as a cultural advantage among European rulers by Charles, his subjects came to consider the Royal Collection as one of the most negative aspects of Charles' reign: he was far too interested in the cultural affairs of art and masques as opposed to governing his country. There also came to be an association of images, particularly those Italian in origin, with the Catholic Church, which stood in direct opposition to the stark austerity of the Puritans. In addition, Charles I was seen as sympathetic to the Catholic cause, not only because of his Catholic wife, but because he readily accepted gifts and shipments of art from the papal envoy and actively participated in the commissioning of the Queen's Catholic chapels.

Along with the king's collection, several Whitehall courtier-collectors also had a sizeable portion of their goods put up for sale, those being the Earl of Arundel, the 2nd Duke of Buckingham, and the Duke of Hamilton. As previously mentioned, the Earl of Arundel had already lost a significant amount of his collection through his own devices as a means to support the Royalist cause, but the works that he left behind were swiftly sold off by his grandson following the deaths of Earl and Lady Arundel. The 2nd Duke of Buckingham, George Villiers' eldest son, armed with the foresight his father apparently lacked, began sending large chunks of the Buckingham collection to the Netherlands as early as 1648.¹¹ After some intense and

¹¹ Jonathan Brown, *Kings & connoisseurs: collecting art in seventeenth-century Europe*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 59.

complicated negotiations, Archduke Leopold William purchased around two hundred works from Buckingham in 1650. The Duke of Hamilton has not been previously discussed as a collector, but he was among the many high-ranking courtiers to imitate their king and acquire art. Unfortunately, as one of the king's generals, he also was condemned to the same fate as Charles and lost his head shortly after the king's execution. Roughly one third of Hamilton's collection found its way into Archduke Leopold William's possession, the archduke clearly being one of the main benefactors of England's Civil War. While records surrounding this transaction are missing, Jonathan Brown posits that Hamilton's brother William, Earl of Lanark, took said pictures with him when he fled to Holland.¹² As the loss of so many private collections diminished England as a leader in artistic taste and connoisseurship, so too did the sale of the king's goods.

Over a period of roughly eight years, the state confiscated and subsequently sold property belonging to the crown, the bishops, the royalists, and other entities that had not sufficiently settled their debts. When all was said and done,

...from the sale of confiscated property (excluding the confiscated lands of the royalists) the Long Parliament had raised, to the end of 1653, £4,720,810, and that another £1,304,957 had been raised from the rents of sequestered royalist estates and composition fines, making a grand total of slightly over £6 million...¹³

Among that six million was, of course, the funds earned from the sale of the Royal Collection. Several works were not sold, including Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* and Raphael's tapestry cartoons, to be kept as property of the Council of State, the sole reason why such works are still in the collection of the British monarch. When Cromwell was created Lord Protector, he ironically found it prudent to appropriate some of the iconographies of the monarchy, in

¹² Ibid, 60.

¹³ H. J. Habakkuk, "Public Finance and the Sale of Confiscated Property during the Interregnum," *The Economic History Review* 15, 1 (1962): 77.

particular the association of a good art collection with a powerful ruler. The *Triumphs of Caesar* were hung in the Long Gallery of Hampton Court as a means of magnifying Cromwell's still tenuous claims to political authority.¹⁴ After all, Caesar was originally a successful general whose military campaigns brought him the power to rule over the Roman Empire; Cromwell could clearly see the use of such iconography. The sale was eventually scheduled to be held in Somerset House, a former residence of the queen, conducted by a small group of men designated to maintain orderly conduct. By October of 1649, Somerset House was open and the sale began.¹⁵

