

| The Currency of Connoisseurs: The History of Two Versions of *The Holy Family with Saint John and Saint Catherine* by Gianfrancesco Penni

The backs of pictures can be almost as informative as their faces.¹ Much of the distinguished history of the National Museum panel – in Mantua, London, Brussels, Vienna, Krakow, and finally Warsaw – is recorded in labels and inscriptions on its back.² These have been little studied before, though they suggest how and why successive owners pursued and possessed it. The earliest document its presence in three stellar seventeenth-century collections and illuminate the rarefied world of the “Whitehall Circle” in London – King Charles I and three of his courtiers,³ all aggressive collectors and connoisseurs of courtly “magnificence” but suicidally inept politicians: one was assassinated, two suffered the indignity of public execution, the fourth died in impoverished exile, and their hard-won collections passed to others.

Mantua, by 1626

The story begins in Mantua with the sale of most of the Gonzaga dukes’ great collection of paintings and ancient statues to the British king, Charles I (**fig. 1**) in 1627–28, against competition from across Europe. It might be tempting to associate our panel with Giulio Romano’s migration there in 1524 and Vasari’s account of Penni visiting him. But the earliest record is dated 16 January 1627, in the inventory of the inheritance of the insolvent 7th duke, Vincenzo II, who ruled 1626–27: “769. A painting depicting the Madonna seated, Our Lord, St John, St Joseph and St Catherine, with a decorative frame embellished with gold, valued at 24 lire; F.”⁴

¹ I would like to repeat my thanks to the National Museum in Warsaw and the other organisers of and participants in the seminar and exhibition, and to offer special thanks to Dr Francesca Del Torre, David Devereux, Dr Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, Roger Howlett, Dr Ewa Manikowska, and Dr David Steel for their kind help with specific questions as noted below.

² “Gonzaga, Charles I, Hamilton, Leopold Wilhelm, Imperial, Pope Clement XIV [?], Kaunitz, Potocki collections, National Museum in Warsaw since 1946” are quoted in successive catalogues, most recently by Stefania Lapenta in *Gonzaga. La Celeste Galleria. Le Raccolte*, Raffaella Morselli, ed. (Milan, 2002), pp. 176–77.

³ Thomas Howard, 14th Earl of Arundel (1585–1646); George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham (1592–1628); King Charles I (1600–49); James Hamilton, 3rd Marquis (from 1643 1st Duke) of Hamilton (1606–49).

⁴ “769. Un quadro dipintori la Madonna sentata, Nostro Signore, san Giovanni, san Giuseppe et santa Catterina, con ornamento fregiato d’oro, stimato lire 24. F.” Mantua, Archivio Gonzaga, D.VI.33, f. 519–1110, published in Raffaella Morselli, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga. L’elenco dei beni del 1626–1627* (Milan, 2000), p. 277, and Stefania Lapenta, Raffaella Morselli, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga. La Quadreria nell’elenco dei beni del 1626–1627* (Milan, 2006), p. 204. Or, less

Though four of the first seven dukes had this initial,⁵ it probably indicates purchase by his elder brother, Fernando (r. 1612–26), a keen collector like their father, Vincenzo I (r. 1587–1612) who in 1604 acquired Raphael's *The Perla*⁶ which is initialled "V." in the same inventory.

From London to Brussels, 1628–56: Displaying "Magnificence"

Most of Charles's pictures left Venice for London in April 1628. An English label (fig. 2) in the lower left corner, loosely written in square "italic" script, records their arrival: "From Mantua | 1628 | N° 149." The number is presumably from a shipping or collection inventory, probably connected with Nicholas Lanier (1588–1666) (fig. 3). Professional musician, Master of the King's Musick, and art expert with a French Huguenot background and Italian relatives, he was the court official responsible for the purchase, and one of the commission appointed in August 1628 to oversee the cataloguing of the royal collection.⁷

In the centre is Charles's post-1625 monogram, a royal crown above the capital letters "CR," seared into the wood with a branding iron. Underneath is a second English label (fig. 4), written more neatly and elaborately in a similar hand. This is identical to that in Lanier's signed letters⁸ and the attributions written in the left-hand margin of the master copy of the manuscript catalogue eventually compiled in 1638–39.⁹ It reads: "februarie the 8th 1638¹⁰ | This Mantua Picture | was given by the King | to my Lord Marquess | of Hambleton upon Som | consideracion of a wagr | which he hath won of the Kinge," i.e., "This Mantua picture was given by the King to my Lord Marquis of Hamilton in settlement of a wager which he has won of the King."¹¹ Though jousting and battlefield prowess were no longer as obligatory at court as in

likely, "1009. Doi quadri senza cornice, dipinti sul asse, mezze figure [...] nel altro una Madonna, il Bambino, san Giovanni, san Giosetto et una sancta, stimati lire 180. V." – see Lapenta, Morselli, op. cit., p. 284.

⁵ Including Giulio's employer, Federico II (1500–40), the first duke: the 1540–42 inventory of his goods only identifies the finest pictures, in his mother, Isabella d'Este's, *studiolo*, five of which eventually passed to Cardinal Richelieu, not King Charles.

⁶ Known as *The Canossa Holy Family*, after its first owners (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, inv. no. 301).

⁷ Following the Mantua purchase, Lanier, Inigo Jones (Surveyor of the King's Works, the court architect), and the Master of the Wardrobe were appointed to oversee the preparation of a catalogue of Charles's collection – see Michael I. Wilson, *Nicholas Lanier. Master of the King's Musick* (Aldershot, 1995), p. 135 – but none is recorded before that compiled by the keeper of the collection, Abraham van der Doort, largely in 1638–39. See Abraham van der Doort, *Abraham Van Der Doort's catalogue of the collections of Charles I*, MS, Bodleian Library, Oxford, inv. no. ms. Ashmole 1514.

