

DISPLAY AS IDENTITY: QUEEN CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN'S CONSTRUCTION OF A PUBLIC
IMAGE THROUGH HER *STANZA DEI QUADRI*

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INTRODUCTION

“I have escaped, even in matters spiritual, the weakness of my sex; my soul as well as my body having been rendered virile by [God’s] grace. Thou hast made use of my sex to preserve me from the vices and dissipation of the country of my birth; and, having condemned me to belong to the weaker sex, [God] hast exempted me from the frailties natural to it.”¹

Queen Christina of Sweden

Throughout her life, Queen Christina of Sweden defied expectations. She was the only child to a king and queen who needed a male heir, so Christina took on the roles of a prince in her activities, behavior, and education. She inherited a throne and grew into the role of “King,” refusing to marry and insisting on wearing men’s clothing, even in her official royal portraits (Fig. 1). After ten years of rule, Christina abdicated her throne and fled to Rome, where she renounced her Protestant faith in favor of Catholicism and was an active patron of arts and culture until her death in 1689. Despite her unsuccessful attempts to acquire another throne, Christina remained influential due to her royal status and her close ties with the Vatican. She created her own rules when it came to gender, rulership, and religion, and she was known throughout Europe as promiscuous, eccentric, and impulsive.²

Extant texts written by Christina and her contemporaries provide details about her life. Christina left letters, maxims, poems, and an autobiography, which reveal how she wished to be seen by her contemporaries and remembered after her death. She described herself as powerful and masculine, and saw these internal qualities in contrast to her “weak” external female body. Christina’s contemporaries focused on her unkempt

¹ Christina, *La Vie de la Reine Christine faite par elle-même, dédiée à Dieu*. Stockholm Riksarkiv

² For an example of one such slanderous account, see I.H., “To the Reader,” in *A Relation of the Life of Christina of Sweden*, trans. I.H. (London: T.R., 1656).

appearance and shocking behavior, so her public image became sensationalized and bizarre. Despite Christina's notorious reputation in Europe, she was known in Rome mostly as a collector and patron of the arts and sciences. Inventories and other documents that describe her Palazzo Riario in Rome reveal that she filled its rooms with her extensive collection of paintings and sculptures. She also kept a large library, science laboratory, and music room for elaborate performances. Her palace became a center for artists, scientists, philosophers, diplomats, and cardinals.

One of the most interesting rooms in the Palazzo Riario was Christina's *stanza dei quadri*, located next to the main paintings gallery on the second floor. Here Christina displayed about fifty works of art, including many works plundered from Emperor Rudolf II's collection in Prague. These included mostly Venetian Renaissance mythological or allegorical paintings, interspersed with some portraits and history paintings. The paintings lined the walls and the ceiling, and a mirror by Gianlorenzo Bernini, entitled *Truth Revealed by Time*, hung among them behind an antique bronze head (thought by Christina to be a portrait of Alexander the Great). Many of the works had been previously owned by royalty and contained imagery and messages aimed toward powerful rulers. Many also included themes of gender reversals, in which women appeared strong and assertive. Bernini's mirror was framed by the figure of Time who pulls back a curtain to reveal the viewer's reflection as Truth. Standing in front of this mirror, Christina could imagine that the mirror reflected the true identity of her masculine soul beneath the veil of her female body.

By choosing the *stanza dei quadri* in which to display her "true" reflection, Christina implied that the works there should also be understood as representative of her identity. In this room, Christina would accept visitors or spy on them from a hidden window at the top

of the ceiling. This arrangement suggests that Christina took an interest in how people viewed her collection. By spying on her guests, she could gauge whether her display was successful in representing her identity. This thesis will examine how Christina's collection and display of art in her *stanza dei quadri* played a role in her attempt to construct a public image.

Despite an abundance of scholarship on Christina's biography and art collecting, very little has been written about her art display in the Palazzo Riario. Enzo Borsellino (1988) and Mariella Piacentini (1997) have examined the history of the palace.³ In a few recent articles (2005, 2008, 2011), Lillian Zirpolo has worked on Christina's self-fashioning through art and display in the Palazzo Riario.⁴ Veronica Biermann published the only article (2001) that focuses on the works in the *stanza dei quadri*.⁵ However, as Biermann examines only the mythological works in the room, the present thesis is the first study to include a comprehensive list and analysis of the works on display in the *stanza dei quadri*.

To address Christina's goals for her display, it is first necessary to examine three complicated elements of her identity: her sex; her gender; and her sexuality. In early modern Europe, these three categories informed one another, and each had a binary construction (male/female, masculine/feminine, active/passive). Sex (a biological construction) mandated the appropriate gender (a social construction), which was

³ Enzo Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini alla Lungara: Storia di un Cantiere* (Fasano: Schena, 1988); Mariella Piacentini, "Disegni Inediti di Palazzo Riario (poi Corsini) alla Lungara," *Studi Romani* 45 (1997): 301-13.

⁴ Lilian H. Zirpolo, "Christina of Sweden's Patronage of Bernini: The Mirror of Truth Revealed by Time," *Woman's Art Journal* 26, no.1, (2005): 38-43; Lilian H. Zirpolo, "Severed Torsos and Metaphorical Transformations: Christina of Sweden's Sale delle Muse and Clytie in the Palazzo Riario-Corsini," Quoted in *Aurora/WAPACC Organization* 9 (2008): 29-53; Lilian H. Zirpolo, "The Queen's Predicament: Christina of Sweden as Virgo, Virago, and Femme Philosophe," *Aurora/WAPACC Organization* 11 (2010): 57-90.

⁵ Veronica Biermann, "The Virtue of a King and the Desire of a Woman? Mythological Representations in the Collection of Queen Christina," *Art History* 24 no. 2 (2001): 213-30.

reinforced by sexuality.⁶ The term “gender” did not exist because a person’s actions and behavior were viewed as consequences of his/her sex, not his/her individual inclinations.⁷ According to Judith Butler’s concept of gendered performance, each society constructs expectations for the genders it recognizes.⁸ The people in that society conform to a gender through their clothing, physical appearance, behavior, speech, and activities such as education and recreation.