The initial political and diplomatic issues following the execution of a monarch, all caused by the actions of the new Commonwealth, ensured that the sale started off quite slow. To begin with, all of the major English collectors had been killed or forced to flee England as collecting art was very much an activity confined to the Royalist population. The effects of Civil War drained England's resources and economy, so very few people worried about purchasing art when there were far more important crises. In addition, the rulers of Europe were extremely wary about buying art from a government that had just executed a fellow monarch, as such actions would indicate at least an acceptance and at most the condoning of that act. Those who made the initial purchases were speculators hoping to turn a profit and wealthy members of Parliament. Among the first works to go were Titians, and rather perversely, portraits of the royal family by Van Dyck.¹⁶ The first foreign beneficiaries of the Commonwealth sale were the Spanish, namely the ambassador Alonso de Cárdenas and Philip IV. Cárdenas had been in

¹⁴ Brotton, *The Sale of the Late King's Goods*, 279.

¹⁵ Brown, *Kings & connoisseurs: collecting art in seventeenth-century Europe*, 66.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 68.

London since 1635, first as resident agent then promoted to ambassador,¹⁷ and began making the rounds at Somerset House to inspect the wares by the end of 1649. Cárdenas would dominate the buyers market of the sale for several years before the French decided to renew diplomatic relations with England, and Antoine de Bordeaux was sent as the agent for Cardinal Mazarin, the advisor to the king and the great collector. Though Cárdenas had managed to secure some of the best pieces, he had by no means exhausted the sale; among the works that went to Spain were several Titians, Correggios, Veronese's *Finding of Moses*, Raphael's tapestries, several statues by Giambologna, Tintoretto's *Christ Washing the Feet of the Apostles*, two portraits by Dürer, and other works by Van Dyck, Rubens, and Palma Giovane. Bordeaux managed to secure several Romanos and Correggios, in addition to several Van Dycks that are now in the Louvre. However, the French banker Everhard Jabach became the most important French purchaser of the late king's goods. There are no records to indicate who acted on his behalf, but Jabach secured five Titians, Leonardo's *St. John the Baptist*, Correggio's *Allegory of Virtue*, Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin*, and the *Four Labors of Hercules* by Reni. By the beginning of 1654, the sale was virtually over with some 1,410 paintings successfully distributed at a value of £33,600.¹⁸ The rapid and sudden exodus of so many collections caused a cultural and artistic vacuum in England, and it was not until the restoration of Charles II that any concerted effort was made to re-establish England among Europe's cultural elite.

¹⁷ Ibid, 69.

¹⁸ Ibid, 93.

Charles' Legacy, the Collecting of Charles II

When Charles II was restored to the throne with the Cromwell Protectorate at an end, it was essential that all imagery and ceremony regarding the king and his coronation emphasize the sacred monarchy:

Its theme was England's providential deliverance from the protectoral tyranny, with Charles II depicted as a vaunting figure rising above the crushed heads of rebellion. The tropes of this figure included the usual *mélange* of classical and biblical types...depicting the resurrected body of sacred monarchy and completing the redemptive return of Charles the Martyr in the person of his legitimate heir and successor.¹⁹

The coronation of Charles II was a careful and deliberate reinstatement of monarchical ritual, complete with new jewels and regalia to replace those that had been sold to fund the royalist cause or destroyed by the Commonwealth. Even the day, St. George's Day on April 23, 1661, was selected because St. George's day had a long history of being an occasion of popular patriotic celebration.²⁰ Perhaps the best visual example of the restoration and its ceremony and pomp is the portrait of Charles II by John Michael Wright, likely painted soon after the coronation ceremony in 1661 (Fig. 20). This portrait is certainly one of the most effective images of monarchical power and echoes contemporary French royal portraits. Charles II is shown seated on his throne wearing parliamentary robes over the Order of the Garter costume; on his head is St. Edward's crown and in either hand the king holds an orb and scepter. He is seated in front of a tapestry that scholars have concluded is a scene representing the Judgment of Solomon, which undoubtedly refers to Charles's wisdom. The portrait is also immensely large, roughly 9 feet by 8 feet, creating the "illusion of the actual presence, in space, of the

¹⁹ Robert Zaller, "Breaking the Vessels: The Desacralization of Monarchy in Early Modern England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 29, 3 (1998): 774.