⁸ UK National Archives, Kew, SP14/72, f. 65r (1613); SP16/79, f. 78r (1627): though SP14/72 is earlier, its separated letters and distinctive flourishes and lettering (particularly the lower-case b, d, f, h, p) are the same as on the "1638" label; SP16/79 is close in date to the "1628" label and its upper-case "M" is similar (illustrated in Jeremy Wood, "Nicholas Lanier (1588–1666) and the Origins of Drawings Collecting in Stuart England," in *Collecting Prints and Drawings in Europe, c. 1500–1750*, Christopher Baker, Caroline Elam, Genevieve Warwick, eds (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 99–103).

⁹ The word "Mantua" is particularly close. See Van der Doort, op. cit. (illustrated in *Abraham van der Doort's catalogue of the collections of Charles I*, Oliver Millar, ed. (Glasgow, 1960), pl. I); the squarish "italic" script of the attributions in the margin contrasts with the flowingly elegant secretarial hand of the main text and Van der Doort's scribbled amendments in smaller, more cursive writing.

¹⁰ This is an English "Old Style" date using the traditional Julian calendar, equivalent to 18 February in the reformed, Gregorian calendar already in use in Roman Catholic countries but not adopted in Britain for another century (known there as "New Style").

¹¹ Misread in Morselli, op. cit., p. 177, following Klara Garas, "Die Entstehung der Galerie des Erzherzogs Leopold Wilhelm," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, vol. 63 (1967), pp. 39–170 (p. 47, n. 19), and Jan Białostocki, Michał Walicki, *Europäische Malerei in polnischen Sammlungen. 1300–1800* (Warsaw, 1957), p. 48.

Penni's day, their civilian surrogates were: hunting, gambling, connoisseurship of horses and dogs, all pastimes appraising nerve, stamina, and fighting spirit. Wagers challenged skill and composure under pressure (*sprezzatura*), building status and intimacy. This label shows how such activities merged with more intellectual interests within the narrow circle of courtiers swarming around Charles's Whitehall Palace. Like their counterparts elsewhere, they cultivated alliances and contained differences within complex networks of mutual obligation between "friends": *do ut des*, "I give so that you should give." Lavish gift-giving was a tool not only in diplomacy but in the aggressive dynamics of court life to an extent unknown today outside, say, tribal New Guinea.

James, 3rd marquis and later 1st duke of Hamilton (1606–49), was an ambitious Scottish magnate, descended from one of Scotland's early Stuart kings and next in the Scottish line of succession after Charles's close family (**fig. 5**): "He had a large proportion of his majesty's favour and confidence, and knew very well how to manage both, and accompany the King in his hard chases of the stag, and in the toilsome pleasures of the racket by which last he often filled his own and emptied his master's purse."¹² A contemporary wrote that he made "more Enemies, and fewer Friends, in Court and Country" through closeness to the king and ruthless exploitation of commercial privileges,¹³ and another that "Marquis *Hamilton* is not easily taken off,¹⁴ especially where there is a Glimmering of good Profit to come in."¹⁵ This followed in the footsteps of Charles's mentor, George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham, "favourite" of Charles's father and of Charles himself until he was murdered in August 1628. Though Buckingham, from a country gentry family, was self-made, Arundel (**fig. 6**) and Hamilton felt themselves at least Charles's equals in blood. Such pictures expressed the sense of grandeur of these "Magnificoes of the world, and great-mouthed Gloriosoes,"¹⁶ but their collecting went beyond demonstrating political "greatness." For Arundel and Charles, the most deeply driven, it was a source of real aesthetic pleasure, fundamental to their sense of identity. Buckingham and Hamilton were more instrumental, using the pursuit of art as a means to intimacy with the king and financial favours, echoing Castiglione's description of the careerist at court: "the good judgement to discern what pleases the prince, and the wit and discretion to accommodate oneself to it."¹⁷ With Charles's encouragement Hamilton resettled at court soon after Buckingham's death,¹⁸ being granted his senior position close to Charles as Master of the Horse, with an apartment at

¹² "Real" (i.e., royal) tennis, see Philip Warwick, *Memoirs of the Reign of King Charles I* (London, 1702), p. 114, quoted by Hilary K. Rubinstein, *Captain Luckless. James, First Duke of Hamilton, 1606–1649* (Edinburgh, 1975), p. 40.

¹³ Edward Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil War in England*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1703), pp. 119–20, whose career was similar.

¹⁴ Probably a hunting term referring to a pack of dogs on the scent of, or after cornering, their quarry, meaning "not easily put off."

¹⁵ *The Earl of Strafford's Letters and Despatches [...]*, edited by William Knowler, 2 vols (Dublin, 1740), vol. 2, p. 72. See John J. Scally, *The Political Career of James, 3rd Marquis and 1st Duke of Hamilton [...] to 1643*, Cambridge University Ph. D. thesis no. 18205 (1993), p. 114.

¹⁶ George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, *Sermons* (London, 1600), quoted by Adam Nicholson in *When God spoke English: the making of the King James Bible* (London, 2003), pp. 158–59.

¹⁷ "[...] il bon giudicio per conoscere cio che piace al principe, e lo ingegno e la prudenzia per sapersegli accomodare," – Baldassare Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano* (Venice, 1528), 2.18.

¹⁸ Having withdrawn to Scotland largely from discontent with the "upstart" Buckingham and his forced marriage to Buckingham's niece.

the heart of Whitehall Palace.¹⁹ He returned from an inglorious military mission to Germany in 1631–32 with half a dozen paintings as palliative gifts for Charles, and in 1635–37 he took over from Buckingham's heirs a 54-room mansion facing the palace entrance (and in 1638 a second, suburban, mansion) where he could display his own.²⁰

It is conceivable that the wager was political. From mid-1637 Scotland was in ferment against Charles's imposition of the episcopal (and therefore royal and English) prayer book. Hamilton was often the bearer of unwelcome news about what was practicable in a turbulent part of Charles's realms which he knew well but the king had left at the age of three. However Charles was notoriously imperious on matters of state, one witticism costing a court jester his job. He cultivated younger magnates like Hamilton assiduously but was hyper-sensitive to any difference of opinion as evidence of "treasonous" intentions,²¹ imprisoning him for over two years during the English civil war. The strongest possibility is that the wager was about art, made by Charles as an incentive to Hamilton in his prolonged negotiations in 1637–38 to acquire pictures for both of them from the Della Nave and Priuli collections in Venice, through Hamilton's brother-in-law, the British ambassador.²² Similarly, when Charles had tried to organise a Whitehall consortium to buy the Della Nave pictures in 1634, he proposed that members should make their choice by throwing dice.²³

