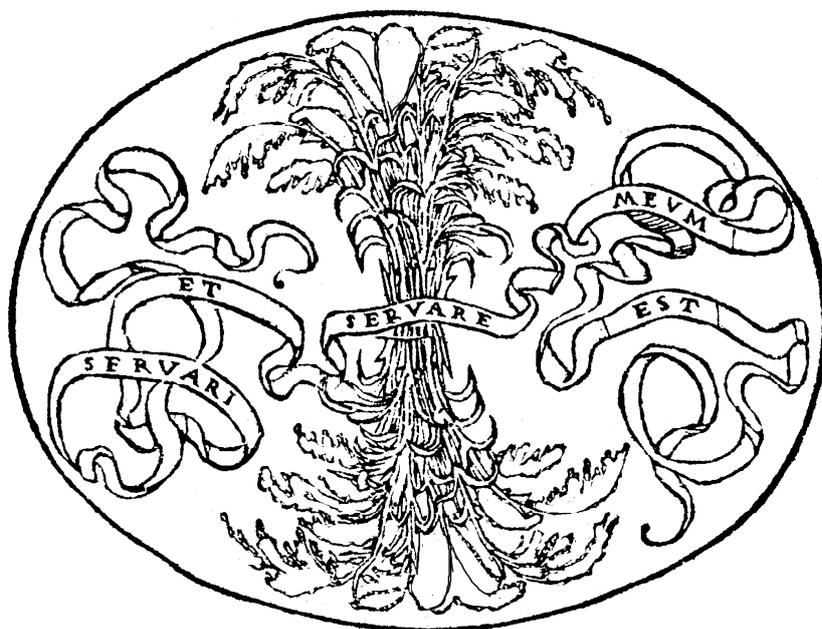


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## A BRIEF DESCRIPTION: THE LANGUAGE OF STUART INVENTORIES

While laudatory adjectives proclaiming the quality, value and rarity of artworks is commonplace today, this has not always been the case. In early modern sources, descriptions of artworks are often frustratingly terse. Adjectives tend to be limited to very few words, especially in sale catalogues and inventories. This was despite the fact that first-hand viewing, ‘surveying’ and ‘taking’ or recording of objects was essential<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of descriptions in sale catalogues and inventories was, in the first instance, to make an object recognisable for readers; in the case of sale catalogues, this enabled the buying public to identify an artwork, and for inventories, this facilitated the tracking of objects owned by a particular person. Compilers expected readers to *view* objects while consulting the descriptions. As such, they were briefly descriptive and not made as an exercise in explaining the meaning or importance of an artwork. However, even in their brevity, the descriptions offer insight into how artworks were presented and assessed in the early modern period.

Although the sale catalogue – initially a single sheet in the form of a bill – began to be produced on a limited scale in the seventeenth century, many auctions did not have one. In Amsterdam, these lists were more common than in London at the same time, but as Michael Montias has shown, the descriptions for artworks in such sale contexts are typically even more summary than those in inventories<sup>2</sup>. Inventories were regularly commissioned upon the death of a person, and this was particularly important when there was a fortune – and inheritance – at stake. The whole panoply of household goods might feature in an inventory, from basic kitchen utensils and items of clothing to furniture, linens and artworks. Moreover, inventories have the benefit of providing references to furnishings and objects in the context of ownership and display. They are particularly valuable for art historians in analysing a vast range of questions about patronage, provenance, display and taste.

Scholarship on Dutch inventories, especially by Montias, has revealed the potential to analyse them as a body of literature, albeit one with a very limited vocabulary and strict conventions of style. Montias’s work on Dutch art records from 1600-1670 analyses the common subject categories of Dutch art at this time and elucidates the purpose of using such a limited vocabulary<sup>3</sup>. My study will ask many of the same questions for Stuart inventories compiled during roughly this same period to show a common currency of certain terminology across seventeenth-century art records as well as points of difference. Although Montias concentrates on the terminology deployed for pictorial subject matter, the focus here has been extended to adjectives and verbs. In addition, court-specific questions will be asked in terms of possible principles of display that governed which artworks were put on display and which ones languished in storage as they can be adduced in Stuart inventories. These considerations of display as well as broader considerations of taste are indebted to the work of Francis Haskell, whose work on Charles I’s picture collection revealed the potential for studying such patterns<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> DENMARK HOUSE WARDROBE 1627, the goods being «Surveid, Viewed and the Remains thereof Taken in the months of November; and December [1627]», fol. 1r.

<sup>2</sup> MONTIAS 1999 and MONTIAS 2003. Further unpublished material collated by Montias is available in the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie in The Hague. Another key resource is the collection of data compiled by Hofstede de Groot and later art historians also housed in the RKD, the «Fichescollection Hofstede de Groot». For early art auctions and their catalogues in the Netherlands, Paris and London, see LUGT, 1938-1964.

<sup>3</sup> DE PAUW DE VEEN 1969 was an important precursor to Montias.

<sup>4</sup> 1989 and 2013.

Remarkably, a large number of Stuart inventories survive, including records of Anne of Denmark's goods at Oatlands Palace from 1616-1618 and Denmark House in 1619; Charles I's pictures c. 1639 as compiled by his meticulous Keeper of Pictures, Abraham van der Doort; the royal family's goods that were dramatically auctioned off by the Commonwealth in 1649-1652; Charles II's pictures at Whitehall and Hampton Court c. 1666-1667; Henrietta Maria's goods at Colombes in 1669; James, Duke of York's pictures in 1674; and James II's pictures in 1685. The 1635 inventory of the Duke of Buckingham's picture collection also merits close inspection, especially as it contains artworks closely informed by (and influential to) court taste<sup>5</sup>. Some of these inventories have been transcribed and published, most notably those transcribed by Oliver Millar of Charles I's goods, while others have almost exclusively been scrutinised for provenance purposes<sup>6</sup>. The artist's name and subject of the artwork are commonly recorded, and in some cases dimensions and other details, but monetary value is conspicuously absent in these inventories, with the exception of the lists drawn up to auction the royal family's goods during the Commonwealth.

This essay will draw on my database, the *Index of Stuart Visual Culture*, which records the pictures, sculptures and tapestries in these inventories, comprising over 5,800 individual entries. While there is potential for a range of data analysis, the focus here will be on the language used to describe artworks in Stuart inventories, bringing in comparisons with contemporary Dutch records as well as with that deployed for tapestries and rich textiles. The significance of this analysis is manifold, reaching far beyond an understanding of early modern vocabulary for artworks and other material goods; the descriptions, with related information on attribution, palace and, in many instances, room displayed, reveal how artworks were encountered, perceived and valued within the complex dynamics of the Stuart court.

Inventories were regularly compiled at court, and were often commissioned to coincide with a big change, such as the beginning or end of a reign<sup>7</sup>. Major palace refurbishments also seem to have occasioned inventories to assess what might be used, needed and/or deployed elsewhere. Those entrusted with making inventories seem to have been relatively well informed about the goods they were recording, and held positions of real trust in the royal household. They were not notaries brought in from outside but court officials valued for their knowledge of the contents of a particular palace or general knowledge of artworks and household goods. As such, Stuart inventories were compiled by Keepers of the Wardrobe, Keepers of Pictures, Under-Housekeepers, court artists and selected court officials<sup>8</sup>. It was not unusual, though, for an inventory to not be signed or attributed to a particular compiler, but often related records or the handwriting can help identify the writer. The correspondence in phrasing for goods across inventories demonstrates that documents were typically composed

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<sup>5</sup> Bodleian Library, Oxford: MS Rawlinson A341, fols. 30r-41r. The inventory of pictures was first transcribed by DAVIES 1907 and more recently transcribed in full by JERVIS 1997. I have also consulted the 1655 Arundel inventory for comparison with the Stuart inventories, but these works are not part of my database. For the Arundel inventory, see HERVEY 1921.