²⁰ Carolyn Edie, "The Public Face of Royal Ritual: Sermons, Medals, and Civic Ceremony in Later Stuart Coronations," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 53, 4 (1990): 313.

Sovereign.”²¹ The formality of this portrait serves as a direct contrast to the images of Charles I that have already been discussed; portraits of Charles I show the king as powerful, certainly, but show him in more of a *pater familias* role rather than king as ruler, which the portrait of Charles II clearly emphasizes through pose and the inclusion of royal regalia.

At the time of the Restoration, it was still widely recognized by many that rulers were required to maintain an outward appearance befitting their status; for Charles II, this resulted in the realization that his palaces should be restored or renovated to at least the glory of their former appearance, if not better, complete with an art collection. As such, a committee was appointed the day after the proclamation of the Restoration to recover, where possible, the pieces of the collection sold off in the Commonwealth sale.²² Fortunately for the crown, the majority of the works that stayed in England after the sale were recovered, but the foreigners who had acquired works from Charles I’s collection had no intention of returning anything. The Council of State in Madrid issued the following instructions to the resident in London:

If anything is proposed to you about the restitution of the paintings and tapestries that some ministers bought when the Parliamentarians sold the treasures of the deceased King Charles, you will excuse yourself [by saying] that you have no notice of this matter.²³

Among the paintings retrieved by the committee were Bronzino’s *Portrait of a Lady in Green*, Correggio’s *Holy Family with St. Jerome*, Titian’s *Lovers*, Tintoretto’s *Esther before Ahasuerus*, and Gentileschi’s *Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife*. In addition to regaining many works, Charles II was also gifted collections as well. As Charles set off from Scheveningen to reclaim his throne in England, the states of Holland and West Friesland presented the king with twenty-four

²¹ Sir Oliver Millar, “Edinburgh. John Michael Wright,” *The Burlington Magazine* 124, 956 (1982): 716.

²² Jerry Brotton, “The Art of Restoration: King Charles II and the Restitution of the English Royal Art Collection,” *Court Historian*, 10 (2005): 115-36.

²³ Brown, *Kings & connoisseurs: collecting art in seventeenth-century Europe*, 93.

paintings and twelve sculptures. The so-called “Dutch Gift” was comprised of works, predominantly 16th century Italian paintings, bought from the collection of Jan and Gerard Reynst.²⁴ Like his father Charles II preferred Italian art, but he was not without admiration for the Dutch and Netherlandish masters that were also included in the gift. However, as Lucy Whitaker and Martin Clayton have posited in their recent exhibition catalogue:

He [Charles II] seems to have lacked Charles I’s intellectual passion for painting: he had little interest in the Raphael cartoons and, according to Jonathan Richardson the Younger, was only dissuaded from selling them to Louis XIV (for use by the Gobelins tapestry factory) by his Treasurer, the Earl of Danby.²⁵

According to these scholars, Charles II was less occupied with the processes of art, or with the Renaissance fascination of genius that would lead the cartoons to be as prized as paintings. Rather his attentions were focused on regaining the mystique and glory of the monarchy; though personal feelings may be unknown, he apparently did not exhibit any tendencies that would make his interest in art appear to be anything more than necessary for the glory of his person.²⁶

Acutely aware of his father’s reign, the inventories of Hampton Court and Whitehall from ca. 1666-67 shows a remarkable combination of portraits and religious and secular art in a very similar layout to that devised by Charles I.²⁷ While there are no documented reasons for maintaining the original design, there are several possibilities to consider: Charles II either did not care enough to change the placement; he was simply showing his dedication to his father; or

²⁴ Dennis Mahon, “Notes on the Dutch Gift to Charles II,” *The Burlington Magazine* 91, 560 (1949): 303. Gerard and Jan were merchant brothers; Jan lived, for a time, in Venice which was where most of the Italian works were purchased.

