

Summer 2006

Reviewed Work(s): The Evolution of English Collecting: The Reception of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods by Edward Chaney, ed

John E. Moore

Smith College, jmoore@smith.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.smith.edu/art_facpubs

Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Moore, John E., "Reviewed Work(s): The Evolution of English Collecting: The Reception of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods by Edward Chaney, ed" (2006). Art: Faculty Publications, Smith College, Northampton, MA.
https://scholarworks.smith.edu/art_facpubs/11

This Book Review has been accepted for inclusion in Art: Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Smith ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@smith.edu



Review

Reviewed Work(s): *The Evolution of English Collecting:*

The Reception of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods by Edward Chaney, ed

Review by: John E Moore

Source: *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (Summer 2006), pp. 610-612

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Renaissance Society of America

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1353/ren.2008.0313>

Accessed: 09-07-2018 15:52 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Renaissance Society of America, The University of Chicago Press are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Renaissance Quarterly*

Edward Chaney, ed. *The Evolution of English Collecting: The Reception of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods*.

Studies in British Art 12. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. vii + 484 pp. index. illus. \$75. ISBN: 0-300-10224-0.

Gathered here are editor Edward Chaney's introductory essay, nine expanded conference papers, and two commissioned pieces. Chaney's tour de force, comprising one-fourth of the entire volume, touches on the intellectual and material legacies of ancient Rome, the rise and fall of cities, travelers to papal Rome, artists and agents resident there, and multifarious collecting activities that stretch from the reign of Henry VIII to that of George I.

Charles Avery looks to John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough (1650–1722). With recently-uncovered documents and a corrective look at others already known, Avery traces the vicissitudes of sculpture at or intended for Blenheim Palace — a ponderous stone bust of Louis XIV transported as war booty from Tournai and still adorning the palace's roofline; a failed purchase of twelve sixteenth-century marbles; the commission of two large marbles that never made it to Blenheim; and four successfully commissioned bronze copies of famous ancient statuary in the Tribuna of the Uffizi. He establishes that a small-scale version of Bernini's *Fountain of the Four Rivers* emerged from the master's workshop shortly before his death, a new identification that hinges on long-overlooked evidence in plain sight.

In Elizabethan England, Richard L. Williams and Kathryn Barron note, paintings had their place not in churches (where, it was feared, they would occasion idolatry) but in royal and aristocratic dwellings. It is dismissively held that the English maniacally cherished portraits, yet such images had long been common in Italy, and household inventories in England securely document the erstwhile existence of narrative paintings. Williams suggests that Protestantism engendered the appreciation of art's aesthetic value rather than its ostensible mystical efficacy.

Barron focuses on the Roman Catholic John, Lord Lumley (d. 1609), whose paintings were second to none of his contemporaries. He recorded sitters' names in the backgrounds of their portraits on fictively painted "scrap[s] of paper" (130). At Nonsuch (Surrey), his country seat, the Grove of Diana evoked sixteenth-century Italian gardens, while a surviving manuscript illustrates sculpture related to Italian busts and equestrian portraits.

Susan Bracken chronicles the Italian sojourns of the Cecil family. Karen Hearn writes of Lucy Harrington, Countess of Bedford (1581–1627), who traveled less but established herself as a redoubtable force in Jacobean cultural life. She acted in and even directed masques, laid out a garden at Moor Park (Hertfordshire), and vied with Thomas Howard, fourteenth Earl of Arundel (1585–1646), to obtain Holbein portraits. A full-length seated portrait casts Lady Bedford as a melancholic intellectual, an unusual formula for female sitters. Decisively stepping into the man's world of numismatics, she also commissioned a portrait medal of herself.

From Robert Hill we learn of Sir Dudley Carleton, British ambassador to Venice. Knowing little and caring less about art, he began to explore that city's riches only during Arundel's second trip to Italy (1613–14). Having lost money by assembling antiquities and paintings for the disgraced Earl of Somerset, and afterward posted to The Hague, Carleton finally learned how to conduct himself as an art agent.

At the 1637 inaugural party of a purpose-built drawing cabinet designed by Inigo Jones at Arundel House in the Strand, George Conn, papal agent at the court of Henrietta Maria, saw three large volumes that separately held drawings of Michelangelo, Raphael, and Leonardo; thus did an English collector instantiate the canonization of those artists in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives*. Cogently accumulating discontinuous circumstantial evidence, Jane Roberts traces the Windsor Castle Leonardo drawings first to Pompeo Leoni (who died in Madrid in 1608), then to Lord Arundel, and, finally, to Charles II.

Elizabeth V. Chew investigates Aletheia Talbot (1584–1654), Lord Arundel's wealthy, recusant wife, who financed renovation at Tart Hall in 1639, a new dating that results from Chew's having straightened out the building history. In the gallery, Lady Arundel's place of retreat, hung (in emulation of fashionable contemporary Continental patterns) landscapes, mythologies, and religious subjects, with portraits reserved for relatively private areas.

Philip McEvansoneya proposes that George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham (1592–1628) and infamous favorite of James I and Charles I, well understood the need to amass sought-after objects in order to make his mark in the courtier's competitive world. The colorful Balthasar Gerbier (1592–1663) helped the duke quickly assemble a first-rate collection of works by sixteenth-century Venetian and contemporary Italian painters. By tabulating the subject-matter distribution of paintings owned by six prominent Englishmen, McEvansoneya discovers a striking congruence between Buckingham's and Arundel's collections.

Anne Brookes presents two individuals, Richard Symonds, a London bureaucrat's son and of modest means, who visited the Continent for a year and half, and Thomas Isham, an aristocrat with deep pockets who spent just short of three years abroad. Focusing on print collecting, her article compares and contrasts these men to excellent effect and draws numerous and wholly persuasive inferences about their different social circles, skills, tastes, habits of looking and thinking, and motivations. Christopher Baker concentrates on that dazzling Oxford polymath, Dr. Henry Aldrich (1648–1710). Whether he traveled to Italy is a vexed question, but Aldrich certainly mined his prints with inexhaustible profit. What Baker articulates so fruitfully here are original methods of retrieval and display that spring, happily and rarely, from a pristine state of preservation.

Although the endnotes of one article occasionally refer to those in another, this should have occurred more often, since the subjects to hand intersect so much. That said, this stimulating volume will prove a lasting feast for all interested in seventeenth-century English culture.

JOHN E. MOORE
Smith College