<sup>6</sup> DENMARK HOUSE INVENTORY 1619/PAYNE 2001; DENMARK HOUSE WARDROBE 1627; VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960; THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972; CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922; HENRIETTA MARIA'S INVENTORY 1669; JAMES, DUKE OF YORK'S PICTURES 1674; JAMES II'S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758.

<sup>7</sup> Compare these incentives for compiling inventories with those described by MONTIAS 2003 for Dutch citizens, pp. 218-219.

<sup>8</sup> This again merits comparison with the notaries and scribes who recorded artworks in seventeenth-century Dutch sale catalogues and inventories. See MONTIAS 2003, pp. 218-219. Painters were occasionally named as witnesses (*getuigen*) or were otherwise involved in an inventory. Under-Housekeepers was the official title for the relatively high ranking servant who looked after and managed a particular residence; it did not denote a cleaner.

with the in-hand assistance of previous inventories<sup>9</sup>. With annotations a common feature, these were not just records to file but very much documents to be actively used by others who also enjoyed a position within the royal household and some domain over household goods.

Just as hierarchies of rank were omnipresent at court – dictating clothing worn, spaces occupied, access granted – so too, were gradings of objects according to material value. Inventories were generally organised by room or by object type. Some inventories comprise solely pictures and others document a broad range of goods, in which case tapestries and rich textiles trumped pictures. In the instances in which inventories are organised by room rather than object, the same rationale applied: tapestries were listed first, followed by textiles, furniture, then pictures<sup>10</sup>. In pictures-only inventories, the organisation seems to have been dictated by walking through a palace or room from one side to the other in what was deemed a logical manner<sup>11</sup>. Some goods seem to have been closely linked to a particular palace and rarely moved to other palaces, while others were subject to regular movement; equally some spaces were regularly re-hung and renovated, such as the Long Gallery at Whitehall and bedchambers.

The entries for artworks are largely formulaic. The standard description for an inventoried picture in the Stuart period is: «A picture of [the subject]». ‘Piece’ (or ‘peece’) is also often used to denote an artwork and seems to have been largely synonymous with ‘picture’. ‘Painting’ is very occasionally used in the earlier inventories but only becomes common in James II’s inventory<sup>12</sup>. A sculpture is consistently labelled ‘a statue’. And a miniature is usually designated ‘a limning’. Similarly, in the inventories for the House of Orange at the contemporary court in The Hague, pictures were customarily called the Dutch equivalents – ‘schilderije’ or ‘schilederie’ – and less often, ‘stuks’, the latter analogous to English ‘pieces’. In both the Dutch and Stuart inventories, sometimes a picture is listed as «A picture of [a subject from the Bible, mythology or history]» and in other cases the entry begins with the subject type: ‘a landscape’, or ‘a Christ’<sup>13</sup>.

Terms for a range of pictorial subjects are also quite prescriptive in Stuart inventories. The word ‘portrait’ or, as the Dutch termed it, ‘conterfeytsel’ or, from around 1640, ‘portret’, is not used found in any Stuart inventories in my database. The Dutch Stadhouder Frederik Hendrik’s 1632 inventory includes several ‘counterfeytsels’, but most artworks with named subjects were given the more generic label of paintings, ‘schilederijen’.

In the Stuart inventories, the portrayal of a named subject is often listed only by name, «Mary Queene of Scotland done by Mytens», as if by contrast to the Dutch sources, these

<sup>9</sup> Compare for example, two entries for the same picture, *An Old Woman Sleeping in a Chair*, done in the style of Gerrit Dou (Royal Collection 403002), the first from *CHARLES II’S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922*, and the second from *JAMES II’S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758*: «Dow, An old woman asleep with a book in her lap» (p. 20, no. 337), and «Dow, A woman a sleepe wth a booke in her lap & a spinning wheele by her, & an old man a sleepe upon a bed by her» (p. 46, no. 531).

<sup>10</sup> See for example *DENMARK HOUSE INVENTORY 1619/PAYNE 2001*.

<sup>11</sup> Van der Doort’s entries for the Long or Matted Gallery at Whitehall are so detailed to evidence that he was working from the left side down and then around.

<sup>12</sup> See the interesting entry in *VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960* for, «Item a peece of painting of a Cabbonett wherein all sorts of painting are painted as if some pictures were hanging at the wall as also of severall sorts, of drawings soe well in redd as in black Chalke Boxes wth books and manie other things painted [...]», p. 65, no. 17. See also «Item there hangs at the roof of the seeling above the Table don in oyle Cullors the moddle or first paterne of the paintinge wch is in the Banqueting house Roofe wch was sent by Sr Peter Paule Rubin to yor Maty to know yor Mats approving thereof painted», p. 91, no. 77. The only reference to ‘painting’ in the is found in *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, the entry for Orazio Gentileschi’s allegorical ceiling paintings at Greenwich: «Nyne peeeces of curious painting in the cealing», valued at 600 pounds, p. 17, no. 3.

<sup>13</sup> In some instances the subject eludes the scribe, as in *VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960*, p. 64, no. 10: «a peece of painting done by Torrentius whereof the invention and meaning is unknowne».

works circumvent the act of representation: here is the person herself/himself present<sup>14</sup>. In other cases, though, such works are described as a 'picture' – «A man and his wifes Picture» and similarly self-portraits of artists are pictures of the artist by that artist: «litle picture of Holbin himself»<sup>15</sup>. Another common term for a portrait is a 'head', as in, «A head of Sir Thomas More» or «Titian's head done by himself, in a black cap»<sup>16</sup>. Intriguingly, a 'head' is not synonymous with a bust-length portrait, i.e. one without arms, since such heads are often said to include arms. A 'head' might be named or unnamed, of a biblical subject or portrait sitter, even 'Italian' or 'Dutch', 'bald' or «dressed with flowers».

The level of detail provided for portraits varies from the simple naming of the subject to information about size ('to the waist', 'at length', 'soe bigg as the life', 'to the feet'); orientation ('full forward face', 'side faced', 'almost a side face'); age ('child', 'youth', 'old', 'auncient'); hair style and colour ('short', 'behind his ears', 'somewhat hanging downe', 'hanging about', 'curled', 'yellow', 'black'); clothing and head dressings ('in armour', 'in a laced ruff', 'in a blue doublet', 'black habit', 'hunting habit', 'nun's habit', 'morning' [mourning]); jewellery ('in her ear', 'at her breast', 'in his cap'); collar ('ruff', 'laced ruff', 'downfalling ruff', 'great ruff', 'ruff band', 'ruff richlie adorned', 'boned lac'd falling band', 'plaine band', 'without a ruff'); what is held in the hands ('his gloves', 'a handkerchief', 'a letter', 'a book', 'a fan', 'a ring', 'hands together'); even the colour of facial hair ('grey beard', 'red beard'). Van der Doort was especially meticulous in noting these details for his portrait sitters, and such specifics can be found in the other inventories to a lesser extent, with the portrait subjects in the Commonwealth sale inventories being the most sparsely described.

Being able to distinguish one portrait from another was especially important in describing unknown sitters, so often the detail congregates in such portraits. There was little chance of mistaking the picture in Charles II's inventory of a «A fat man with a double chin and a bawld head» or Van der Doort's painstakingly elaborated

Item don upon the right light upon a round blew grounded Card painted a Lady as yett unknowne in a black dressing and habbitt holding both her hands one over another in a plaine unlaced Band with a Jewell at her breast set in a white tourn'd Ivory box<sup>17</sup>.

Clothing or one's 'habit' was apparently an instant identifier, and efforts to describe the style of dress include 'citizens habit' (for a Dutch subject), 'shepherdess's habit' and, perhaps describing portraits in masque attire – «outlandish dress» and «phantastick habit»<sup>18</sup>. 'Dress' was generally not used to describe clothing but for textiles worn in the hair, 'dressed' hair or 'dressing'. References to old-fashioned 'habit' include «an ould Dutch woeman her head dressed after the old fashion with linin in a black habbit» as well as descriptions of 'antick habit', 'Roman habit' or even «habit of Hercules (or other ancient god or goddess)»<sup>19</sup>. If clothing thus seems to have been a key signifier in identifications, facial features were rarely considered noteworthy; references to eye colour, scars, or size of nose are totally absent. The

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<sup>14</sup> *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651*/MILLAR 1972, p. 69, no. 15.