²⁵ Whitaker and Clayton, *The Art of Italy in the Royal Collection: Renaissance and Baroque*, 32.

²⁶ Charles II’s genuine interest in and knowledge of art seems to have been very limited, as he left much of the recovery process to others and had little to no personal involvement. Unlike his father, Charles II never jeopardized his political or financial security on his art. For a more in depth discussion of Charles II’s collecting habits, see Brotton, *The Sale of the Late King’s Goods*, Chapter 14.

²⁷ Whitaker and Clayton, *The Art of Italy in the Royal Collection: Renaissance and Baroque*, 32.

he was attempting to seamlessly connect his reign to his father's, as if the Commonwealth and subsequent Cromwell Protectorate never existed. Though collecting art may not have been his forte, Charles II was actively involved in renovating Windsor Castle, updating the medieval lodgings with richly adorned Baroque architectural and decorative elements. Throughout the 1670s, Charles created a new set of State Apartments employing Hugh May as architect, Antonio Verrio for murals and ceiling panels, and Grinling Gibbons for woodcarving.²⁸ Again, his renovations serve the purpose of further glorification of the monarchy and king; as Charles I needed constant reassuring that he was a powerful and effective king, Charles II focused on supporting the idea that monarchy was a good, important, and the only institution of government.

Other Collectors Following the Restoration

During the Restoration period there were few private collectors of foreign art in England. The collection of the 5th Earl of Exeter is considered to be among the best collections of the later 17th century, and was heavily concentrated in Italian paintings that the Earl purchased while abroad.²⁹ Rather, the majority of collections corresponded to those of the 1st Duke of Beaufort and Thomas Poverly, “where the simple unavailability of good foreign pieces is indicated by a much heavier concentration on copies, works by English artists, pieces by foreigners working in England, as well as by the very low number of history pieces.”³⁰ The lack of choice in quality works also began a decline in ideas of taste, as taste soon became a luxury a collector could not afford if they wanted to acquire any works. Therefore, the larger ideas of tastelessness and

²⁸ Accessed March 7, 2008 <<http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/Page574.asp>>

²⁹ Gervase Jackson-Stops, ed., *The Treasure houses of Britain : five hundred years of private patronage and art collecting* (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985)

³⁰ Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting: The Growth of Interest in the Arts in England, 1680-1768* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 160.

vulgarity only took hold with the opening of the art market in the 18th century to a more general public of the bourgeoisie. That is not to say that *no* foreign works were ever acquired, simply that their rarity and the willingness of English collectors to substitute English works caused a dearth in art from continental Europe. Concepts of taste and vulgarity are entirely dependent upon the culture of a given period; under Charles I, good taste and its importance in court culture were ideas imported from continental Renaissance courts, while the Puritans under Cromwell rejected entirely the idea of connoisseurship and the appreciation of works for anything other than religious purposes. The evolution of taste continued under Charles II and the rest of the Stuarts, morphing into an idea no longer dictated by the highest echelons of royalty, but rather by the continually changing art markets and such governing bodies as the Society of Artists and the Royal Academy.

While several monarchs since the reign of Charles I have taken an interest in art and in the development of the Royal Collection, few have compared to the Stuart king in terms of the number and quality of works that he acquired. George IV (Fig. 21) was the first royal collector to stand in comparison with Charles I, and while the men shared some similarities in their collecting habits, George was very much his own man. However he was very conscious of Charles I and the collection that he built, as George bought back such important paintings as Van Dyck's *Charles I in Three Positions* and *Landscape with St. George* by Rubens.³¹ As the collectors of the 17th century took full advantage of Charles I's misfortune, so too did George IV handsomely benefit from the French Revolution and the subsequent Napoleonic campaigns that resulted in the upheaval and release of thousands of art works into the European market. The king also had an advantage over Charles I in that while Charles dealt with agents, George