In early modern Europe, biological males were expected to perform a masculine gender, and biological females were expected to perform a feminine gender. In fact, guidebooks such as Baldassare Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier* (1528) and Juan Luis Vives’s *The Education of a Christian Woman* (1524) instructed men and women on how to act according to their prescribed genders.⁹ Gendered expectations for women included chastity, propriety and modesty, because they were viewed as weak, prone to vice, and dependent on men.¹⁰ Expectations for men included strength, intelligence, and courage, because they needed to control the women and run the society.¹¹ These expectations also designated sexual behavior. A person with male sexual organs was expected to play the

⁶ James Saslow, “The Desiring Eye: Gender, Sexuality, and the Visual Arts,” in *A Companion to Renaissance and Baroque Art*, ed. Babette Bohn and James Saslow (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 128. See also James Saslow, *Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in the Visual Arts* (New York: Viking, 1999).

⁷ Christina often referred to her gender identity as her “soul”, as exemplified by the quote at the beginning of this introduction.

⁸ Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 519-31.

⁹ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Leonard Opdycke (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1903); Juan Luis Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual*, ed. Charles Fantazzi (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000).

¹⁰ Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, 116-17.

¹¹ Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 19-22, 41-46.

active or penetrating role in sex, which would reinforce his masculine gender. If two men engaged in homosexual acts, the passive man was viewed as weak and feminine.¹²

According to Christina, it was common for men to act as women but rare for women to act as men.¹³

Christina exemplified one such woman who acted like a man. She wore men's clothing, engaged in masculine activities such as hunting and science, and spoke with a loud voice and vulgar vocabulary.¹⁴ In these ways, Christina performed a masculine gender within the binary gender construction of her society. To assert that she had both physical and moral strength, Christina claimed that God had rendered both her soul and her body virile.¹⁵ By characterizing herself in this way, Christina adhered to the common method of description for women who occupied male-dominated positions. For example, in his *Felsina Pittrice* (1678), Carlo Cesare Malvasia characterized female artist, Elisabetta Sirani's (1638-65) style and virtue as "*virile*", or manly.¹⁶ He states that she painted well, despite her "weaker sex." Artistic creativity was understood as a male attribute, so biographers

¹² Michael Rocke, "Gender and Sexual Culture in Renaissance Italy," in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Judith C. Brown and Robert C. Davis (New York: Longman, 1998), 150.

¹³ Christina, "L'Ouvrage du Loisir," in *Christine reine de Suède: Apologies*, ed. Jean-François de Raymond (Paris: du Cerf, 1994), 232 n. 635.

¹⁴ Charles Alexander Mannerschied, S. J. "Some Passages Concerning the Person, Character, Manner of Living, and Government of Christina Queen of Sweden. Extracted and translated from a Latin letter of Father Mannerschied a Jesuit, dates Stockholm, December 10th, 1653," in *The Works of Christina of Sweden* (London, 1753), xiii-xx.

¹⁵ Christina, *La Vie de la Reine Christine faite par elle-même, dédiée à Dieu*. Stockholm Riksarkiv Azzolinosamlingen. kaps. 37:4 chapter IV, trans. in Oskar Garstein, *The Age of Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Christina of Sweden*, vol. 4 of *Rome and the Counter-Reformation in Scandinavia: 1622-1656* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1992), 547.

¹⁶ Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice vite de' pittori bolognesi* (1678; Bologna: Tipographa Guidi all' Ancora, 1841), 2:385-86; See also Fredrika H. Jacobs, "Problems of Praise and Pythagorean Contrarity," in *Defining the Renaissance Virtuosa: Women Artists and the Language of Art History and Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 8-26.

characterized female artists as masculine to explain how a woman could be a great artist. These descriptions ensured that greatness continued to be viewed as a male attribute. Rulership was also associated with the male sex, so Christina described herself as “virile” in an attempt to be viewed as capable and powerful.

Christina’s sexuality is difficult to assess, due to the contradictions between her autobiography and contemporary accounts of her sexual behavior. Christina claimed to be chaste and virginal in her autobiography to protect her reputation as an unmarried queen. However, she also wrote about her sexual desire for women. Christina’s contemporaries described her sexual desire for and interactions with both men and women. The level of factuality in these claims, which will be described in Chapter 1, is impossible to determine. For the purposes of this thesis, however, Christina’s private sex life is irrelevant. This argument will focus on how Christina publicly claimed a sexuality that reinforced her masculine gender.

In early modern Europe, women were often accused of sexual debauchery because society viewed them as lustful.¹⁷ In almost all of these cases, however, the objects of their desire were men. Christina’s society generally assumed that women could desire men, and men could desire men, but women could not sexually desire other women. Women who desired women were classified as “unnatural”.¹⁸ Judith Brown summarizes the unusual nature of women desiring women, explaining that, out of the hundreds of court cases concerning homosexuality in medieval and early modern Europe, only about ten involve

¹⁷ Judith Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford, 1986), 5.

¹⁸ Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 6-7. See also Patricia Simons, “Lesbian (In) Visibility in Renaissance Culture: Diana and Other Cases of *donna con donna*,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 27 (1994): 81-122.

sexual relations between women. This low number highlights how rarely early modern society acknowledged female homosexuality.

Christina, who dressed in men's clothing, engaged in masculine activities, and refused to marry, seemed unnatural to her contemporaries because she did not perform her prescribed feminine gender. The Roman diarist Giacinto Gigli wrote that many believed Christina to be a hermaphrodite.¹⁹ This speculation coincided with rumors about her sexual desire for women. Allegations about her homoerotic tendencies and hermaphroditism may have been attempts to explain her unusual behavior. In other words, contemporaries assumed that her masculine-gendered performance indicated the presence of male sex organs and a sexual desire for women. Christina, who wished to be viewed as masculine, did little to deny these rumors.

Christina's statements about her sexuality suggest that she wished to be associated with the dominant, active sexual role typically indicative of a masculine gender. To ensure that no one viewed her as weak, Christina refused to marry and submit herself to the passive, feminine sexual role. She stated that if God had made her a man, she would have been ruined by her lust for women.²⁰ Christina also claimed that she could never submit to being used by a man like a peasant plowing his field.²¹ From these statements, it seems that Christina wanted to appear as though she possessed all of the sexual desires and

¹⁹ Giacinto Gigli, *Diario di Roma*, ed. Manlio Barberito (1644-70; Rome: Colombo, 1994), 751.

²⁰ Christina, "La vie de la reine Christine faite par elle-même, dédiée à Dieu," in *Christine reine de Suède: Apologies*, ed. Jean-François de Raymond (Paris: du Cerf, 1994), 93.