<sup>15</sup> *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651*/MILLAR 1972, p. 262, no. 102; *DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S INVENTORY 1635*/DAVIS 1907, no. 294.

<sup>16</sup> *JAMES II'S INVENTORY*/BATHOE 1758, p. 51, no. 589 and p. 12, no. 131.

<sup>17</sup> *CHARLES II'S INVENTORY*/MILLAR 1922, p. 12, no. 192; *VAN DER DOORT*/MILLAR 1960, p. 119, no. 63.

<sup>18</sup> *VAN DER DOORT*/MILLAR 1960, p. 11, no. 15; *CHARLES II'S INVENTORY*/MILLAR 1922, p. 85, no. 161; *JAMES II'S INVENTORY*/BATHOE 1758, p. 76, no. 878; *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651*/MILLAR 1972, p. 68, n. 131. See also the lone portrait that is explicitly listed as depicting the sitter in 'masking habitt', *VAN DER DOORT*/MILLAR 1960, p. 197, no. 17.

<sup>19</sup> *VAN DER DOORT*/MILLAR 1960, p. 50, no. 48; *CHARLES II'S INVENTORY*/MILLAR 1922, p. 1, no. 4; *VAN DER DOORT*/MILLAR 1960, p. 169, no. 30; *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651*/MILLAR 1972, p. 143, no. 90.

‘double chin’ remark in the example cited above is highly unusual<sup>20</sup>. Other interesting exceptions include the portraits of «An Italian Lady a full face & posture» and the «Black Complexioned venician gentlemans head»<sup>21</sup>.

‘Dutch’ and ‘Italian’ are the most frequently cited national identifiers for portrait sitters, including an unnamed ‘Dutch prince’<sup>22</sup>. Knowledge of national styles of dress must have been convenient for adducing the subject’s nationality, but presumably the artist’s style was a factor too in identifying a work as ‘French’, ‘Italian’, ‘Spanish’ or ‘Dutch’. None of these works, for example, were attributed to a particular artist: «A Grandee of Spain in gilded armour Trunck breeches and white bootes»; «An Italian Lady. In a greate Ruffe and embrodered cloathes» and «Two Spanish Children wth a dog by them»<sup>23</sup>. The artist’s nationality need not however match that of the subject, with works such as «a portrait of a Dutch lady with a great roff» attributed to an Italian painter<sup>24</sup>. Incidentally, ‘Dutch’ seems to have referred to any Netherlandish sitter, with this example possibly referring to a sitter from the Southern Netherlands. Moreover, we find a portrait by Rubens of «Vandyke in a dutch habit»<sup>25</sup>. Similarly, pictures by Pieter Brueghel are said to be peopled with ‘Dutch’ peasants<sup>26</sup>. The dearth of references to civic identity is thus notable.

Other designations for subject types are also generic, such as ‘lanskip’ or ‘landscape’, ‘sea piece’, ‘flowerpott’ or ‘flower piece’, standardised in a manner comparable to contemporary Dutch inventories and sale catalogues. A portrait or history painting might also contain a ‘lanskip’ within it, such as Van Dyck’s ‘Great Piece’ or the «Landscept peece where Cupid & death hath mistooke there bowes, where the ould folks are shott wth arrowes falling in love & the yong folks are shott wth death»<sup>27</sup>. A landscape need not be a naturalistic depiction but could be allegorical, as in the «Landshape wth Death Heaven and Hell in itt»<sup>28</sup>. Thus the elasticity and co-existence of types or pictorial genres is of particular interest with landscapes. Even a picture that depicted no land at all might be deemed as such: «Sea landshape done by [Joos de] Momper», listed in the Commonwealth sale inventories<sup>29</sup>. These points are consistent with what we find in Frederik Hendrik’s 1632 inventory<sup>30</sup>.

Normally, landscapes were not seen to merit much detail beyond whether they were ‘great’ (large) or ‘small’, though occasionally some are said to contain ‘ruins’, and rarely seen to warrant detailed descriptions such as:

Item besides the said peece, another aforesaid fellow Lanskip peece where the Countrey People are a dauncing contyening some 35 little figures alsoe in a black ebbone frame painted upon the right lighte<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> The same portrait is described in *JAMES II'S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758* as «A fat man’s head bald, with a double chin», p. 4, no. 39. For the only other reference to the size of a chin, see another entry in *JAMES II'S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758*, a portrait of a man with a ‘long chin’; p. 49, no. 571.

<sup>21</sup> This is even more curious because it appears in the usually laconic *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, p. 315, no. 272; *VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960*, p. 12, no. 22.

<sup>22</sup> *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, p. 316, no. 278.

<sup>23</sup> *CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922*, p. 13, no. 214, *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, p. 316, no. 278; *CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922*, p. 26, no. 485. See also «An Italian lady with a Heron», in the *DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S INVENTORY 1635/DAVIS 1907*, no. 203.

<sup>24</sup> *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, p. 303, no. 81.

<sup>25</sup> *CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922*, p. 17, no. 273.

<sup>26</sup> See for example, *CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922*, p. 17, no. 284, more examples cited below.

<sup>27</sup> *VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960*, p. 42, no. 1 and p. 188, no. 31.

<sup>28</sup> *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, p. 418, no. 29.

<sup>29</sup> *Ivi*, p. 276, no. 16.

<sup>30</sup> See for example, «Een landschap met water vol visschen, Savory, ende de beeldekens door Poelenburch» and «Een landschap vol schooner vrucht met de historij van Ceres», p. 192, nos. 241 and 238.

<sup>31</sup> *VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960*, p. 77, no. 8.

Arguably even this picture could make identification challenging, and presumably involve carefully counting the thirty-five figures.

Other standardised vocabulary is used to denote works that might also be classified today as landscapes but which were instead given independent categories in the Stuart sources; ‘winter piece’ (works by Rubens and Brueghel) or ‘harvest’ (works by Bassano and Brueghel) are comparable to the Dutch ‘winter’ and ‘oogst’. ‘Kitchen’ was also used as a classification of picture, represented in works by Joachim Buekelaer and Brueghel, and ‘fish market’ was deemed suitable for works by Bassano and Buekelaer, terms that also had their Dutch equivalents<sup>32</sup>. The variety of specialised landscape terms – such as beach, mountain, wilderness, dunes, fishing and woods – which Montias found in Dutch records, though, is not reflected in the Stuart sources<sup>33</sup>.

While Montias has shown that the term ‘stil leven’ appears with some frequency in Dutch inventories, it is non-existent in the Stuart sources until James II’s inventory of 1685. Here we find three ‘pieces’ of ‘still life’ by Caravaggio, van Aelst and Jan de Heem. The same De Heem picture is described in Charles II’s inventory as «De-heme, A Cup of Pearle shell on a Table», but in James II’s inventory it became «A piece of still life, a mother of pearl cup in it by De Heem»<sup>34</sup>. Thus in the earlier sources artworks that currently would likely be termed ‘still lifes’, such as «A peece of birds fruite & fishes», «A Peece of plate Oysters grapes & a lemon» and «A Dutch picture of bread Cheese and Bacon», are instead described in terms of the specific creatures and goods depicted rather than in terms of a standardised type<sup>35</sup>. Notably a few of these works are presented self-evidently as Dutch, even if there is no attribution<sup>36</sup>.