³¹ Christopher Lloyd, *The Royal Collection: a thematic exploration of the paintings in the collection of Her Majesty the Queen* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992), 47.

transacted business directly with dealers who by now were quite skillful in moving art. Not an intellectually discerning collector, George had rather eclectic tastes and usually collected what he enjoyed; works by Rembrandt and Hogarth were bought with equal enthusiasm and reasoning. Though unlike Charles I, George IV's main passion for collecting lay in contemporary works of Dutch and Flemish origin; he showed no real interest in Spanish, Italian, or early Flemish works, even refusing *The Arnolfini Portrait* by Jan van Eyck in 1818.³² In yet another contrast with Charles I, George IV was quite active in his patronage and encouragement of English artists, though to be fair, English artists during the nineteenth century were producing work that participated fully in the international artistic exchange, rather than the more provincial outlooks of English artists of the seventeenth century.

The growth of the arts in England during the 18th century cannot be attributed to one, or even a few, factors. Many new trends and events encouraged the development of the arts, from the popularity of the Grand Tour to the increasing political and economic stability which created a slew of leisure activities, to the artist societies which encouraged and developed their members' skills. The philosophies of John Locke are particularly indicative of the developing ideas of knowledge in the late 17th century, as he challenged the authority of sensory perception and sought to regulate the bounds between opinion and knowledge.³³ As such, other scholars and philosophers began to explore the ideas of taste and good aesthetic judgment, whether these qualities were learned attributes or inherent characteristics in a select few individuals in an attempt to isolate the basic standards that determine taste and artistic value.³⁴ As an

³² Ibid, 60.

³³ Nigel Llewellyn, "'Those Loose and Immodest Pieces': Italian Art and the British Point of View," in Shearer West, ed., *Italian Culture in Northern Europe in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 70.

³⁴ See the writings of John Locke and David Hume.

understanding and knowledge of the arts became part of a gentleman's education, the number of English tourists in the continent greatly increased in number. Some of the most iconic visual representations of these trips and visitations to the great art collections are the paintings by Johan Zoffany that show groups of impeccably dressed gentlemen amongst the works themselves. English artists suffered from a lack of artistic education and exposure to varying styles of painting and sculpture that was the privilege of their continental counterparts. In an effort to assimilate into the higher societal groups, artists such as Jonathan Richardson, William Hogarth, and Joshua Reynolds posed as critics and connoisseurs in addition to their careers as painters.³⁵ English artists also lacked the formal academies and schools that other European artists enjoyed, a fact amended by the formation of the Royal Academy in 1768.

Following Charles I and George IV in the line of great royal collectors are Queen Victoria and Prince Albert (Fig. 22); I have refrained from discussing spouses in much detail, and while wives would occasionally be quite active or participatory in collecting, none of them had the same impact on a collection as a whole like Prince Albert, probably aided in this due to the social constructs of Victorian England and the emphasis on strict gender roles. Victoria and Albert were unique in that they worked closely together to re-organize the collection and added to it further by commission or acquisition. Their individual experiences also informed their taste; Victoria was an amateur artist herself while Albert was the only royal collector to have traveled in Italy.³⁶ It was Albert who initiated the first, full cataloguing of the Royal Collection including the establishment of the Print Room at Windsor Castle to house works on paper; the Print Room still serves its original intended purpose today. Yet aside from their influence on the

³⁵ Holger Hoock, *The King's Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture, 1760-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 6.

³⁶ Whitaker and Clayton, *The Art of Italy in the Royal Collection: Renaissance and Baroque*, 39.

Royal Collection, Victoria and Albert likely had a greater influence on cultural and artistic development within all of English society than any other monarch or consort. Albert must be particularly noted for his involvement in the Great Exhibition of 1851 as President of the Society of Arts. After the Prince Consort's premature death in 1861, Victoria famously withdrew from public life and with it her interest in any major commissions or acquisitions. Victoria and Albert represent a very different collector than Charles I; they collected for themselves, to be sure, but they were also highly invested in preserving the collection and fostering artistic interest among the general public. For Charles, collecting proved to be something of a narcissistic indulgence based on the need for a publically perceived greatness, in addition to his intellectual interests in artistic practices.