Hamilton's insistent and increasingly frantic letters to the ambassador between July and November 1637 reveal that privately he was tormented by the king's pressure and fear of humiliation: "[...] his Matti [His Majesty] [...] is so extremely takine ther with as he has persuaded me to by them all [...] sines itt is his Matti plesoure, joined to my ooune [own] inclinatiooun, that I shall by them whatt sum ever they cost let them not gooe [go] by you for I ame resolved to have them [...];" "[...] he mead a bargaine with me for them and I obliged my self to bring them heir for the which he hes advanced sume part of that munie I remetted to you, and nothing now will content him if they ar not come [...];" "I have undertaken itt to the King and tho it be a frivolus mater he would be displeased if it should not be doune[...];" "I should be verie sorie to mise of that Collection for manie Consideratioones but chiefly because I have undertakin to his Matti to by itt [...];" "(as I have oft wrytt) I am ingaged to his Matti for the bying of them, so there is no more to be done but that you take kayre [...];" "I will be highly in disorder if ye part from Venis without concluding for La naves study [i.e., his *studiolo*] and that peeis ["piece," i.e., picture] of raphell what soever the pryse be I pray you let me not want them [...];" "I shall never leaive trubbeling you till you have sent me word that ye have bought La naves studio,

¹⁹ "In *ju M* [i.e., his Majesty's] Longe Gallorie towards the Orchard... above my lord Marques Hambletons doore." Van der Doort, op. cit. See *Abraham van der Doort's...*, op. cit., pp. 41, 44.

²⁰ Wallingford House, the site of today's Admiralty House, and Chelsea House. See also Paul Shakeshaft, "To much bewiched with those intysing things: the letters of James, third Marquis of Hamilton and Basil, Viscount Feilding, concerning collecting in Venice 1635–1639," *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 128, no. 1000 (June 1986), pp. 114–32, n. 27, 29.

²¹ John Adamson, *The Noble Revolt: The Overthrow of Charles I* (London, 2007), pp. 2, 17.

²² Ellis Kirkham Waterhouse, "Paintings from Venice for Seventeenth Century England," *Italian Studies*, 7 (1952) pp. 1–23; Shakeshaft, op. cit.

²³ "They shall be equallie divided into fower parts by some men skilfull in paintinge [...] and [...] [each] shall throw the dice severally. And whosoever throwes most shall take his share first, and soe in order everye one shall choose." British Library, London, Add. Mss 4293, folio 5, quoted by Francis C. Springell, *Connoisseur and Diplomat: The Earl of Arundel's Embassy to Germany in 1636 as Recounted in William Crowne's Diary, the Earl's Letters and Other Contemporary Sources with a Catalogue of the Topographical Drawings Made on the Journey by Wenceslaus Hollar* (London, 1963), p. 200, n. 34.

for I ame ingaged to the King to bring that Collection to ingland [...];” “if I were not ingaged to the King for both those Collections I would not thus press the having of them [...]” and, most revealingly: “[...] my Lo. arundalles jesting will troubill me more than lousing dubbill ther valou [losing double their value].”²⁴

Haggling dragged on into January 1638, stirred up by Arundel who wanted both collections. But by 8 February Charles would have regarded the “engagement” as satisfied. Two months earlier his ambassador had reported to Hamilton, a little prematurely, “[...] hee [Arundel’s agent] hath found no other reward but an extraordinary mirth I tooke att his choler [rage] express’d att the news of this conclusion of the bargaine [with della Nave], and the pains and plots he us’d to breake itt. I was no less pleas’d this morning att the disorder he was in att my telling him of my agreeing likewise with Procurator Priuli [...]”²⁵ The star acquisition was Priuli’s *Saint Margaret*,²⁶ considered a Raphael, “uone of the rarest of the world”²⁷ and on 9 February he reported Priuli’s accidental death, according to local gossip because “itt was impossible hee should live, after hee had parted with his Saint.”²⁸ It should be remembered, though, that Hamilton’s letter thanking him was written from Newmarket, the home of English horse-racing.²⁹

This coup took Hamilton’s collection above 600 pictures. The Warsaw panel was already among the 384 items³⁰ in an inventory compiled in spring/summer 1638: “27. A peece of our lady taking up of our Saviour out of the cradle, with St Joseph, St Elisabeth [sic] and st John Baptiste standing by and landschape of ---.”³¹ By the time the Venetian purchases reached London in October the country was sliding towards political crisis and Hamilton, who was in Scotland negotiating for the king, kept *Saint Margaret* (“[...] if I returne he must pay deire [dear] for hire [her] [...] [but] in my absence my shoope [shop] is shut”).³² Countering rebellion there undermined the finances of Charles’s extra-parliamentary rule, precipitating ruinous civil wars, his trial for treason, and execution by the English Parliament on 30 January 1649, symbolically in the public thoroughfare outside the Banqueting House decorated with Rubens’s apotheosis of the Stuart monarchy. For his invasion of England in support of Charles, Hamilton was beheaded on 9 March nearby, outside Westminster Hall where the law-courts sat. In April a royalist journalist mocked him for their kaleidoscopically shifting relations after 1638, with a pictorial analogy: “Just like those pictures which we paint, | On this side fiend, on that side saint, | Both this, and that, and ev’rything, | He was; for, and against the King.”³³ Hamilton’s

²⁴ From letters nos XXVI, XXXI, XXXVI, XXXIX, XL, XLIII and XLIX in Shakeshaft, op. cit. Their phonetic spelling suggests a Scottish accent.

²⁵ From letter no. L in *ibid.*

²⁶ Now Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. no. 629.

²⁷ Letter no. LII: Hamilton quoting Arundel in Shakeshaft, op. cit.