But equally a fruit ‘piece’ might be styled as Italian, for example «An Italian Fruite peece wth Figgs and Meddlars in itt» and «Grapes, Apples, Pomegranates & c. An Italian piece»<sup>37</sup>. Spanish still-lives could also be recognised along such nationalistic lines in the case of Juan Labradore, «Spanish. Grapes. done Levorador»<sup>38</sup>. Labradore’s pictures are also described in a comparable manner to the Dutch still-lives discussed above, being designated «pieces of fruit»<sup>39</sup>. The few ‘banquets’ recorded in the Stuart sources are sometimes called ‘Dutch’ or ‘Holland’ and comparable with the generic Dutch term ‘banquet’, such as «A Dutch banquet wth Apples, & holland Chese & c.»<sup>40</sup>. Other more abstract nouns for still lifes in Dutch sources, such as *vanitas* or *memento mori*, are also lacking in the Stuart inventories, although images of a saint with a ‘deaths head’ are sometimes listed.

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<sup>32</sup> See also *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, p. 186, no. 9: «An Italian Bocher. selling meate ad».

<sup>33</sup> See MONTIAS 2003, p. 222.

<sup>34</sup> *CHARLES II’S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922*, p. 27, no. 630; *JAMES II’S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758*, p. 8, no. 88. The other pieces of ‘still life’ in the *JAMES II’S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758* are: «a piece of still life being a wine flask with lemons and bread», p. 43, no. 491, and «A large piece of still life, being fowls», p. 44, no. 508. The former is possibly to be identified with one of two pictures listed in *CHARLES II’S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922*: «An Italian peece, A Bottle, dish of Lemons, with Bread & c.», p. 12, no. 198 or p. 49, no. 605, «A Bottle, a dish of lemons, with bread, and other things. An Italian Peece. Painting».

<sup>35</sup> *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, p. 194, no. 142; *Ivi*, p. 64, no. 75; and *DENMARK HOUSE INVENTORY 1619/PAYNE 2001*, p. 38, no. 9.

<sup>36</sup> See also «A picture of a Dutch Citchin» and «A picture of a Dutch Citchin wth a hare», *DENMARK HOUSE INVENTORY 1619/PAYNE 2001*, p. 38, nos. 7 and 10.

<sup>37</sup> *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, p. 416, no. 8 and *CHARLES II’S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922*, p. 80, no. 86. The former can tentatively be identified with a picture listed in *VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960*, p. 187, no. 18. The latter is probably the same picture listed in *JAMES II’S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758* as: «An Italian piece of fruit, with grapes and flowers», p. 81, no. 947.

<sup>38</sup> *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, p. 63, no. 53.

<sup>39</sup> *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, p. 263, no. 115 and p. 311, no. 202; *JAMES II’S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758*, p. 90, no. 1073.

<sup>40</sup> *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, p. 315, no. 261. On terms used for Dutch still-life pictures, see MONTIAS 2003, pp. 225-227.

'Perspective' is a category found in both Stuart and Dutch inventories, accounting for 63 entries for pictures at the Stuart courts. The term could encompass a variety of subjects, with the description often accompanied by a reference to a place, such as a 'temple', 'church', 'prison' (St. Peter was a common choice for such perspectives), Christ in the House of Martha and Mary (another biblical subject apparently deemed suitable for a perspective) or a portrait sitter (Charles I and Henrietta Maria being the subjects of several). Given that complex spatial organisation is a feature of such pictures, the architectural setting was central to identifying it, and indeed to mastery of this type, as seen in Hans Vredeman de Vries's 'perspective' (Royal Collection 405475), which hung in Somerset House in 1619 and Whitehall Palace in the mid-1660s<sup>41</sup>.

Genre-subjects, such as the popular pictures of ladies and gentleman in interiors termed 'geselschap stuck' (company piece) and the 'boerengeselschap' (peasant company) in the Dutch Republic seem to correspond to the English types: 'Dutch parlor' and 'Boors merry-making' or 'Boors at their past-time'. Around five pictures could be identified as comparable to the high-class merry company scenes that proliferated in the Dutch Republic, and these are customarily described along the lines of 'A Dutch parlor & some Dutch figures'<sup>42</sup>. The identification of these subjects with a Dutch setting and Dutch people is notable. There are also a number of peasant scenes of 'boors' in Stuart inventories that are Dutch in both designation and attribution. Dutch sources similarly use 'boer' to denote such works and adhere to specific pictorial types: 'boerendans' (peasant dance) and 'boerengeselschap' (peasant company). Stuart inventories include images described along comparable lines: «Brugle, Dutch Boores making a pastime»; «A painting in black and white of boors dancing»; «A merry-making with Dutch boors» and «A Dutch Kermisse»<sup>43</sup>.

Surprisingly, 'history' as a category of painting is very rarely deployed in Stuart inventories<sup>44</sup>. Instead 'history' seems to have been reserved for the more expensive, perhaps deemed more inherently noble, medium of tapestry<sup>45</sup>. By contrast, with a different inflection, pictures provide 'stories', but the term 'story', too, is relatively sporadic in inventories; instead, as with the removal of the layer of representation with portraiture, the pictures *are* stories; they are not seen to represent them: «The Birth of Christ» or «Andromeda and Perseus»<sup>46</sup>. Biblical histories in particular are not presented specifically as 'stories', and it is possible that this related to the function of religious works to serve in personal devotional practice<sup>47</sup>.

The comparisons with Frederik Hendrik's 1632 inventory are again revealing: in this case, too, 'historie' is used almost exclusively to refer to tapestry subjects – although there are

<sup>41</sup> DENMARK HOUSE INVENTORY 1619/PAYNE 2001, p. 37, no. 2, and CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922, p. 7, no. 92.

<sup>42</sup> THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972, p. 276, no. 10; and similarly: «A Dutch Parlor» and «A Dutch Parlor a little figure dancing in it», recorded in the *Ivi*, p. 306, nos. 122 and 123. See also VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960, p. 177, no. 38; the associated banquet scene could perhaps also be interpreted as a «merry company».

<sup>43</sup> CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922, p. 17, no. 284; JAMES II'S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758, p.13, n. 140 (Stool Room); *Ivi*, p. 13, no. 149, (Stool Room); CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922, p. 17, n. 279.

<sup>44</sup> The history pictures in JAMES II'S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758 include entries for a Roman history, a depiction of Antony, four unnamed history pieces and, p. 28, «The history of King Charles the Second's taking shipping at Scheveling in Holland».

<sup>45</sup> The only artwork that I have found described as a 'history' in Stuart inventories is in CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922, p. 27, no. 496: «Il Capasino, Curtius Romanus his history in a round seeleing piece. Wrights Lottery».

<sup>46</sup> JAMES II'S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758, p. 64, no. 718, and DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S INVENTORY 1635/DAVIS 1907, no. 24. There is a very interesting exception in DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S INVENTORY 1635/DAVIS 1907 inventory of a picture attributed to 'Gentilesco' [Orazio Gentileschi], «A Fiction of Divers Women and a Satyr».

<sup>47</sup> The only 'story' of a biblical nature listed in the Stuart inventories is in CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922, p. 27, no. 510: «Luke Van la due, The Story of St. Sebastian».

a few exceptions, including an unnamed 'historie' by Van Dyck<sup>48</sup>. But in line with earlier observations about Dutch sources and their acknowledgement of artworks as representations, the history paintings in The Hague were unambiguously presented as paintings in most cases, such as «Een schilderije daerinne Symeon» [a painting with Simeon therein] or «Een schilderije sijnde een crucifix» [A painting being a crucifix]<sup>49</sup>. Most forcefully, there is «Een schilederie representerende een Magdalena» [A painting representing a Magdalen]<sup>50</sup>.