While war may have disrupted the steady flow of art into England in the 17th century, political misfortunes of the 18th century saw a reversal of tides. It is quite ironic that Charles, the king who lost his head, caused such a great exodus of art and yet the other king who lost his head, Louis XVI, allowed for great numbers of art to return to England. While Charles II may not have been the most popular or successful king either, all outwardly appearances suggested otherwise, so diligent was the Restoration king in returning the monarchy to its previous visual splendor.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION: THE IMPACT OF CHARLES AS A COLLECTOR

Collecting art in Europe during the Renaissance and Baroque eras was a very exciting and fruitful pastime, enabling major collectors to gain social and political prestige while indulging in their own pleasures. Charles I of England typified an art collector of his period, not necessarily forging a new path but collecting within the parameters of perceived good taste. Through the greater opening of the art market in the eighteenth century, Charles I's heirs had the ability to participate in cultural affairs with a larger portion of their public; owning good art was no longer limited to the high ranking aristocrats, especially with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. However, with this increased participation in art collecting, the English monarch was no longer the sole authority on manners of good taste having been replaced by the academies.

Yet the influence of Charles I can still be seen in some form today, even among the palaces and castles of Queen Elizabeth II: the unquestionable idea that the position of monarch requires a visible material wealth, which is part of the crux of this discussion. Why else would Charles II have dedicated time and money to refurbish the royal collection? Visual imagery can be incredibly powerful and whether or not it is affordable, public perception of the sixteenth century to the contemporary era requires a certain visual magnificence from monarchical rulers. Often rulers have chosen to collect or commission certain pieces that reflect or insinuate characteristics ideal to rule, such as Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* or John Michael Wright's portrait of Charles II. In this sense, as Henry Wotton previously observed, "art becomes a piece of state."¹

Though Charles I may have been a poorly inadequate king, his legacy, at least in art history, is important as his reign marks the first *complete* importation of continental Europe's ideals of taste and collecting. All of the collections mentioned throughout this thesis have been

¹ Whitaker and Clayton, 12

private, at least at one point, and therefore were formed and influenced solely on tastes and enjoyments of a collector. The collections formed by monarchs can also be evaluated as reflections of different ideas of kingship, or queenship, and the perceptions of royal rule through cultural achievement. Therefore, these collections offer a glimpse into contemporary artistic trends and serve as a barometer of taste and trend at any given time.