²⁸ Letter no. LIX, to Hamilton in *ibid.*

²⁹ Letter no. LXII in *ibid.* The ambassador’s dissatisfaction at Charles’s niggardly reward for his work – a post in the household of his heir – is said to have been partly the cause of his support of the Parliamentary side in the English Civil War.

³⁰ Including some inherited from his father (*ibid.*, n. 10).

³¹ Lennoxlove House near Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland, Hamilton archives, “Inventory No. 15.” See Garas, “Die Entstehung...,” op. cit., appendix 1, p. 64.

³² Scally, op. cit., p. 142, n. 226.

³³ Marchamont Nedham, *Digitus Dei, or God’s Justice upon Treachery and Treason* (London, 1649), quoted in Rubinstein, op. cit., p. 243.

later inventories mirror these events. One, written less elegantly than the others, probably after Charles fled London in 1642 and before, or when, the English Parliament impounded the collection briefly in 1643–44, records it packed into 44 crates, among them, “The fift case [5 pictures, including] Joseph/Mary/John Bapt/Elizabeth.”³⁴ The last, in French and mentioning “the late king of Great Britain,” was presumably prepared for the international market after Hamilton’s death, on behalf of William, his exiled brother and heir.³⁵ It lists 275 pictures, ours probably “251. Une Madona avec 4 autres figures.”³⁶

We do not know how our picture (unattributed in the Mantua and Hamilton inventories and transferred before the cataloguing of the royal collection) was judged. The gift might speak for itself, except that Charles was said by Van Dyck to value Raphael the most highly.³⁷ Ceding it in a gesture of “magnificence” may have been a real test of *sprezzatura*. Thus Charles’s “Large Raphael Madonna” as it was known in England, which its next royal owner, Philip IV of Spain, called “the pearl” of his collection, was hung at Whitehall in the innermost of his three “Lodging Rooms,” next to Correggio’s highly esteemed *Venus with Mercury and Cupid (The School of Love)*.³⁸ Though his bedroom was mainly hung with portraits of his close family, the catalogue records “9. Item. At the Bedside Our Ladie Christ and St John intire figures halfe Soe bigg as the life. In a Carved and all over new gilded frame [...] done by Raphell Urbin.”³⁹ This was probably an earlier work by Penni from Mantua, *The Holy Family with Saint John* now in the Bankes Collection.⁴⁰

³⁴ Hamilton archives, “Inventory No. 5.” See Garas, “Die Entstehung...,” op. cit., appendix 2, p. 70.

³⁵ Jonathan Brown, *Kings and Connoisseurs* (New Haven and London, 1995), p. 161.

³⁶ Hamilton archives, “1649 Inventory.” See Garas, “Die Entstehung...,” op. cit., appendix 3, p. 80.

³⁷ R.W. Lightbown, “Van Dyck and the purchase of paintings for the English Court,” *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 91 (July 1969), no. 800, pp. 418–21 (p. 420), cited by Francis Haskell, “Charles I’s Collection of Pictures,” in *The Late King’s Goods: Collections, Possessions, and Patronage of Charles I in the Light of the Commonwealth Sale Inventories*, Arthur MacGregor, ed. (London and Oxford, 1989), pp. 203–31 (p. 216).

³⁸ Now National Gallery, London, inv. no. NG10.

³⁹ *Abraham van der Doort’s...*, op. cit., p. 36. Charles may have had it with him while interned at Hampton Court in 1647, as it was there in October 1649: “326. The little Madona Christ st John by Raphael.” See *The Inventories and Valuations of the King’s Goods, 1649–1651*, Oliver Millar, ed. (Glasgow, 1972), p. 205.

⁴⁰ *The Holy Family with Saint John (The Madonna delle Rovine)*, Dorset, Kingston Lacy, The Bankes Collection, The National Trust, CMS, inv. no. 1257083, bought in Spain 1813–14. Other identifications of Charles’s “Small Gonzaga Raphael” include Raphael’s *The Madonna della Rosa* (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, inv. no. 302), Giulio’s *The Small Holy Family* for Cardinal Bibbiena (Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. 605), and its variant in the Roussel collection, Nanterre (see Alessandro Luzio, *La Galleria dei Gonzaga venduta all’ Inghilterra nel 1627–28* (Milan, 1913), p. 90), but only the Bankes panel is recorded as bearing Charles’s monogram. The *Madonna della Rosa*’s figures, Christ excepted, are not “intire” and it is not recorded until 1657. Though Bibbiena’s *The Small Holy Family* is still sometimes proposed, its composition does not match Mantua’s ‘sleeping Christ’, Van der Doort’s ‘half-size figures’, the absence of Saint Elizabeth from the English descriptions, and the documented sale to Spain in 1653; it is unrecorded between its probable bequest to Castiglione in November 1520, and Paris early in the 1660s. Later that century Felibien connected it not with the Gonzaga or Charles but with a French cardinal deeply involved in Francis I’s Italian diplomacy, Adrien Gouffier de Boissy (c. 1479–1523). See André Felibien, *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres...*, new ed. (London, 1705), vol. 1, pp. 224–26. He or his elder brother (see Jan Sammer, “Tommaso Vincidor and the Flemish Romanists,” in *Late Raphael: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, Miguel Falomir, ed. (Madrid, 2013), p. 123) acquired another “Raphael” around 1518, and it is plausible that in 1521 the Bibbiena/Castiglione picture was used as a papal sweetener to Adrien or his nephew Claude (head of this influential family from 1519 and a serious collector). France was dominant in Italy from 1515 until 1525, and Pope Leo X not only sent the French court several Raphaels through Bibbiena, his special envoy, in 1518 but early in 1521 was still cultivating Francis I ostentatiously, just when Castiglione was lobbying him on behalf of the Marquis of Mantua, and the Marquis’s brother Ercole and brother-in-law the deposed Duke of Urbino. Lapenta and Morselli concur with this “Bankes” identification (Lapenta, Morselli, op. cit., pp. 130–31, 185), following Howard Burns and Sylvia Ferino Pagden in *Giulio Romano*, Ernst H. Gombrich, ed. (Milan, 1989), p. 271, but do not identify the Bankes or Warsaw panels in the 1626–27 inventory.