²¹ Pierre Le Toumeur, *Histoire universelle: depuis le commencement du monde jusqu'à présent composée en anglais par une société de gens de lettres; nouvellement traduit en français par une société de gens de lettres* (Paris: Moutard, 1787), 64:268.

inclinations associated with men. Her claims probably had less to do with her sexuality and more to do with her desire to be viewed as powerful and, thus, masculine.

This thesis will consider Christina's claims about her sexuality in relation to the erotic artworks displayed in her *stanza dei quadri*. In this context, Christina was able to publically perform an active "male gaze" by sexually objectifying the passive, erotic figures. According to James Saslow, the "gaze" is the act of looking through the lenses of gender, desire, and power.²² Michelangelo Buonarroti characterized this phenomenon in the sixteenth century through his wish that he could "make [his] whole body nothing but an eye," so he could absorb his beloved's beauty.²³ The "gaze" functioned as a tool through which men could show their dominance by objectifying the passive figure. Christina displayed several depictions of sexually passive figures in her *stanza dei quadri*.²⁴ She also spoke of her desire for figures in artworks. Once, while discussing with a cardinal a statue of Truth as a nude woman, Christina said she was glad that all truths were not made of marble.²⁵ This statement implies that Christina sexually desired the nude female body and that she viewed the nude female figures in her works as objects for her erotic desire. It also implies that she has had an erotic experience with a woman in the flesh, because she claims to prefer flesh to marble. Christina's display and objectification of sexually passive women

²² Saslow, "The Desiring Eye," 127; See also Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

²³ Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Poetry of Michelangelo: An Annotated Translation*, trans. James Saslow (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), no. 166.

²⁴ Most of these passive figures were female, but at least one, a copy after Michelangelo's *Ganymede*, was male.

²⁵ Quoted in Jacques Lacombe, *Histoire de Christine, Reine de Suede* (Paris: Chez la Ve. Damoneville & Musier, 1762), 200.

allowed her to adopt the “male gaze,” which further supported her masculine gender.²⁶ While her desire for and erotic experience with women may have been fabricated, these comments exemplify Christina’s wish to be viewed as active and powerful.

This thesis will also consider Christina’s understanding of her sex and gender as manifestations of the medieval theory of the “king’s two bodies”.²⁷ This concept maintains that a ruler has a physical “body-natural” and a theoretical “body-politic”.²⁸ While the body-natural consists of the ruler’s mortal flesh, the body-politic contains his/her presence in the kingdom and eternal royal virtue. This theory assumes that God only grants the body-politic to worthy, great rulers. The body-politic was viewed as strong, dominant and virtuous which were traits typically associated with the masculine gender. For this reason, Christina claimed that women should never rule.²⁹ She also stated, however, that the soul has no sex, so men sometimes take after their mothers, and women can take after their fathers.³⁰ With this statement, Christina suggests that certain women, like her, can embody a masculine gender, which would allow them to be successful in a leadership position. This notion illustrates Christina’s understanding of her female sex as her insignificant body-natural and her masculine gender as her self-defining body-politic.

²⁶ For more information on gender, sexuality, and the gaze in early modern Europe, see Saslow, “The Desiring Eye.”

²⁷ For an analysis of Christina’s “two-bodies,” see Kari Elisabeth Børresen, “Christina’s Discourse on God and Humanity,” in *Politics and Culture in the Age of Christina: Acta from a Conference Held at the Wenner-Gren Center in Stockholm, May 4-6, 1995*, ed. Marie-Louise Rodén (Stockholm: Swedish Institute in Rome, 1997), 46.

²⁸ Edmund Plowden, *Commentaries or Reports* (1548-79; London: S. Brooke, 1816), 212a; E.H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: Studies in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 7.

²⁹ Christina, “L’Ouvrage du Loisir,” 231, n. 628.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 232, n. 634.

Christina's description of herself as masculine was necessary in order to be taken seriously as a ruler. One important precedent for a female ruler-in-her-own-right was Queen Elizabeth I of England (1533-1603). Like Christina, Elizabeth claimed to have the "body... of a weak and feeble woman" but the "heart and stomach of a king."³¹ Elizabeth, however, dressed in women's clothing and adopted virginity and chastity (the most important female virtues) as main proponents of her public identity. Christina broke with this precedent by publically performing (behaving, speaking, and dressing) as a man and claiming an attraction to the female body. She also participated in typical rulership roles that were uncommon for women, such as military strategy and plunder. Christina even commissioned portraits in which she appeared in armor to underscore her involvement in war and her strong, masculine body-politic (Fig. 2).

Chapter 1 of this thesis provides a biography of Christina's life that will inform suggestions about her identity in later chapters. This biography will draw mainly from Christina's autobiography and letters, which provide valuable information about her life and identity. Some significant elements of her biography that influenced Christina's public and self-image include her strange birth, relationship with her parents, plunder of Prague, abdication, patronage of Roman artists, and burial at St. Peter's basilica. This chapter will focus on Christina's gendered performance and her utilization of art to promote her identity.

Chapter 2 will include a thorough examination of the extant inventories of Christina's palace and a list of works displayed in her *stanza dei quadri*. Each inventory will be analyzed based on its author, date, content, and location. This chapter will also include a

³¹ Elizabeth I, Queen of England. *Elizabeth I Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, Jane Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 326.

description of the layout and decoration of Christina's Palazzo Riario. Following the list of works in the *stanza dei quadri*, this chapter will provide observations about the subjects, artists, styles, dates, and eroticism of the works. This information will lead to conclusions about what the works have in common and why they were grouped together.

Chapter 3 will argue that Christina used the artworks in the *stanza dei quadri* to express her masculine body-politic over her female body-natural. The chapter will place the *stanza dei quadri* within the context of palace display in seventeenth-century Rome and will explain who would have seen and heard about the room. It will situate the room within the palace by describing palace movement and how Christina presented herself to visitors. It will also examine how Christina presented herself in other media such as text, portraiture, and performance. This chapter will discuss specific works of art in terms of gender reversals, masculinity, sexuality, and sovereignty.

This thesis will add to current scholarship on Christina's construction of identity through the display of her art collections. By analyzing the individual and collective meanings of the works on display in the *stanza dei quadri*, this thesis will argue that Christina strove to project a powerful, masculine public identity.