APPENDIX
LIST OF ART WORK CITED

1. Andrea Mantegna, *Ludovico II Gonzaga*, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, 1474. Fresco. (From Fiocco, *Paintings by Mantegna*, Plate XI)
2. Pisanello, *Sala del Pisanello*, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, ca. 1440. Fresco. Accessed July 13, 2008 <<http://www.thais.it/speciali/PISANELLO/Hres/TOT.htm>>
3. Andrea Mantegna, *The Triumphs of Caesar IX: Julius Caesar on his Triumphal Chariot*, The Royal Collection, Great Britain, ca. 1484-92. Distemper on canvas. (From Plumb and Wheldon, *Royal Heritage*, p. 106)
4. Titian, *Isabella d'Este*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, 1534-36. Oil on canvas. (From Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance*, Fig. 19)
5. Jean Clouet, *Portrait of Francis I (King of France)*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, ca. 1525-30. Oil on panel. (From Huyghe, *Art Treasures of the Louvre*, Plate 62)
6. Hans von Aachen, *Portrait of Rudolf II*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, 1606-08. Oil on canvas. (From Hulten et al., *The Arcimboldo Effect*, p. 162)
7. Giuseppe Arcimboldo, *Vertumnus*, Skoklosters Slott, Balsta, Sweden, 1590-91. Oil on panel. (From Hulten et al., *The Arcimboldo Effect*, p. 165)
8. Anthony Van Dyck, *Equestrian Portrait of Charles I*, National Gallery, London, 1637-38. Oil on canvas. (From Brown and Vlieghe, *Van Dyck: 1599-1641*, Fig. 16)
9. School of Raphael, *Miraculous Drought of Fishes from The Acts of the Apostles*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London on long term loan from The Royal Collection, 1515-16. Bodycolor on paper mounted on to canvas. (From Plumb and Wheldon, *Royal Heritage*, p. 109 figs. 1 and 2)
10. John de Critz, *Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury*, National Portrait Gallery, London, 1602. Oil on panel. (From Yung, *National Portrait Gallery: Complete Illustrated Catalogue*, Cat. 107)
11. Peter Paul Rubens, *Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel*, National Gallery, London, 1629-30, Oil on canvas. Accessed July 13, 2008 <<http://www.npg.org.uk/live/search/portrait.asp?mkey=mw00193>>
12. Daniel Mytens, *Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel*, Arundel Castle, England, ca. 1616. Oil on canvas. (From Plumb and Wheldon, *Royal Heritage*, p. 98 fig. 2)
13. Peter Paul Rubens, *George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham*, Palazzo Pitti, Florence, 1625. Oil on panel. Accessed July 13, 2008 <<http://www.humanitiesweb.org/human.php?s=g&p=c&a=p&ID=8856>>

14. Paul van Somer, *Anne of Denmark*, The Royal Collection, Great Britain, 1617. Oil on canvas. (From Plumb and Wheldon, *Royal Heritage*, p. 99 fig. 2)
15. Isaac Oliver, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, The Royal Collection, Great Britain, ca. 1610-12. Watercolor and bodycolor on vellum laid on card. (From Plumb and Wheldon, *Royal Heritage*, p. 91 fig. 2)
16. Anthony Van Dyck, *Henrietta Maria*, The Royal Collection, Great Britain, 1638. Oil on canvas. (From Brown and Vlieghe, *Van Dyck: 1599-1641*, Cat. 92 fig. 1)
17. Anthony Van Dyck, *Nicholas Lanier*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, 1628. Oil on canvas. (From Brown and Vlieghe, *Van Dyck: 1599-1641*, Cat. 50)
18. Anthony Van Dyck, *Charles I in Three Positions*, The Royal Collection, Great Britain, 1635. Oil on canvas. (From Brown and Vlieghe, *Van Dyck: 1599-1641*, Cat. 86)
19. Anthony Van Dyck, *Charles I à la Chasse*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1635. Oil on canvas. (From Brown and Vlieghe, *Van Dyck: 1599-1641*, Fig. 17)
20. John Michael Wright, *Charles II*, The Royal Collection, Great Britain, ca. 1661-66. Oil on canvas. (From Plumb and Wheldon, *Royal Heritage*, p. 126)
21. Sir Thomas Lawrence, *George IV*, The Wallace Collection, London, ca. 1822. Oil on canvas. (From Plumb and Wheldon, *Royal Heritage*, p. 238 fig. 2)
22. Sir Edwin Landseer, *Queen Victoria and Prince Albert at the Bal Costumé of 12 May 1842*, Royal Collection, Great Britain, 1842-46. Oil on canvas. (From MacKenzie, *Victorian Vision*, Fig. 10)

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Brianna Ellen Anderson was born in Annapolis, Maryland in 1985. She graduated from Syracuse University in three years with a B.A. in art history and a concentration in history, having spent 4 months living and studying in Florence, Italy. Brianna entered the University of Florida's Graduate School in August 2006 with the intent to focus her studies on the Italian Renaissance. Her main area of interest now lies in the influence of the Italianate on European court culture. She is currently employed in the curatorial department at the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, Florida, and plans to eventually pursue her J.D. with the intent to practice art law.