The closest Mantua match is “796. A small painting, a copy after Raphael of Urbino, Our Lord sleeping and Saint John,” valued at only 18 lire (against 1200 lire /200 scudi for *The Perla*).⁴¹ Its promotion may have been due partly to Charles’s eye which even a professional like Van Dyck praised,⁴² but largely to the slippery dealer Daniel Nys. His letters of March–April 1627 mention “the small Raphael” for which he eventually offered 500 scudi on Charles’s behalf (compared with 4000 for “the large Raphael” – *The Perla*).⁴³ It retained this attribution in England (“The little Madonna, Christ, st. John by Raphael,” “the Smaller Madonna by Raphael Urbino”), and achieved an even higher price from the Spanish ambassador in 1653.⁴⁴

Vienna, 1657–1820: Two Acquisitive Connoisseurs

The flood of pictures sold from Whitehall collections to settle civil war debts benefitted astute and solvent collectors throughout Europe, including the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria (1614–62) who was nearby in Brussels as governor of the Spanish Netherlands (1647–56) (fig. 7). He does not seem to have competed with the agents of his master, Philip IV of Spain, for Charles’s pictures in London, but acquired the best of Hamilton’s and Buckingham’s when their heirs marketed them through the Netherlands. The inventory of 1,397 pictures in “four great galleries, two halls and an inner chamber”⁴⁵ in his Stallburg palace in Vienna in July 1659 includes our panel as “140. A landscape in oils on wood, in which our dear Lady lifts the little child Jesus from the cradle, near the [i.e., her] right side Saint John Baptist and Saint Catherine, and on the left Saint Joseph. In a cut-away brown frame decorated with gilding. 7 span high and 6 broad. This is a good copy after Raphael Urbino.”⁴⁶ In 1662 his collection was inherited by his nephew, the Emperor Leopold I: the Warsaw panel remained in the Stallburg until 1780, relegated to the reserve collection on the ground-floor. The number 249 painted on the picture in white, repeated in black on its back, refers to an unpublished manuscript

⁴¹ “796. Un quadretto, copia di Rafaele d’Urbino, con Nostro Signore che dorme et san Giovanni, stimato lire 18. F.” See Lapenta, Morselli, op. cit., p. 212, though this would fit other compositions, including the *Madonna of the Diadem* (Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. 603). The Bankes panel is not particularly small (76 × 53.3 cm) but its figures are, and its dimensions are roughly half those of *The Perla* (147.4 × 116 cm).

⁴² Lightbown, op. cit.

⁴³ Luzio, op. cit., pp. 138–40.

⁴⁴ Bought for its £800 valuation, compared with the £2000 valuation of *The Perla* for which the creditors who received it eventually accepted £700 (or £1000 according to the ambassador: Brown, op. cit., pp. 87–88). See Bodleian Library, Oxford, Carte Ms. 74, folios 145r–146v, published in Albert J. Loomie, “New Light on the Spanish Ambassador’s Purchases from Charles I’s Collection 1649–53,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 52 (1989), pp. 257–67.

⁴⁵ “Quattro gran loggie, due stanze, et un Camerino,” described by the secretary to the visiting Duke of Modena. See Marko Deisinger, “Die Galerie Erzherzog Leopold Wilhelms [...] im Jahre 1659,” *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien*, vol. 10 (2008), p. 403.

⁴⁶ “140. Ein Landtschafft von Öhlfarb auff Holcz, warin unser liebe Fraw das kindtlein Jesus aus der Wiegen höbt, dabey auf der rechten Seithen der hegl. Joanes Baptista und hegl. Catharina, und auf der linkhen Sct. Joseph. In einer auszgeschnittenen, braunen Ramen zierverguldt. 7 Span [i.e., 145.6 cm] hoch und 6 [124.8 cm] bracht. Ist ein gütte Copey nach Raphal Urbino” (the measurements presumably include a frame with a 15 cm moulding). See Adolf Berger, “Inventar der Kunstsammlung des Erzherzogs Leopold Wilhelm von Österreich: nach der Originalhandschrift im Fürstlich Schwarzenberg’schen Centralarchive,” *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, 1, Bd. 2, (1883), p. 94 col. 2. See also Klara Garas, “Der Schicksal der Sammlung des Erzherzogs Leopold Wilhelm,” *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, vol. 64 (1968), p. 185 (and appendix 1, p. 210: “140. Raffaell, Maria mit Kind und Heiligen”).

inventory of 1772, scrawled and summary (“249. The Family of Christ, on panel. Copy after Raphael”),⁴⁷ each picture numbered “indelibly with oil paint.”⁴⁸

It again served as high-level political currency when the State Chancellor, Prince Kaunitz (1711–94) – “the coachman of Europe,” chief Hapsburg minister for some forty years, and a knowledgeable aesthete (fig. 8) – acquired works from the Imperial collection when he master-minded a re-hang of its best pictures on art-historical lines in the Belvedere palace in 1780, and commissioned a scholarly inventory of the entire collection.⁴⁹ This was portrayed as classicised “greatness” in Fischer’s *Allegory* (fig. 9), Wisdom guiding a heroic, almost imperial Kaunitz towards his “hehrer, herrlicher Bau,” with just a trace of Malvolio.⁵⁰

These activities seem to have ruffled feathers among the permanent officials responsible for the collection and, to defend himself, Kaunitz minuted the emperor, Joseph II, at length in July 1781, “being so scrupulous about everything which could reflect on me personally.” His judiciously worded, but still revealing, text reflects a lifetime of drafting and an awkward situation. He explained “with the most exact truth, from which Your Majesty knows I am incapable of straying” that the emperor’s late mother, the empress Maria Theresa, had presented him with some minor pictures, calling them rubbish (*saloperie*) which she was ashamed to give, but still checking them “with her own eyes” against the list which he now submitted. He wrote that, in the poor condition “in which they may have been” before he had them restored, His Majesty might have considered them almost valueless: “there would not have been 4 of them which would have been worth 10 florins, and the rest not a farthing.”⁵¹ The emperor’s reply was an annotation confirming the gift “with much pleasure,” subject to Kaunitz sending his list to the

⁴⁷ “Gallerieboden [...] Nr 249. Familie-Christi auf Holcz. Copey nach Raphel,” Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Gemäldegalerie Archiv. I am grateful to Dr Sylvia Ferino-Pagden for her introduction, and to Dr Francesca Del Torre, Kuratorin, Gemäldegalerie, for kindly locating and copying this entry.