CHAPTER 1: THE LIFE OF QUEEN CHRISTINA

Ideological and behavioral gender differences in early modern Europe originated from the notion that women were flawed or incomplete versions of men.³² Due to their supposed inferiority, women rarely occupied positions of power. Exceptions to this norm include female rulers and regents such as Mary Tudor, Elizabeth I, and Marie de' Medici.³³ Male authors went to great lengths to explain the appearance of power in women. In Giovanni Boccaccio's book, *De claris mulieribus* (c. 1361-62), he claims that, "Nature sometimes errs when she unites souls with mortal bodies, namely, when she gives to a woman a soul which she intended to give to a man."³⁴ This comment suggests that powerful women owed their physical and intellectual abilities to a natural fluke that made them masculine.

Consistent with this theory, Queen Christina of Sweden characterized herself as masculine and powerful despite her female sex. She projected this identity through her writings, behavior, intellectual interest, and artistic display. Before examining the *stanza dei quadri* as an expression of Christina's public image, it is necessary to better understand her history. This chapter will provide a biography of her life and consider how her

³² Contemporary attitudes toward women are summarized in Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Women: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge, 1980).

³³ For more on early modern women in power, see Mary D. Garrard, "Historical Feminism and Female Iconography," in *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 141-79.

³⁴ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Famous Women*, trans. Virginia Brown (Harvard University Press, 2001), 195-96.

experiences helped to influence her understanding and presentation of herself as a great, masculine female.

A Princely Childhood

Christina was born in 1626 and was the only child of the Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg to survive past infancy.³⁵ As she claimed in her autobiography, Christina's nurses originally mistook her for a boy.³⁶ Astrologers and soothsayers had assured the royal couple that the child would be male. When Christina emerged covered in hair, enveloped in a caul (or membrane), and roaring with a deep voice, her nurses assumed that she was male. When they discovered their embarrassing mistake, no one dared inform the king until the following day. When Gustav learned of Christina's true sex, he ordered a *Te Deum* (a song reserved for the birth of royal boys).³⁷ He declared that she would be trained as a prince and eventually named her successor to the throne.³⁸

Although Christina enjoyed a loving relationship with her father, her mother disliked her. The queen had wanted a boy and resented Christina for her sex, regarding her as an ugly little girl.³⁹ When King Gustavus Adolphus died in battle in 1632, Christina's mother became erratic. She locked herself up in her bedchamber with the curtains drawn

³⁵ Christina, "La vie de la reine Christine faite par elle-même, dédiée à Dieu," 90.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 98, 121.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

and made Christina stay with her all day and night.⁴⁰ For several months, the queen refused to let the king's body be buried, and she hung his heart in a golden box above her bed.⁴¹ During this time, the queen developed an obsession for Christina, due solely to her resemblance to the late king.⁴² Her mother's hyper-emotional and unstable behavior may have contributed to Christina's dislike of all things feminine. She considered all women weak in soul, body, and mind and suggested that strong rulers were not at all feminine.⁴³ She viewed gender as a person's emulation of their mother or father.⁴⁴ Christina, who wished to be a great ruler like her father, would perform a masculine gender.

Christina's lessons provided the only escape from the queen's dark, gloomy chambers, so she became a very good student.⁴⁵ Her tutor, humanist Johannes Matthiae, filled her lessons with classical languages, philosophy, and theology.⁴⁶ Christina especially excelled at linguistics. She mastered Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Flemish, Greek, and Swedish and even dabbled in Hebrew and Arabic.⁴⁷ While studying the classics, Christina became particularly fond of Alexander the Great and would compare herself to

⁴⁰ Ibid.,131.

⁴¹ Johann Arckenholtz, ed., *Mémoires concernant Christine de Suède*, (Amsterdam and Leipzig: Pierre Mortier,1750-60), 1:20.

⁴² Christina, "La vie de la reine Christine faite par elle-même, dédiée à Dieu," 94, 131.

⁴³ Ibid., 121.

⁴⁴ Christina, "L'Ouvrage du Loisir," 232 n. 634.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 131-32.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 121-22; Børresen, "Christina's Discourse on God and Humanity," 48.

⁴⁷ Mannerschied, "Some Passages Concerning ... Christina Queen of Sweden," xviii-xix.

him throughout her life. In fact, she wrote an essay on Alexander's life,⁴⁸ and Eva Hættner Aurelius has argued that Christina fashioned her autobiography after Plutarch's description of Alexander.⁴⁹ For Christina, Alexander represented the ultimate ruler that she desired to become. During her childhood, Christina attempted to emulate Alexander's athleticism, military skill, and gender. She never took to feminine activities such as embroidery, but excelled at hunting and horsemanship.⁵⁰ She used her dolls as soldiers in her lessons on military strategy and dressed in knee-length skirts along with men's coats, shirts, and boots.⁵¹

Christina grew up to be an intellectual and invited several celebrated thinkers to court, including René Descartes.⁵² French scientist and scholar Pierre-Daniel Huet remarked that Christina, Anna Maria van Schurman, and Madeleine de Scudéry were the three most learned women at the time, and Christina had the sharpest intellect.⁵³ Her interest in science and philosophy led Christina to reconsider her religious beliefs. She recalled asking Matthiae at age six or seven whether all of Lutheranism was as much a fable

⁴⁸ Christina, "Diverse Reflections on the Life and Actions of Alexander the Great," in *The Works of Christina of Sweden* (London: Plato's Head in the Strand, 1753), 133-84.

⁴⁹ Eva Hættner Aurelius, "The Great Performance. Roles in Queen Christina's Autobiography," in *Politics and Culture in the Age of Christina: Acta from a Conference Held at the Wenner-Gren Center in Stockholm, May 4-6, 1995*, ed. Marie-Louise Rodén, (Stockholm: Swedish Institute in Rome, 1997), 59.

⁵⁰ Christina, "La vie de la reine Christine faite par elle-même, dédiée à Dieu," 122-23.

⁵¹ Christina, "La vie de la reine Christine faite par elle-même, dédiée à Dieu," 121, n. 25; Pierre Chanut, "Letter to Brienne, February 1648," quoted in Carl Nordenfalk ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden* (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 1966), 396; Mannerschied, "Some Passages Concerning... Christina Queen of Sweden," xiv.

⁵² Arckenholtz, ed., *Memoires concernant Christine de Suède*, 1:227; For more information see: Susanna Åkerman, "Kristina Wasa, Queen of Sweden," in *Modern Women Philosophers, 1600-1900*, vol. 3 of *A History of Women Philosophers*, ed. Mary Ellen Waithe (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991).