Although the artist's name has traditionally been foregrounded in descriptions of artworks, this was not consistently the case with early modern inventories. Notably, the earlier Stuart inventories recorded for Oatlands and Denmark House avoid identifications of the artist<sup>51</sup>. The Duke of Buckingham's 1635 inventory includes a range of attributions (over two-thirds of the pictures are attributed) and, for the royal Stuart inventories, there is a marked change c. 1639 with the inventory of pictures compiled by Van der Doort<sup>52</sup>. Prioritising attribution, Van der Doort's descriptions expand to «A picture of [subject] done by [artist]» (the usual configuration for portraits) or, more simply, for most religious, mythological and other history paintings, 'a Christ' (or 'a Mercury' or 'a King David') done by [artist's name]'. Van der Doort draws added attention to the artist's name through marginal notations: 'done by [artist's name]'. Frederik Hendrik's 1632 inventory and Dutch inventories tend to regularly provide attributions, and perhaps it is worth asking if the Dutch-born Van der Doort knew of Dutch conventions for describing artworks, if not standard Dutch terms for artworks such as 'Boor'.

In contrast to Van der Doort's artist-centric descriptions, Commonwealth sale entries position the subject first, followed by the artist. This is consistent with Frederik Hendrik's inventory, too. As with Van der Doort, a striking preponderance of these artworks were 'done' by an artist. 'Done' is similarly used in later Stuart inventories. The verb 'to paint' appears with some frequency in Van der Doort, although almost always it is used to further clarify that a picture was «painted on the right light» or «painted on the wrong light», referring to whether a picture was lit from the left (right light) or right side (wrong light)<sup>53</sup>. Thus, artworks are rarely described as 'painted by' an artist; instead, the idea was that the artist 'did' pictures. Again, there are analogies to contemporary Dutch inventories, where pictures are customarily presented as 'gedaen van' (done by) or 'gemaect van' (made by)<sup>54</sup>. But as we have already seen, the Dutch sources are much more insistent on historical pictures as representations. While we still find images of 'Een Cupido' and the like, it is far more common to see 'Een schilderije van' [a painting of] prefacing the subject; instead of the 'Mary and Christ Child' of Stuart inventories, the Dutch inventories list 'Een schilderije daer Maria sit met een kindeken op den schoot' or 'Een Marijbeelt' [an image of Mary]<sup>55</sup>.

In most cases after the Restoration it is common to find the artist again centralised. In both Charles II and James II's inventories, the artist's name precedes the subject. In a fascinating change, the active verb 'done' is only rarely deployed after the Restoration, and the

<sup>48</sup> DROSSAERS – LUNSINGH SCHEURLEER 1974, p. 274. See also p. 192, no. 239, and p. 203, no. 516.

<sup>49</sup> DROSSAERS – LUNSINGH SCHEURLEER 1974, p. 186, nos. 111 and 108. There are a few exceptions, including «Een geboorte Christy [...]», no. 110.

<sup>50</sup> DROSSAERS – LUNSINGH SCHEURLEER 1974, p. 210, no. 695.

<sup>51</sup> This is typical of the period; see also Philip 1848.

<sup>52</sup> The 1635 inventory consists of entries that have the artist's name first, followed by the subject, for example, no. 121, «Titian. – An Ecce Homo».

<sup>53</sup> A notable exception is «Item a Prospective peece painted by Hookgest and the Queenes Picture therein at length don by Cornelius Johnson [...]», VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960, p. 58, no. 9.

<sup>54</sup> In Rubens's 1640 inventory, there is a portrait of Tintoretto «gemaect door syn hand» [made by his hand]; DUVERGER 1989, p. 293; in the 1632 inventory of the Stadhouder, p. 183, no. 61: «Een schilderije daer Maria sit met een kindeken op den schoot, door Van Balen gedaen».

<sup>55</sup> Such as «Een schilderij daerinn eenden Cupido [...]»; p. 183, no. 49. For the other two references cited here: p. 183, no. 61, and p. 185, no. 90.

same alteration can be found in Dutch inventories and indeed sale catalogues as well. 'Done' is replaced by a simple 'by' or the Dutch 'van'. This change in terminology may be indicative of the reduced stress on the craftmanly nature of painting.

Attribution of artworks is normally presented as self-evident when a work is clearly identified as 'done by' an artist. A few are distinguished by being 'moderne', and as such done by contemporary, seventeenth-century artists. At the opposite end are old artworks described as 'antique' in age or style, this referring almost exclusively to ancient Rome<sup>56</sup>. But over half the artworks in the *Index of Stuart Visual Culture* are not attributed. Many are said to have been made 'after' or be 'copies after' another artist; others are after an artist's 'manner' or 'way'. Titian was the artist most copied, with Raphael, Correggio, Holbein and Van Dyck also popular sources for copyists<sup>57</sup>. An inventory might more tentatively add that a picture is 'said to be done' or 'thought to be' by a particular artist, or 'out of the School' or even 'an Immetator' of an artist<sup>58</sup>. And as previously mentioned, the artist's country of origin is even occasionally offered as a point of identification, with references to pictures that are by 'an Italian hand', 'Venetian hand', 'a Frenchman', 'a Spaniard', or, pointedly, 'an old Italian master'.

With different compilers, rulers and motivations for making inventories, naturally there are other differences amongst the Stuart inventories. Information on frames, for example, is divergent. The early inventories of Oatlands and Denmark House describe curtains for pictures but not frames, and frames are not a feature of the descriptions in Buckingham's 1635 inventory. Curtains seem to have been largely removed (or not accounted for) in Van der Doort, who however does regularly specify the frame type ('speckled wood', 'carved and gilded', 'streyning', 'black'). Information on frames is listed in all of the later inventories, though not in the case of all pictures. Unusually, James, Duke of York's 1674 inventory includes notes on the frames (or lack thereof) for all of the 52 pictures listed. While certainly a number of artworks had frames that were not recorded, the descriptions show that artworks were hung alongside other works with different styles of frame, and indeed pictures without frames were displayed and not necessarily consigned to storage.

Other differences in the nature and range of information supplied about artworks, including vocabulary for assessing quality, are also discernible across the Stuart inventories. Van der Doort, a painter himself and connoisseur who carefully reflected on authorship and meticulously noted the direction of lighting in pictures, provides a level of refinement and detail that is absent in the Commonwealth inventories. The 1635 inventory of Buckingham's goods also reveals a sophisticated knowledge of the collection, and key issues of authorship and quality. Perhaps at odds with their interest in raising money to pay off the king's debts, the Commonwealth descriptions are more perfunctory, with little relish in the artworks themselves – even as sources of potential profit.

<sup>56</sup> Such as a picture in *HENRIETTA MARIA'S INVENTORY* 1669, «An other Nostre Dame with a Jesus in her Armes of a moderne hand» (the Fontebuoni picture now in the Royal Collection), fol. 210v, or the statue listed in the *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972* of a «Moderne Lucretia», p. 138, no. 21. 'Antique' is used for some statues, including several in *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972* such as «A head antique. ye Buske Moderne», p. 144, no. 104, and can also refer to a style of dress, «The Prince of Orange in an Antique habit», *HENRIETTA MARIA'S INVENTORY* 1669, fol. 212v. See also MONTIAS 2003 on the Dutch use of 'modern' in Dutch inventories and sources, pp. 232-233.

<sup>57</sup> Other artists whose works were copied include Brueghel, Bassano, Andrea del Sarto, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Veronese, Lucas van Leyden, Miereveldt, Durer and Gentileschi.

<sup>58</sup> The latter example relates to a painting recorded by *VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960* (and echoed in the *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972* as «the 3. disciples Coming from fishing said to be don by one at Room who is an - Immetator of Caravagio», p. 181, no. 12; *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972*, p. 315, no. 263: «thre Fisher men. done by Mich. Angelo Cororagio said to be don by one at Room who is an - Immetator of Caravagio».

It cannot be claimed that the trustees of the Commonwealth sale inventories lacked a suitable expert on art. Jan van Belkamp, the painter and successor of Van der Doort as the Keeper of the King's Pictures, was a trustee of the sale and as such must have overseen the cataloguing of pictures<sup>59</sup>. The entries show a conversance with artworks that are 'copies', but there is much less interest in the condition of artworks or overall quality. Perhaps the limited descriptions were a result of time constraints or even possibly to be attributed to parliamentary aesthetics. It is also possible that pictures-only inventories can be associated with greater detail and sophistication regarding quality than much broader inventories of goods like the Commonwealth sale.