⁴⁸ “[...] In die 2te rubrique wird der numerus der gemalden eingetragen. Durch diese mit oelfarben gemachte unausloeschliche numeren [...]” See “Grand Chamberlain Prince Auersperg to Maria Theresa, 19 December 1772,” *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhoechsten Kaiserhauses*, 24, Bd. 2 (1903), p. LXIII, document no. 19375.

⁴⁹ Alice Hoppe-Harnoncourt, “Geschichte der Restaurierung an der k. k. Gemäldegalerie, 1. Teil: 1772 bis 1828,” *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, vol. 2 (2001), pp. 135–206. I appreciate Dr Del Torre’s reference to Gerlinde Gruber, “‘En un mot j’ai pensé à tout’: Das Engagement des Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz-Rietberg für die Neuaufstellung der Gemäldegalerie im Belvedere,” *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien*, Neue Folge, vol. 10 (2008), pp. 190–205.

⁵⁰ Vinzenz Fischer, *Allegorie auf die Übertragung der kaiserlichen Galerie in das Belvedere*, 1781. Vienna, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna, inv. no. 4229 (Gruber, op. cit., p. 196, fig. 6), like another noble work tainted by the arrogance of power: “Vollendet das ewige Werk [...] steht er zur Schau; hehrer, herrlicher Bau.” The everlasting work is ended [...] it stands on show, august and glorious building’ (Richard Wagner, *Das Rheingold*, scene 2).

⁵¹ “Nous sommes enfin prêts à finir au Belvédère. [...] Mechel sera [...] présenter les inventaires [...] entre autres [...] quelques tableaux, qu’il a plû à feue S. M. l’Impératrice de me donner, après les avoir vérifiés par ses propres yeux, être conformes à la description détaillée qu’en trouvera V. M. I.le dans la note très-humblement ci jointe. V. M. peut être persuadée, que dans l’etat où ils étoient, il n’y en avoit pas 4, qui valussent 10 Fls. et la reste pas une obole; cependant, en me les faisant raccommoder ou plutôt repeindre, j’ai pu en tirer quelque parti, à ma campagne d’Austerlitz, où ils m’ont servi à remplacer du bon, que j’en ai tiré. C’est là le fait dans la plus exacte verité, dont V. M. sait, que je ne suis pas capable de m’écarter. Si Elle veut bien confirmer ce don, que feue S. M., avec la bonté, que Lui connoissoit V. M., voulut qualifie de saloperie, qu’elle étoit honteuse, disoit Elle, de m’avoir donné, je le regarderai comme une nouvelle preuve de bonté de sa part; et dans le cas contraire au premier ordre, je ferai tout revenir et tout rendre. Je demande pardon à Votre Majesté d’avoir osé entrer dans un si grand detail sur si peu de chose; mais je suis si scrupuleux sur tout ce qui peut me regarder personnellement que j’espère qu’Elle voudra bien ne pas le trouver mauvais.” From a letter of 8 July 1781. See Adolf Beer, *Joseph II, Leopold II, und Kaunitz. Ihr Briefwechsel* (Vienna, 1873), pp. 78–80 (cited in Gruber, op. cit., n. 47).

responsible chamberlain and curator, with the inventory being finalised by Kaunitz's protégé, Christian von Mechel. After speaking to Kaunitz Joseph recorded his approval formally in September, in a minute to the chamberlain referring again to "the list of those pictures which Her Late Majesty gave to Prince Kaunitz."⁵²

It is a little surprising that the empress or Kaunitz did not immediately confirm in writing such a transfer of Imperial property, whatever their other preoccupations before her death in November 1780 and Joseph II's assumption of sole power. It is also unfortunate that the list mentioned so carefully does not seem to have survived,⁵³ so we cannot be sure which pictures were involved. Ours seems all but certain, and a label with Kaunitz's monogram, not now present, was reportedly still on it a century later.⁵⁴ Kaunitz is also said to have owned a fine if unfinished Raphael from the Imperial collection now known as *The Esterházy Madonna*,⁵⁵ presumably another of these "virtually worthless" paintings since his minute to the emperor does not mention earlier gifts. When his collection was dispersed our picture was acquired by Artur, count Potocki z Krzeszowic (1787–1832) (**fig. 10**), a Polish magnate who served Prince Józef Poniatowski and Napoleon as an *aide de camp* during the invasion of Russia and after their defeat was granted the same title, and a commission in the Russian imperial guard, by their opponent, Tsar Alexander I.⁵⁶ He probably bought it at or soon after the first Kaunitz auction, in Vienna in 1820 when it sold not for ten florins but for 250.⁵⁷

Galicia, after 1820 – before 1946: Provincial Power-Building

The picture was considered the gem of Potocki's Krakow palace "Pod Baranami" ("Under the rams' heads"), an 1854 guidebook describing it as "if not by Raphael then by his pupil, a second Raphael."⁵⁸ A manuscript catalogue of the collection, made between 1847 and 1870, attributes it to Penni, lauding its "great style, merging the noble elegance and correctness of the antique with the truth of nature, revealing the brush of a great master [...] this work was born out of the artist's [own] inspiration and study, not from imitation: it is not a pastiche by

⁵² "Die Liste derjenigen Bilder, so Ihre Mayst. seel. schon dem Fürsten Kaunitz gegeben ist von mir bestätigt worden, und also mit darunter in Empfang zu nehmen; Sie werden also in Gemässheit dieses, meinen Befehl an den Fürsten Kaunitz die Nachricht davon geben, und das weitere veranlassen." Joseph II to Grand Chamberlain Count Rosenberg, 14 September 1781. See Eduard von Engerth, *Kunsthistorische Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses. Gemälde. Beschreibendes Verzeichniss* (Vienna, 1884), vol. 1, p. LXIV.