⁵³ Pierre-Daniel Huet to Pierre Gassendi, 1652, quoted in Arckenholtz, ed., *Memoires concernant Christine de Suède*, 1:261, n. 2.

as the Last Judgment.⁵⁴ This anecdote characterizes her early disinclination to accept religious doctrine. In the 1650s Paolo Casati travelled to Stockholm to gauge the sincerity of Christina's intention to become Catholic. He reported back to Pope Alexander VII that she doubted the miracles of the bible and had spent several years researching different religions in an attempt to find one that she considered to be true. Having no luck in this quest, Christina eventually resolved that Catholicism seemed more reasonable than Lutheranism and decided to convert.⁵⁵ In 1667, she praised Descartes specifically for aiding in this decision.⁵⁶

An Audacious Reign

Christina assumed the throne in 1644, at age 18. Throughout her minority, a Council of the Kingdom had ruled as a collective regent.⁵⁷ Although Christina preferred an absolute monarchy, her advisors had used their power to put in place a mixed government that leaned toward republicanism.⁵⁸ Since the death of Christina's father, this council had tread on the rights of the peasant class in order to afford greater benefits and luxuries to noblemen.⁵⁹ During her ten-year reign, Christina exploited the tensions between the aristocratic and peasant classes to achieve her political goals. In 1649, Christina convinced

⁵⁴ Christina, *Les mémoires de Christina Alexandrine*, Stockholm Riksarkivet, Azzolino-samlingen 37:2, 37:3; Quoted and translated in Garstein, *The Age of Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Christina of Sweden*, 609-10.

⁵⁵ Paolo Casati, "No. 131. Paolo Casati a Pope Alexander VII, sopra la regina di svezia. December 5, 1655. Bibl. Albani," in Leopold von Ranke, *The History of the Popes: Their Church and State, Vol. III*, trans. E. Fowler (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1901), 403-06.

⁵⁶ Christina to Antoine Courtin, 30 August 1667, Montpellier, T. VII f. 180.

⁵⁷ *Svenska Riksrådets Protokoll*, Vol. 12 (1880), 9, (15 June 1630).

⁵⁸ Pierre-Hector Chanut to Cardinal Mazarin, 7 July 1646. Paris, Biblioteque Nationale MS fr. 17962 fol. 489r-92v.; Garstein, *The Age of Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Christina of Sweden*, 556-559.

⁵⁹ Garstein, *The Age of Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Christina of Sweden*, 557.

her state councilors to accept her cousin, Prince Charles Gustavus, as her successor.⁶⁰ With the help of the non-noble Estates in 1650, she further forced the council to accept his sons as hereditary princes of Sweden.⁶¹ This action ended the aristocrats' hope of forming a Swedish republic and secured Sweden's status as a hereditary kingdom.⁶²

Perhaps due to her increase in political power, Christina's contemporaries became fascinated with her love life. In a letter from 1644, Christina had professed her eternal love for her cousin, Charles Gustavus, and said they would marry once she gained the throne.⁶³ As mentioned above, she did not keep her promise. Instead, Christina apparently developed an unrequited love for a French Colonel in her Guard, Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie.⁶⁴ Rumors spread that she also enjoyed a more-than-platonic relationship with her lady-in-waiting, Ebba Spare, whom she called "Belle." English ambassador, Bulstrode Whitlocke, wrote that Christina introduced Belle as her "bed-fellow" and told him that her inside was as beautiful as her outside.⁶⁵ Although sharing a bed was common between female friends at the time, rumors circulated throughout Europe that Christina was a hermaphrodite, a tribade, and an atheist.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ *Svenska Riksrådets Protokoll*, Vol. 13 (1912), 338-69, (28 Feb. 1649).

⁶¹ *Svenska Riksrådets Protokoll*, Vol. 14 (1916), 303-82, (24 Sept. – 31 Oct. 1650).

⁶² Pierre-Hector Chanut to Cardinal Mazarin, 7 July 1646. Paris, Biblioteque Nationale MS fr. 17962 fol. 489r-92v. Quoted in Garstein, *The Age of Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Christina of Sweden*, 558.

⁶³ Letter from Christina to Count Palatine Charles Gustavus, 5 January 1644. Stockholm, Rikskarkivet. Quoted in Nordenfalk ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 82, n.40.

⁶⁴ Pierre-Hector Chanut to Cardinal Mazarin, 7 July 1646. Paris, Bibl. Nationale MS fr. 17962 fol. 489r-92v. Quoted in Garstein, *The Age of Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Christina of Sweden*, 505-6.

⁶⁵ Bulstrode Whitlocke, *A Journal of the Swedish Embassy, The Years 1653 and 1654*, Vol. 1 (London: T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt, 1772), 420.

⁶⁶ On Christina's reputation as a hermaphrodite, see Gigli, *Diario di Roma*, 751; Some of the slanderous accounts can be found in: *Histoire de la vie de la reine de Suede* (Fribourg, 1667); I.H., "To the

These accusations mainly emanated from Christina's French enemies who published slanderous pamphlets in Paris. In one pamphlet, a woman claimed that Christina, who often put her hands up the skirts of her female visitors, was "one of the most ribald tribades" ever heard of.⁶⁷ "Tribade" was a Greek term that referred to women who rubbed each other and was used to characterize women who engaged in homosexual activities.⁶⁸ These rumors spread quickly throughout Europe. An Englishman wrote that Christina had turned the Swedish court from a "school of virtue" into a "nursery of vice."⁶⁹

Such allegations were common responses to women in power. Female rulers such as Mary Tudor, Elizabeth I, and Marie de' Medici were the targets of countless slanderous remarks that characterized them as "unnatural".⁷⁰ These reactions to female power can be attributed to logic, fear, and politics. The appearance of power (a male attribute) in a woman led to the assumption that the woman had other male characteristics, such as a sexual desire for women and male genitalia. The accusations could also be reactions to a presumed threat to the male-dominant society. Strong, powerful women proved that other women did not need men to guide or control them. This posed a threat to men who believed they naturally ranked higher than women. By defaming female rulers, men attempted to neutralize this threat. Viewing a female ruler as a hermaphrodite or tribade

Reader," in *A Relation of the Life of Christina of Sweden*, trans. I.H. (London: T.R., 1656); See also Sarah Waters, "A Girton Girl on a Throne': Queen Christina and Versions of Lesbianism, 1906-1933," *Feminist Review* 46 (Spring, 1994): 41-60.

⁶⁷ *Histoire de la vie de la reine de Suède* (Fribourg, 1667), 12.

⁶⁸ The term "lesbian" was not commonly used until the nineteenth-century. "Tribade" characterized women who engaged in homosexual acts, but there was no term for women who desired women rather than men, because that preference was not considered possible. Brown, *Immodest Acts*, 17.