Royal inventories compiled after the Restoration include more regular references to condition, attribution and quality than the Commonwealth sale inventories. This could be attributed to the fact that three of these four inventories comprise solely pictures. For example, adjectives appear with greater frequency in the inventory of Charles II's pictures of c. 1666-1667, as are gradations of attribution and assessments of quality ('slight', 'very good'). Even if the artist is unknown, his country of origin seems to have been relevant: eight pictures are described as by an 'Italian hand'. Charles II's interest in acquiring the best of Henrietta Maria's pictures at Colombes after her death in 1669 – as advised by a group of commissioners he sent to Paris – necessitated several assessments of quality and rarity in a manner that is relatively unusual in inventory descriptions of pictures; in one case an artwork is described as 'knowne by the King'<sup>60</sup>. The relatively short 1674 inventory of James, Duke of York's pictures (only 52 items) is striking in its paucity of information: no attributions to artists, few references to portrait subjects and limited descriptions with a brief subject and the frame, such as «A lady with a guylt frame»<sup>61</sup>. The 1685 inventory of James II's pictures is a much more extensive document appropriate to a newly crowned king, and continues along comparable lines to that of Charles II's c. 1666-1667 one. The similarity of phrasing in many examples strongly suggests that Charles II's inventory was used in the making of the 1685 document. What is perhaps most notable about the 1685 inventory is the already mentioned introduction of the term 'still life' as well as the adjective 'neat', a new (but only twice used) word that accords well with prevailing taste of the late seventeenth century, meaning finely painted.

Notwithstanding these differences across inventories, it is notable just how unusual it is to find vocabulary that relates to the quality of an artwork in any of the inventories. Such assessments were common in contemporary treatises on art, for example Edward Norgate's *Miniatura* and Henry Peacham's *The Art of Drawing*, where 'best', 'excellent', and 'good' all feature. Naturally such descriptions are also omnipresent in early modern biographies of artists<sup>62</sup>. In remarkable contrast, references to artworks that are 'good' or even 'very good' are scant in Stuart inventories and recorded for only five paintings (and no sculptures)—by Holbein, Palma Vecchio, Veronese, Correggio and an attributed landscape – and in the cases of the Veronese and Correggio the 'very good' refers to the quality of a *copy* rather than an original or 'principal' painting. Perhaps it was particularly important to note that a copy was of good quality when presumably the quality of an original was self-evident. Two other references to 'good' pieces describe not the artwork itself but the painter: 'some Good Germaine painter' and 'a good Italian hand'<sup>63</sup>. Not that 'good works' were necessarily put on

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<sup>59</sup> A point also made in MILLAR 1972, xv, and HASKELL 1989, p. 226.

<sup>60</sup> HENRIETTA MARIA'S INVENTORY 1669, fol. 219v.

<sup>61</sup> Bodleian Library MS Bodl 891, item nos. 24, 27, 33, 34, 36, 40, 41, 44, 48 and 50 are *all* listed as such.

<sup>62</sup> Pliny the Elder, it is worth noting, was keen to stress quality, but did not use 'good' or 'best' for artworks, and describes only a single artwork as 'excellent', an engraving by Dioscurides; *Historia Naturalis*, vol. 6, book 35, chapter 36, p. 389.

<sup>63</sup> VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960, p. 80, no. 22; JAMES II'S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758, p. 34, no. 393.

display. The only two artworks in James II's 1685 inventory that are described as 'good' were both placed in storage at Whitehall.

A handful of other adjectives can be gleaned from the inventory descriptions of pictures, including 'faire' (twice), 'fine' (five times, all in James II's 1685 inventory), 'excellent' (twice in Van der Doort) and the abovementioned 'neat' (twice in James II's 1685 inventory). Fair seems to have been a particularly high compliment, denoting not just quality but value, judging by its widespread use in inventories to describe the richest textiles. Fine too seems to have had very positive associations, again embodying both quality and value. Frederik Hendrik's inventory is also limited in its praise of pictures; a lone painting (an unattributed Madonna) is deemed 'seer fray' [very beautiful]: «Een Marijbeelt, seer fray gedaen, hebbende haer kindeken op den schoot»<sup>64</sup>. Another unattributed painting of 'paradijs' [Paradise] is unusually bestowed with the compliment of being 'seer curieuselijck gedaen' [very curiously done]<sup>65</sup>. Again as with copies, perhaps the inference is that noting quality for an unattributed work was useful when authorship was uncertain.

Neat or 'net' would become a popular compliment for pictures in the second of the seventeenth century in the Dutch Republic, a convenient qualifier of both moral cleanliness and exacting brushwork that is characteristic of Gerrit Dou and the Leiden school<sup>66</sup>. The choice of 'neat' in James II's 1685 inventory is interesting, being associated with the Dutch painter Allart van Everdingen's (1621-1675) *Rocky Landscape with River*, 1657.<sup>67</sup> While it was in storage, another landscape, «one of the four seasons neat figures and armour», hung in the Whitehall Stool Room. 'Neat' pictures thus demanded close inspection, perhaps like the 'night' and 'dark' pictures (six references throughout the inventories), which tended to be housed in cabinet rooms, closets and dressing rooms: «A picture of night worke of our Saviour when Herods soldiers put a reede into his hand in stile of a sceptre [...]» in Anne of Denmark's closet at Oatlands; a *St. Christopher* painted on copper that hung in Charles I's Cabinet Room; and a picture attributed to Bassano in Charles II's Closet which can likely be identified with *Animals and Figures in a Landscape* currently in the Royal Collection<sup>68</sup>.

This may explain why other pictures that would also have been seen as 'dark' or 'night pieces' were also often placed in such small rooms with restricted access, including Hendrick van Steenwyck's *Liberation of St. Peter*, displayed in the King's Cabinet Room under Charles I; a painting in the style of Gerrit Dou, *An Old Woman Sitting in a Chair*, which was kept in the King's Closet under both Charles II and James II; and the 'large night piece' by Dou, which hung in James II's Great Closet<sup>69</sup>. In fact, all of the pictures labelled as works by Dou in the inventories were situated in the King's Closet – except one which was placed in Henrietta Maria's cabinet by her bedchamber at Colombes. Evidently these were pictures that invited close looking. Works ascribed to Hendrick van Steenwyck, Rembrandt, Adam Elsheimer and other artists working in a 'dark' manner were also commonly placed in such rooms.

<sup>64</sup> DROSSAERS/LUNSINGH SCHEURLEER 1974, p. 267, no. 90. In another instance, it was not the picture itself but the fruit depicted in the painting that is described as 'schoone', p. 192, no. 238.

<sup>65</sup> DROSSAERS/LUNSINGH SCHEURLEER 1974, p. 191, no. 215.

<sup>66</sup> See SLUIJTER 1988 and HECHT 1989.

<sup>67</sup> Royal Collection 403477.

<sup>68</sup> Royal Collection 405632. For the picture in Anne of Denmark's closet, see *OATLANDS PALACE*.

East Sussex Records Office, Glynde MS 321. For the Steenwick: «Item a prospective peece of ye imprisonmt of st Peter where:3.watchmen,are,whereof one lying along,and:2:alsoe sitting a sleepe in a black frame, don upon the wrong light», *VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR* 1960, p. 84, no. 41. Similar works by Steenwyck appear in the Dressing Room at Hampton Court under both Charles II and James II: «St. Peter In Prison. A night peece», p. 76, no. 49; and a «small perspective, where St. Peter is in prison» that is recorded in the same room in *JAMES II'S INVENTORY/BATHOE* 1758, p. 78, no. 906. A Steenwick 'Night peece' also appears in *THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR* 1972 in the Greenwich closets, p. 63, no. 58. Interestingly, 'dark' pieces are always found in smaller rooms while 'night pieces' are occasionally also displayed in more public galleries.