⁵³ Gruber, op. cit., p. 198. Only the Belvedere part of Mechel's inventory was published, in 1783; the Gemäldegalerie does not possess the full inventory or Kaunitz's list.

⁵⁴ Theodor von Frimmel, *Geschichte der Wiener Gemäldesammlungen* (Berlin–Leipzig, 1899), vol. 3, p. 96, presumably informed by the Potocki curator.

⁵⁵ Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. no. 71. See Jurg Meyer zur Capellen, *Raphael. A Critical Catalogue of His Paintings*, vol. 1 (Landshut, 2001), p. 254.

⁵⁶ *Österreichische Biographische Lexikon 1815–1950*, Bd. 8 (Vienna, 1983), p. 231 (Jerzy Zdrada); his nephew and grandson both became prime minister of Austria.

⁵⁷ Theodor von Frimmel records Kaunitz sales in March 1820 and April 1820: lot 132 in 1820 is a close match ("École de Raphael et Jules Romain. Sur bois haut 58 pouc. Larg. 45 pouces. Les fiançailles de St Catherine"), if its measurements include a substantial frame and if those in the nineteenth century print (inscribed in the plate "haut 44 pouces large 36 pouces de Vienne") are approximate and exclude the frame (see Theodor von Frimmel, *Lexikon der Wiener Gemäldesammlungen*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1914), pp. 334–63).

⁵⁸ Józef Mączyński, *Kraków dawny i terażniejszy. Z przeglądem jego okolic* (Krakow, 1854), p. 21.

any ordinary talent”.⁵⁹ It singles out Saint Elizabeth [sic] and Saint John as “an original idea of the artist [...] an invention of a great master,” and praises its “beautiful Italian landscape.”⁶⁰ For its exhibition in Krakow in 1882 the art historian Marian Sokołowski published a shrewd if highly coloured analysis in more than six pages: “he covered the soil [...] with shingle full of shells, depicted with great precision. This symbolises the difficult and stony path which the fragile child cannot yet bear but will have to tread in the future. He carefully unrolled the plain, white towel made by his mother and put it under the feet of the child leaving the cradle, so they will not bleed. He placed Saint Catherine, his mystical bride, by him, undoing her sandals to show that she will follow in his footsteps. Let us look closely – the straps have fallen and soon this beautiful foot, made to be kissed, will walk unshod and stain the soil with blood [...] How beautiful is Saint Catherine’s head [...], on a long neck, topped with the ‘cogged’ crown of a princess and resembling the profiles of Greek coins [...]. Lastly, how her whole figure brings to our eyes a somewhat inanimate, sculptural stillness not without purpose or reason [...] although without helmet, shield and armour – an ancient statue of deified Roma!”⁶¹

The Potocki catalogue states that the panel came “from the collection of Prince Kaunitz, Maria Theresa’s minister: the painting was a gift from Pope Clement XIV,” but there seems to be no evidence for this. Pope Clement XIV (r. 1769–74) – builder of the Vatican’s magnificent galleries for classical sculpture, the present Museo Pio-Clementino, and donor to Maria Theresa in September 1773 of a costly mosaic of Batoni’s portrait of her sons Joseph and Leopold – would be an appropriate recipient of such a diplomatic present. He might conceivably have passed it on to Kaunitz as a gracious gesture, but it is improbable that this would have gone unrecorded, particularly by Kaunitz himself when he sought Joseph’s approval. It is also odd that, despite his lavish praise, the Potocki cataloguer overlooked the distinguished history on the picture itself. This suggests that he did not examine it off the wall and relied on oral tradition, presumably from the elderly dowager countess, Zofia Potocka, née Branicka (1790–1879). Like their predecessors, the Potockis’ motives for collecting were probably multiple and complex. It may be relevant that the Krzeszowice branch of the family was the creation of Zofia’s husband, a second son. While his father, the anthropologist and “Gothick” story-writer Jan (1761–1815), used his family wealth for Byronic travels as far as Mongolia and North Africa, soon after his suicide⁶² Artur set out to promote the prestige and influence of his own branch, acquiring the Krzeszowice estate in 1816, the Krakow palace in 1822, and a substantial picture collection to dignify them and educate the public. This included two more paintings with a Kaunitz provenance, and a grandiose portrait of

⁵⁹ Manuscript gallery catalogue, attributed to the keeper of the collection, Jan Wolański: *Galerya Obrazów*, Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie, Archiwum Potockich z Krzeszowic, no. 2851, pp. 12–13.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ I am most grateful to Dr Ewa Manikowska for generously providing this information about the picture’s reception in Krakow, and translations from the guidebook and catalogues. See Ewa Manikowska, “Zbiór obrazów i rzeźb Artura i Zofii Potockich z Krzeszowic. Ze studiów nad XIX-wiecznym kolekcjonerstwem w Polsce,” *Rocznik Historii Sztuki*, vol. 25 (2000), pp. 145–99 (abstract in Italian), for analysis of the Potockis’ collecting, based mainly on their purchases in Italy, and Artur’s ambitions for a publicly accessible gallery. Exhibition catalogue: Marian Sokołowski, *Wystawa obrazów dawnych mistrzów urządzona na rzecz Towarzystwa Dobroczynności w Sukiennicach krakowskich w marcu 1882 r.*, exh. cat. (Krakow, 1882), pp. 50–56, cat. no. 16.