⁶⁹ I.H., "To the Reader."

⁷⁰ Garrard, "Historical Feminism and Female Iconography," 143.

allowed contemporaries to retain their understanding of women as naturally weak. Lastly, by spreading rumors that Christina was an immoral atheist, the authors of the pamphlets would make Sweden look weak by association. This political move was particularly important given that Sweden participated as a strong Protestant nation in the Thirty Years War until 1648. Although many of these rumors were probably false, Christina did little to refute the accusations of her homoerotic desires. As explained in the introduction, Christina publically claimed a sexual attraction to women, especially later in life. This allowed her to adhere more fully to the societal construct of masculinity so that she could vie for more powerful positions.

In 1648, Christina ordered her troops to plunder Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II's Hradčany Castle in Prague.⁷¹ With the Thirty Years War coming to an end, Christina decided to take advantage of wartime laws and bring the emperor's famous collection to Sweden. She ordered her troops to abandon the war effort in Prague so they could send the archives, library, and art collection up the Elbe River to Swedish soil. In fact, she told Charles Gustavus in a letter that treasures such as Rudolf's art collections and library were the only things that she cared for.⁷² From a young age, Christina coveted wartime treasure. While her father was away at war, Christina wrote to him and requested that he bring her home something beautiful.⁷³ By seizing Rudolf's collection, Christina gained hundreds of great works of art and earned the elevated prestige that came with owning such a vast, impressive collection. She also performed the powerful, masculine act of plunder and

⁷¹ Arckenholtz, ed., *Memoires concernant Christine de Suède*, 2:327-28.

⁷² Quoted in Nordenfalk ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 424.

⁷³ "Bitte E(uere) M(ajestät) wollen bald wiederkommen und mir auch was hübsches schicken. Ich bin Gottlob gesundt und befeisse mich im beten viel alzeit wackerlehrnen." Letter from Christina to her father. Stockholm, Riksarkivet. Quoted in Arckenholtz, ed., *Memoires concernant Christine de Suède*, 4:190.

aligned herself with famous classical figures such as Titus, Constantine, and Alexander the Great who asserted authority by pillaging their enemy's treasures.⁷⁴

The works that arrived from Prague included about five hundred paintings, seventy bronze sculptures, three hundred scientific instruments, four hundred Indian curiosities, thirty-three thousand medals and coins, hundreds of chests of books, boxes of jewels, and various natural history items.⁷⁵ Christina told the Duke of Bracciano in a letter that her new collection was wonderful, but that she cared little for any of it besides the thirty or forty Italian paintings.⁷⁶ In the same letter, she claimed that she would exchange all of the works by northern artists for just two by Raphael. This claim demonstrates Christina's infatuation with Italian art. By 1652, the inventory at Christina's palace in Stockholm included around forty thousand art objects.⁷⁷

A Royal Resignation

Despite her victory in the war and her acquisition of Rudolf's collection, Christina became increasingly unhappy at the Swedish court. Coming into power at the end of the Thirty Years War (in which she had managed to keep Sweden Protestant) and the Catholic

⁷⁴ For the political and ideological implications of plunder, see Margaret Miles, *Art as Plunder: The Ancient Origins of Debate about Cultural Property* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁷⁵ An inventory was compiled of the works plundered from Prague, and it is kept at Skokloster Castle in Skokloster, Sweden. The paintings section has been published in "Appendice I: Inventaire des Tableaux de L'Empereur Rodolphe II à Prague," in *La Galerie de Tableaux de la Reine Christina de Suede Ayant Appartenu Auparavent a L'Emperuer Rodolphe II Plus Tard aux Ducs D'Orleans*, ed. Olof Granberg (1652; Stockholm: Imprimerie Ivar H. Eggström, 1897). The list included here comes from Magnus Olausson, "13 Luglio 1648. La Conquista del Quartiere di Malá Strana a Praga," in *Cristina di Svezia: Le Collezioni Reali* (Milan: Electa, 2003), 134.

⁷⁶ Letter from Christina to the Duke of Bracciano, Paolo Giordano II Orsini, 1653, Quoted in Nordenfalk ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 419.

⁷⁷ Raphael Trichet, Marquis du Fresne, "Inventaire des Raritez qui sont dans le cabinet des antiquitez de la Sérénissime Reine de Suède, Fait l'an 1652," Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket. Inv. No. A 4. Printed in "Appendice II," in *La Galerie de Tableaux de la Reine Christina de Suede Ayant Appartenu Auparavent a L'Emperuer Rodolphe II Plus Tard aux Ducs D'Orleans*, ed. Olof Granberg (1652; Stockholm: Imprimerie Ivar H. Eggström, 1897).

Reformation, she could not stay on the Swedish throne unless she practiced the Protestant faith.⁷⁸ Already in August of 1651, Christina voiced her intention to abdicate her throne but was dissuaded by her council.⁷⁹ In 1654, Christina announced her abdication and fled to Rome.⁸⁰ Christina gave up her political power, but not her rank as queen. In her 1687 work, “L’Arma antica della Svezia,” summarizing her abdication, Christina explained that she retained her God-given sovereignty.⁸¹

Christina began her journey to Rome on June 10, 1654, following her collections, which had sailed before she announced her abdication.⁸² From her collection of forty thousand art objects, Christina selected about seventy paintings, nineteen bronze sculptures, seventy-two tapestries, fifty scientific instruments, and six thousand books.⁸³ The paintings, which had been chosen from her collection of seven hundred and fifty, consisted of about forty-five Italian mythological paintings from Prague and twenty-five portraits of friends and family. Christina also sent several objects from her collection as

⁷⁸ Charles Alexander Mannerschied, *Relacion curiosa de la persona vide y costumbres de la Reyna de Suecia en Carta de Estocolmo*, 1653. Madrid, Bibl. Nacional MS 2384 fol. 183r.

⁷⁹ Her argument for abdication is recorded in *Svenska Riksrådets Protokoll*, Vol. 15 (1920), 82-85, (7 Aug. 1651); The council’s rejection of her argument is documented in *Sveriges Ridderskaps och Adels Riksdagsprotokoll* Vol. 5, Part 1 (1873), 289-90, (12 Aug. 1651) and 183, (30 Sept. 1651); This exchange is summarized in Garstein, *The Age of Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Christina of Sweden*, 707-09.