<sup>69</sup> *JAMES II'S INVENTORY/BATHOE* 1758, p. 47, no. 546.

'Perspectives' were also regularly kept in cabinets and closets, presumably inviting scrutiny of the complex perspectival arrangement and small figures. Works by Steenwyck and Pieter Neefs can generally be found in such rooms or dressing rooms, while perspectives which featured members of the royal family tended to be more centrally positioned in galleries, such as a Cornelis Johnson and Steenwyck portrait of Charles I 'in little' that was hung in Paradise and the Houckgheest image of Charles I and Henrietta Maria dining placed in the King's Gallery at Hampton Court c. 1666-1667<sup>70</sup>. The King's Chair room was similarly deemed suitable for two perspective portraits by Jan van Belkamp of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, and a 'large' perspective might find a home in a gallery under James II<sup>71</sup>. Unusually, under Anne of Denmark there are a number of small perspectives displayed in her 'Great Gallery' at Somerset House<sup>72</sup>.

'Curious' is the most common complimentary adjective associated with artworks in Stuart inventories, being used for ten pieces, including two curiously carved frames. The early modern understanding of 'curious' artworks apparently related to the level of finish and detail, of careful workmanship, a sense of being carefully and 'cunningly wrought'<sup>73</sup>. Figures tend to be small in 'curious' pictures, with artworks by Jan van Eyck, Giovanni Grimaldi, Cornelis van Poelenburgh and Lucas van Valckenburgh fitting this description. François Clouet's portrait of King Charles IX of France was also described as 'very curious', and as a full-length figure of just 14x11 inches this was a work that merited close inspection; it was accorded a prominent position in the King's Chair Room at Whitehall under Charles I. Perhaps most noteworthy is the classification of Van Dyck's 'Great Piece' as 'being very Curiously done' in the Commonwealth sale inventories. Given the paucity of detail in many of the Commonwealth entries and the very large scale of the painting, this assessment of the picture was probably meant to underscore its quality. Because this portrait so forcefully promotes Stuart lineage and claims to kingdom, this attention may have been focused more on its value as an accomplished work by Van Dyck than the subject matter. However, it remains somewhat at odds with Commonwealth descriptions to find such a strongly monarchical portrait given special attention.

Certainly no other artworks in the Commonwealth sale inventories were presented as 'curious', and the only 'good' or 'fine' pieces thus listed were tapestries. None were labelled 'famous' or 'rare' and even references to condition are scant when compared to the numerous descriptions of 'spoiled' and 'defaced' works detailed in 1639 and c. 1666-1667. If 'great' appears commonly, it was almost certainly in the sense of the scale rather than quality; 'great' connoted almost exclusively size in inventories (both English and Dutch) of the period<sup>74</sup>. An exception seems to be found in Henrietta Maria's post-mortem inventory, where «A great Picture of the good Samaritan» by Domenico Fetti is recorded; at 23x17 inches this was a considerably smaller picture than conventional 'great' pictures for which dimensions are provided in inventories<sup>75</sup>.

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<sup>70</sup> CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922, fol. 45r, no. 70, and fol. 47v, no. 128

<sup>71</sup> For the portraits by Belkamp, see VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960, p. 68, nos. 31 and 32. For the large perspective by Steenwick, see JAMES II'S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758, p. 81, no. 936.

<sup>72</sup> See fol. 19v, no. 2; fol. 21 r, no.1 and no.5; fol. 22r, no. 5; and fol. 22v, no. 3.

<sup>73</sup> See for example Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* for a reference to 'curious workmanship', line 755; *Cymbeline* for a «most curious mantle, wrought by the hand [...]», line 3807; and *All's Well that Ends Well* for «rather curious than in haste», line 260. See also the description of «curious coats cunningly wrought», in anonymous book, *Flodan field in nine fits being an exact history of that famous memorable battle fought between English and Scots on Flodan-hill* [...], published in London in 1664 (p. 42).

<sup>74</sup> See for example Van der Doort's entry for a painting of Adam and Eve with a «greate staff wth greate hornes», VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960, p. 90, no. 76.

<sup>75</sup> HENRIETTA MARIA'S INVENTORY 1669, fol. 200v.

'Great' pictures were more often positioned in larger rooms such as galleries and halls and even bedchambers, though a few 'great' works were kept in the closet. The Duke of Buckingham's inventory includes 11 'great' pictures, which may suggest a preference for very large-scale works. Smaller works termed 'small' or 'little' were regularly hung in more compact spaces like closets and bedchamber, but there are interesting examples of small works – by celebrated artists – being displayed in galleries<sup>76</sup>. Two 'little' landscapes by Rubens ('a morning' and 'an evening') hung, for example, in the Great Chamber at York House, while a 'little' copy of the 'Labella Jucunda' (*Mona Lisa*) was displayed in the Gallery. Under Charles I, a 'little' copy of a Raphael altarpiece was positioned in the King's Chair Room; and under Charles II, two 'little' works by Giulio Romano and another 'after the manner of Raphael' enjoyed placement in galleries<sup>77</sup>.

Moreover, galleries were often a mix of large and smaller works, such as the 'Great Gallery' at Denmark House in 1619, hung with 56 pictures including several 'small' landscapes and other 'small' works alongside portraits, religious pictures and mythological paintings<sup>78</sup>. Of the 81 pictures in the Long Gallery under Charles II, the scale ranges from Van Dyck's vast 'Great Piece' to several small religious pictures by Domenico Fetti. Certainly there was an effort to impress the large audiences expected in gallery spaces with works by (or after) famed artists, whether 'great' or 'little', but 'little' works were apparently considered more suitable on the whole for smaller spaces.

Nevertheless, references to the fame of the artist or the artwork itself are largely eschewed. Van der Doort is the only source who does this, and even then to describe a watercolour by Correggio, Titian's *Venus of Pardo* and Giambologna as 'the famous sculptor'<sup>79</sup>. Similarly, given how often Norgate enthuses that something is the 'best', it is all the more peculiar that artworks are not comparably judged in inventories; a single picture seemed to merit 'best' in Stuart inventories, a work attributed to 'Titian: «The best Madonna with a Tobias in it Dutch present». But, when this was recorded c. 1666-1667, it was not proudly displayed but tucked in storage<sup>80</sup>.

Surely our own understanding of display is governed by the principle that high quality works should be showcased, while lower quality and damaged pictures should be hidden in storage. That however was not always the case at the Stuart court, as the inventories reveal. A painting by Titian might languish in storage while unattributed pictures were proudly hung in prominent locations from the Long Gallery to State apartments. Today we might conclude that the abovementioned 'Titian' was probably not a 'real Titian'. However this assumption is complicated by the many damaged, 'spoiled' and unattributed works, or even pictures deemed 'meanly' by Van der Doort or 'slight' in later inventories, that were prominently displayed at Stuart palaces.

Numerous paintings were displayed in 1639 that had been 'defaced' by 'quicksilver' en route to from Mantua to London and still others – with no proud Gonzaga provenance – were kept in 'old defaced' frames<sup>81</sup>. Only those pictures deemed 'utterlie ruined and spoyled' were relegated to storage in 1639; this distinction is telling: only such 'utterly ruined' works were deemed unfit for display, while ones that were partially ruined were nonetheless

<sup>76</sup> The works described as small or little that were listed in the 'Great Gallery' at Somerset House for the Commonwealth sale are likely to have been brought there for purposes of display for the sale rather than having originally been housed there.

<sup>77</sup> VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960, p. 63, no. 37; CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922, p. 2, no. 16, and p. 10, no. 151.

<sup>78</sup> For the small works in the Great Gallery, see p. 38, nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 11 and 15.