⁶² “The man who shot himself with a strawberry”: feeling the need for a silver bullet, he is said to have used a strawberry-shaped knob from the lid of a sugar bowl.

himself from Gerard in Paris in 1816. Unusually, a print of our picture appeared, attributing it to Raphael.⁶³ A papal provenance might have attracted the Potockis as matching *The Esterházy Madonna* which, according to a former label, entered the Imperial collection as a gift from Pope Clement XI (r. 1700–21), before passing, via Kaunitz, to the leading family of Hapsburg Hungary.⁶⁴

Warsaw, since 1946: Art for the People

This takes us far from the intimate, hot-house existence of courtiers like Hamilton and Kaunitz. They were very different political phenomena, one a traditional “favourite” of the ruler, the other a professional administrator of supreme quality, and they used art differently, one for personal advancement, the other primarily as an instrument of state-building. But both depended on “courtiership,” on cultivating mutually beneficial relations with would-be autocrats, in which the Warsaw panel was viable currency, part of the commercial reality underlying Castiglione’s philosophic ideal. In this milieu reward and reputation (his *grazia e laude*) was won by mutual favours,⁶⁵ private connoisseurship, and calculated under-statement. The nineteenth-century world of the Krzeszowice Potockis was a blunter and more transparent one of market purchase, public promotion, and florid eloquence, as they used their wealth to build political influence in Hapsburg Galicia.

Their collection survived the extinction of their male line in 1890, wars, and revolutions, to make a further transition, in the spirit of its founder, from art as a personal commodity to art as a public good. The panel’s move to the National Museum in Warsaw is recorded in a printed label on its back: “Ministry of Public Security saved from looting and removal abroad, confiscated from Count A. Potocki⁶⁶ and transferred to the Nation. A. 1946”⁶⁷ (fig. 11). This may mean that our picture returned briefly to Vienna in 1944–45, if only to a railway siding, as Potocki records escaping there with over 600 crates of possessions towards the end of the German occupation, only to be overtaken by the Soviet advance in April 1945.⁶⁸ There is also a National Museum in Warsaw label with the general inventory number 128832 and above it, in thick blue-green paint, a later number from the museum’s categorised inventory, M.Ob.601 MNW.

⁶³ In the Ruland archive at Windsor Castle, inscribed *Raffaele* in the plate, undated (in outline, like a book illustration of c. 1800–70): Carl Ruland, *The Works of Raphael Santi da Urbino as represented in the Raphael Collection in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle [...]* (Weimar, 1876), p. 80, cat. no. XXXVIII.24 (microfilm illustrations available from the Warburg Institute, University of London). Its figures have haloes: faint gold traces of Saint Catherine’s survive on the surface of the painting. Though this attribution could have been the Kaunitz family’s, they did not sell it as a Raphael: it predates the 1847–70 catalogue and is more likely Potocki’s, his wife’s, or their dealer’s.

⁶⁴ Albeit in decline, bankrupted in 1832 partly due to over-zealous collecting.

⁶⁵ When Penni himself sold seven ancient busts to Giulio’s employer, the 7th marquis (later 1st duke) of Mantua, in 1525 the transaction was dressed up as an exchange of “gifts” (Daniela Ferrari, *Giulio Romano. Repertorio di fonti documentarie*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1992), pp. 78–86).

⁶⁶ Alfred III, great-grandson of Artur’s elder brother.

⁶⁷ *Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego | ocaliło przed grabieżą i wywozem zagra | nicę organizowanym przez hr. A. Potoc | kiego i przekazało Narodowi. A. 1946.*

⁶⁸ All from his chateau in Łańcut, its contents evacuated between March and July 1944, beginning with 19 crates of pictures (Alfred Potocki, *Master of Łańcut: The Memoirs of Count Alfred Potocki* (London, 1959), pp. 282–84).

The Boston Version: Pleasurable Consumption

The documented history of the Boston version is much briefer but still revealing. In a Scottish collection in the nineteenth century, it moved to Boston, Massachusetts in the twentieth. There it was acquired by the Childs Gallery from an unidentified local collector, probably around 1955, bearing two labels.⁶⁹ One records framing by a Boston firm, Foster Brothers, at some time between 1902 and 1942. The other marks the ownership of Horatio Granville Murray Stewart (1834–1904) of Broughton and Cally (**fig. 12**).⁷⁰ He was the sole heir to two Scottish families descended from the Earls of Allandale and the Earls of Galloway, and inherited estates on the coast of Galloway in south-west Scotland described fifty years earlier as the largest of any commoner in Scotland, as well as over 50,000 acres in nearby County Donegal, Ireland.

His story is another lesson in the perils of over-enthusiastic consumption, or the pleasures of short-termism. Most of his land, accumulated over more than two centuries, came from Alexander Murray of Broughton, a distant relative whose picture collecting, building, and travelling ran him so deeply into debt that all his personal property had to be sold when he died childless in 1846, and the Irish estate in 1855. Murray Stewart seems to have copied him, over-spending his considerable income against the sale of assets after his death. Again childless, he amassed a large but uncatalogued picture collection and expensive decorative art, travelled widely like the Potockis, bought the neighbouring Rusko estate in 1874 for his wife, and died with debts equivalent to half his total assets. His English wife was “staunchly episcopalian” (a minority in presbyterian Scotland), and together they built a large private chapel with chaplain and choir school, reportedly devoting some fifteen years to its design. At its consecration in 1877, an elaborately carved ceiling and “richly gilded and painted” texts carved into the walls are mentioned by the local newspaper, but no pictures. Devotional use of such an altarpiece might have been too papist for them, or something they preferred not to publicise, or they may simply have acquired it later. It was probably sold in 1904 during the piecemeal disposal of nearly all of Murray Stewart’s possessions, or possibly after his wife’s death in 1919 when the items most personal to her were dispersed.⁷¹

⁶⁹ I am grateful to Roger Howlett, Childs Gallery, Boston for his record of the labels and discussion of the Boston history of the painting.

⁷⁰ I am grateful to David Devereux, formerly of The Stewartry Museum (Dumfries and Galloway Council), Kirkcudbright, Scotland, particularly for verifying that the painting was not in the 1846 auction of Alexander Murray’s effects (and therefore was probably first acquired by Murray Stewart), and to Dr David Steel, historian of the Gatehouse of Fleet area, for his expert guidance to the literature on Murray Stewart and his family.

⁷¹ J.E. Russell, *Gatehouse and District*, 2 vols (Dumfries, 2003), vol. 1, pp. 90–102, 278.