⁸⁰ The two copies of Christina’s Deed of Abdication are held in the Stockholm Riksarkivet and the Archivio Vaticano, Archivio di Castel S. Angelo. Arm. C. 1224.

⁸¹ Christina, “L’Arma antica della Svezia,” in *Mémoires concernant Christine de Suède*, 4:296.

⁸² On the 24th of September 1653, Trichet’s inventory states that items “were” in the art chamber. At this time, they had already left for Rome. Raphael Trichet, Marquis du Fresne, “Inventaire des Raritez qui sont dans le cabinet des antiquitez de la Sérénissime Reine de Suède”; Nordenfalk ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden* 429-30 n. 1039; Garstein, *The Age of Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Christina of Sweden*, 706.

⁸³ Though Le Rousseau’s inventory includes 103 paintings, twenty or thirty did not come from Stockholm and must have been acquired during her travels. Jacques S. Le Rousseau, “Inventaire de la Reine Christine de Suede,” in *The Antwerp Art Galleries: Inventories of the Art-Collections in Antwerp in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, vol. 2 of *Historical Sources for the Study of Flemish Art*. ed. Jean Denucé (1656; Antwerp: Edition De Sikkel, 1932): 176-92.

gifts to notable Europeans. King Philip IV of Spain received Albrecht Dürer's *Adam and Eve* (Madrid, Prado), and King John IV of Portugal received Hans Holbein the Elder's *Spring of Life* (Lisbon, Museum of Art).⁸⁴ Gifting these objects to foreign rulers demonstrates that Christina still had expendable wealth and solid friendships with European rulers post-abdication.

Christina's European tour lasted about a year and a half, during which she made several stops. In Hamburg, she met Georg von Plettenberg, a representative of the Holy Roman Emperor, who wrote that she had cut her hair like a man's and wore a skirt and a man's coat over trousers.⁸⁵ After a short stay in Antwerp, Christina journeyed to Brussels. On December 23, 1654, Christina entered the city in a parade of two hundred carriages beneath a show of fireworks.⁸⁶ She stayed in Brussels for nine months before travelling to Innsbruck, where, on November 3, 1655 she officially converted to Catholicism.⁸⁷

Though she converted, Christina did not entirely accept Catholic doctrine or practice. In a letter to Ebba Spare, Christina claimed that she no longer listened to sermons and despised preachers, because they bored her.⁸⁸ In an earlier letter from 1652, Christina confessed that she believed in a third religion separate from Lutheranism and

⁸⁴ Nordenfalk, ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 430 n. 1041, paraphrasing a letter from Christina to J. Leijoncrona, 31 October 1654, Stockholm, Kungliga biblioteket. Inv. No. Leijoncronas papper, 505-06.

⁸⁵ Georg von Plettenberg to Emperor Ferdinand III, 18 July 1654 Vienna, Haus-, Hof-, and Staatarchiv. Inv. No. Reichskanzlei, Ber. Aus Hamburg, Fasz. 2b, ff. 37, 40. Quoted in Nordenfalk, ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 240 n. 534.

⁸⁶ Galleazzo Gualdo, *Historia Della Sacra Real Maestà di Christina Alessandra Regina di Svezia* (Venice: Per il Baba, 1656), 55.

⁸⁷ The Pope's copy of her declaration of faith is in the Archivio Vaticano Acta Consistorialis. Inf. I 81 A.1; Garstein, *The Age of Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Christina of Sweden*, 744.

⁸⁸ The letter no longer exists, but it was transcribed in Arckenholtz, ed., *Memoires concernant Christine de Suède*, 1:475.

Catholicism.⁸⁹ However, she also believed that every man needed a religion through which to understand the world.⁹⁰ Christina arrived in Rome on December 20, 1655 and was formally paraded inside the walls three days later.⁹¹

A Roman Residence

Until 1668, Christina continued to travel throughout Europe, attempting to claim the thrones of Bremen, Flanders, Naples, and Poland.⁹² During this time, rumors of Christina's homosexual behavior and atheism continued to spread.⁹³ According to Robert Alcide de Bonnacase de Saint-Maurice, Christina had changed from the "wonder of [that] Age," and "the glory of her sex," to the "laughing-stock" of all nations.⁹⁴ After finally failing to claim Poland, she made her way home to Rome, where she would rule over culture in lieu of a country.

In 1668, she settled into the Palazzo Riario, which she had rented nine years earlier.⁹⁵ By this point, Christina's vast art collections consisted mostly of antique Roman

⁸⁹ Letter from Christina to Frederick of Hessen-Eschwegen, 10 March, 1652, Stockholm Royal Archives Stegeborgsamlingen E 126. Transcribed in Arckenholtz, ed., *Memoires concernant Christine de Suède*, 1:217-19.

⁹⁰ Paolo Casati, "No. 131. Paolo Casati ad Pope Alexander VII, sopra la regina di svezia. December 5, 1655. Bibl. Albani."

⁹¹ Bartolomeo Lupardi, *Vera e distintar relazione della solenna cavalcata fatta in Roma nell'ingresso della real Maestá di Christina di Svetia li 23 dicembre 1655*. Rome, Istituto Svedese; Summarized in Nordenfalk, ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 269-70, n. 606.

⁹² Åkerman, *Queen Christina of Sweden and her Circle, The Transformation of a Seventeenth-Century Philosophical Libertine* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1991), 230-33, 239-44.

⁹³ See *Histoire de la vie de la reine de Suede* (Fribourg, 1667) and *Il Concubinato scandaloso e publico in Roma dell' Cardinale Azzolini, con la Regina di Suetia* (Italy, 1679).

⁹⁴ Robert Alcide de Bonnacase de Saint-Maurice, *A Relation of the Life of Christina of Sweden*, trans. I.H. (London: T.R., 1656), 5.

⁹⁵ Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini alla Lungara*, 29.

sculptures and Italian Renaissance paintings.⁹⁶ Her home became a cultural center frequented by artists, intellectuals, and Catholic leaders. Upon first arriving in Rome, Christina befriended the artist Gianlorenzo Bernini and patronized him and other artists, such as Pier Francesco Mola, Gianangelo Canini, and Antonio Gherardi.⁹⁷ Several of her commissions focused on restoring the antique works in her collections. Giulio Cartari, for example, added onto an ancient Roman torso to represent a figure of Clytie (Fig. 3; Prado) in Christina's *Sala di Clytie*, and Ercole Ferrata restored eight seated muses (Prado) from Hadrian's villa in Tivoli that decorated her *Sala delle Muse*.⁹⁸ Christina also patronized poets, musicians, and scientists, and a wide range of intellectuals attended meetings of her *Accademia Reale*, founded in 1674.⁹⁹

Christina met Bernini upon her entrance into Rome. He designed her carriage and said that if anything about it displeased her, it was his work. She replied that, in that case, nothing about it could be his.¹⁰⁰ They became great friends, and she visited his studio several times.¹⁰¹ Bernini's son Domenico characterized their relationship through a common topos used for rulers and their image-makers. He writes that, on one occasion,

⁹⁶ Nicodemus Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin d. y:s studieresor i Danmark, Tyskland, Holland, Frankrike och Italien; Anteckningar, Bref och Ritningar*. ed. Osvald Sirén (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt and Söners Förlag, 1914), 182-86.