<sup>79</sup> VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960, p. 156, no. 1; p. 19, no. 16 and p. 11, no. 16.

<sup>80</sup> CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922, p. 46, no. 532.

<sup>81</sup> See for example the Correggio picture displayed in the Privy Gallery that was placed in an 'old defaced' frame; VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960, p. 26, no. 18.

considered suitable. At least this was the case in 1639. By c. 1666-1667, when an inventory of Charles II's pictures was compiled, ten pictures described as 'much spoiled' were nonetheless displayed, while only four similarly described pictures were put in storage. Charles II for example had a 'slight copy' of the Virgin and Child with St. Anne in the Long Gallery at Whitehall as well as a small 'slight' Landskip and a 'slight' copy of Titian's Family of the Marquis de Guasto in the King's Closet at Whitehall<sup>82</sup>. James II's 1685 inventory also includes several references to 'slight' pictures, some of which were displayed, including the same family portrait in the closet, two 'slight' landscapes in the Whitehall Presence Chamber and a 'very slight' picture of 'gods and goddesses' was hung in the 'old gallery' at Windsor<sup>83</sup>.

Copies, too, were not necessarily side-lined, as long as the original painting was considered important and/or if the subject merited display. Copies abounded on the walls of galleries and throughout the state apartments. Closets and cabinets were filled with limned copies of portraits and history paintings. The Duke of Buckingham's gallery at York House included a copy after a Bartolomeo Manfredi cupid; the Long Gallery at Whitehall under Charles II included copies after Titian's *Ecce Homo* and Raphael's *Battle of Constantine* and James II's 1685 gallery at Hampton Court was hung with copies after Veronese and Titian works<sup>84</sup>. Subject matter, especially when it came to portrait copies, was certainly a key factor that determined display, and this explains for example why Mytens was directed to make a copy after Isaac Oliver's miniature of Prince Henry. Mytens's copy was hung in the King's Bedchamber at Whitehall in the inventories of 1639, 1649 and c. 1666-1667<sup>85</sup>. Copies of portraits of other family members were also strategically displayed; dynasty governed this aspect of display, and indeed one might argue that pedigree and connection was more important than authorship of such works.

Moreover, the 'value' of a picture for display at the Stuart court was not wholly tied to the attribution or the quality. Given the sparseness of explicit value judgements provided for pictures in Stuart inventories, it is notable that such assessments are nevertheless often offered for tapestries and rich textiles. To give a sense of comparison with descriptions of textiles in the 1627 inventory of the wardrobe at Denmark House, 51 items are described as 'faire', the word being selected chiefly to describe very rich *passementerie* of silk, lace and/or precious metals as well as mantles, beds and Persian carpets<sup>86</sup>. Over twenty-five objects are labelled 'fine', including tapestries, carpets and trimmings; five different Turkish carpets are all proclaimed to be 'of ye best making'<sup>87</sup>. Clearly, it was rich textiles rather than pictures that merited such acclaim. In addition, the entries to describe furnishing textiles tend to be much longer and more detailed than those for pictures. There is every sense that quality was communicated not just in adjectives but in the length of description. Similarly, amongst the tapestries listed in all the Stuart inventories studied here, they are proportionally more often associated with adjectives denoting quality, especially 'good' (six times) and 'fine' (ten times).

Such data supports Malcolm Smuts's important 1996 article on the greater material currency of tapestries and textiles over pictures at the early modern court, a currency embodied in such qualitative adjectives<sup>88</sup>. Moreover, a systematic examination of the language of Stuart inventories helps to clarify the disparity in the value of pictures and textiles at the early modern court. This study has also shown how pictures were considered and valued in

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<sup>82</sup> CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922, p. 6, no. 79; p. 21, no. 358 and p. 23, no. 392.

<sup>83</sup> JAMES II'S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758, p. 48, p. 95 and p. 72.

<sup>84</sup> DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S INVENTORY 1635/DAVIS 1907, no. 140; CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922, p. 5, no. 61, and p. 2, no. 19; JAMES II'S INVENTORY/BATHOE 1758, p. 86, no. 1008, and p. 80, no. 930.

<sup>85</sup> VAN DER DOORT/MILLAR 1960, p. 35, no. 3; THE INVENTORIES 1649-1651/MILLAR 1972, p. 267, no. 181 and CHARLES II'S INVENTORY/MILLAR 1922, p. 15, no. 245.

<sup>86</sup> DENMARK HOUSE WARDROBE 1627.

<sup>87</sup> DENMARK HOUSE WARDROBE 1627, fol. 9r.

<sup>88</sup> 1996.

terms of the language used to describe them. The brief descriptions recorded by court officials use, for the most part, a standardised vocabulary and formulaic phrasing. Repetition of vocabulary and phrasing provided a kind of authenticity for an artwork: this is the same picture that was here the last time this inventory was taken; this is a Titian painting of the *Eve Homo*. As has been stressed here, too, recognisability was essential, and this was seen to be facilitated largely by identification of the artist and the subject, often the size and number and/or scale of figures, and in the case of portraits, by aspects of dress or national identity. Adjectives may be, on the whole, rarely deployed, but patterns can be gleaned in their usage that relate to perceptions of quality and to suitability for a particular location, such as ‘night’ or ‘dark’ pieces being placed in closets and cabinets. In the case of some seemingly vague terms such as ‘curious’, analysis of artworks deemed thus gives greater clarity about what is meant. Equally dimensions given for pictures in inventories reveals that ‘great’ referred not to quality but size. Surprisingly, condition, attribution and even quality did not always dictate what artworks were positioned on display and which ones were demoted to storage.

In addition, the analysis of changes in descriptions across a series of inventories of the same royal dynasty and across individual artworks is also revealing, including the development of new terms like ‘still life’ and adjectives such as ‘neat’, and the differing priorities of compilers. References to quality and condition were not always at the forefront, but they became more consistently applied after the Restoration. Close connections with vocabulary in contemporary Dutch inventories, too, suggests a shared language of describing artworks, but this seems to have not necessarily translated into a common notion of what these objects were at their core, and how they functioned for viewers: if for the Dutch they seem to have been, in the first instance, pictures, *representations*, at the Stuart court, the pictures *were* people, stories.

If scholars have long lamented the loss of artworks that once graced the Stuart court – whether through destruction, sale or dispersal under the Commonwealth or subsequently – and expressed frustration at the difficulty of identifying so many pictures described so briefly in inventories, the study of Stuart inventories provides a new way to bring these pictures back to the court, back to life.

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## ABSTRACT

This essay examines the language used to describe artworks in Stuart inventories. This analysis is based on my *Index of Stuart Visual Culture*, a database which records the pictures, sculptures and tapestries in Stuart inventories, currently comprising over 5,800 individual entries. Comparisons are made with contemporary Dutch records as well as with Stuart descriptions of tapestries and rich textiles. The significance of this analysis is manifold, reaching far beyond an understanding of early modern vocabulary for artworks and other material goods; the descriptions, with related information on attribution, palace and, in many instances, room displayed, reveal how artworks were encountered, perceived and valued within the complex dynamics of the Stuart court.

Questo saggio analizza il linguaggio usato per descrivere le opere d'arte negli inventari degli Stuart. L'analisi si basa sull'*Index of Stuart Visual Culture* (curato da chi scrive), un database dedicato ai quadri, alle sculture e agli arazzi degli Stuart, attualmente composto da oltre 5.800 voci. I confronti lessicali sono realizzati con i coevi inventari olandesi, nonché con le descrizioni di epoca Stuart di arazzi e ricchi tessuti. Il significato di questa analisi è molteplice, andando ben al di là della comprensione di un lessico inerente opere d'arte e altri beni materiali e risalente alla prima età moderna. Le descrizioni, con le relative informazioni concernenti l'attribuzione, il palazzo e, in molti casi, persino le stanze dove erano conservate, rivelano come le opere d'arte erano percepite e valutate all'interno delle complesse dinamiche della corte Stuart.