⁹⁷ Francis Haskell, "Part 1: Rome," in *Patrons and Painters: Art and Society in Baroque Italy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 161.

⁹⁸ Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 182; Zirpolo, "Severed Torsos and Metaphorical Transformations," 42, 47.

⁹⁹ The proceedings of the *Accademia Reale* and a register with signatures of its 27 members are housed in the Vatican Library and published in Michele Maylender, *Storia delle Accademie d'Italia IV* (Bologna: L. Cappelli, 1929), 394-417.

¹⁰⁰ Gualdo, *Historia Della Sacra Real Maestà di Christina Alessandra Regina di Svezia*, 234-35.

¹⁰¹ Domenico Bernini, *Vita del Cavalier Gio. Lorenzo Bernino* (Rome, 1713), 104.

Bernini remained in his artist's smock during a visit from Christina. Bernini stated that he believed there was no attire more appropriate in which to receive a queen. Christina showed her reverence for his artistry by touching the garment.¹⁰² This anecdote parallels one in which Charles V, while visiting Titian in his studio, stoops to pick up the artist's brush.¹⁰³ Stories like these, in which rulers treat their artists as equals, are based on Pliny's anecdotes describing the relationship between Alexander the Great and Apelles. For example, Pliny states that Alexander gave Apelles his mistress and decreed that no other artist would ever paint his portrait.¹⁰⁴ Domenico's story and its literary precedents illustrate the close relationship between Christina and Bernini and place Christina in the position of her role model, Alexander.

Christina displayed six works (now lost) by Bernini in her palace: a bust of herself; two paintings; a sculpted head of a child crowned with a laurel wreath; a marble bust of Christ; and a mirror entitled *Truth Revealed by Time*.¹⁰⁵ In a letter of 1679 to Venetian diplomat, Angelo Morosini, Christina wrote, "I have so much esteem for... Bernini that I embrace with joy all opportunities that present themselves for showing my favor to a man who has made himself the greatest and most illustrious of his profession of all time."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Ibid., 104.

¹⁰³ Carlo Ridolfi, "Vita di Titiano Vecellio da Cadore," in *Le maraviglie dell'arte*, Vol. 1 (Venice, 1648), 180.

¹⁰⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Chapters on the History of Art*, trans. K. Jex-Blake (London: Macmillan, 1896), 125.

¹⁰⁵ None of these works have survived. Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 182-86; Zirpolo, "Christina of Sweden's Patronage of Bernini," 40.

¹⁰⁶ Letter to Angelo Morosini, 11 April 1679. BIM, MC, VI, cc. 272r-v. Trans. Franco Mormando, *Bernini: His Life and His Rome*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011), 221.

In 1689, Christina died from a long-term illness and left all of her possessions to her Cardinal Decio Azzolino, her close friend and supposed lover.¹⁰⁷ Following his death a few months later, her estate fell into the hands of his nephew, who sold it to Livio Odeschalchi. Christina was buried in the crypt of St. Peter's following an extravagant funeral.¹⁰⁸ A monument to the late queen, designed by Carlo Fontana, was erected in the basilica in 1702.¹⁰⁹

This account of her life confirms that Christina constructed a public identity centered on masculinity and power. She performed a masculine gender to seem capable of the power she sought. When Christina's reputation began to plummet due to her political exploits, she retreated to Rome, where her alliance with the Pope and her importance in Roman culture allowed her to feel powerful again. The following chapters will examine how the *stanza dei quadri* functioned as the center of Christina's promotion of power and reflected her identity.

¹⁰⁷ "R elation de la Maladie, de la Mort & des Fun erailles de la Reine Christina traduite de l'Italien," in *Memoires concernant Christine de Su ede*, 2:165-74.

¹⁰⁸ *Liber Mortuorum*, C I 30, f. 82. Chiesa Nuova. Archivio della Congregazione, Rome.

¹⁰⁹ Arckenholtz, *Memoires concernant Christine de Su ede*, 2:311.

CHAPTER 2: THE WORKS ON DISPLAY IN THE *STANZA DEI QUADRI*

The contents of Queen Christina's collections are known today through both lifetime and posthumous inventories made in Stockholm, Antwerp, and Rome. These documents include: Raphael Trichet's 1652 inventory of Christina's collection in Stockholm;¹¹⁰ Jacques S. Le Rousseau's inventory made in 1656 during her sojourn in Antwerp;¹¹¹ Nicodemus Tessin the Younger's description of Christina's palace made during his visit to Rome in 1687-88;¹¹² and Lorenzo Belli's inventory taken after Christina's death in 1689.¹¹³ Partial descriptions of her collections also exist in works such as Giovanni Pietro Bellori's *Nota delli Musei, Librerie, Gallerie & ornamenti di Statue, e pitture, ne' Palazzi, nelle Case, e ne' Giardini di Roma* (1664) and Pietro De Sebastiani's *Viaggio curioso de palazzo e ville più notabili di Roma* (1683).¹¹⁴ This chapter will examine these inventories and literary sources to determine which works hung in the *stanza dei quadri* and to explore the styles, artists, time periods, subject matters, and figures represented. Observations on these matters will inform conclusions regarding Christina's taste and, in the next chapter, her intentions in displaying these works together in the *stanza dei quadri*.

¹¹⁰ Raphael Trichet, Marquis du Fresne "Inventaire des Raritez qui sont dans le cabinet des antiquitez de la Sérénissime Reine de Suède."

¹¹¹ Le Rousseau, "Inventaire de la Reine Christine de Suede," 176-92.

¹¹² Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 182-86.

¹¹³ Lorenzo Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," in *Raccolta di Cataloghi ed Inventarii Inediti di Quadri, Statue, Disegni, Bronzi, Dorerie, Smalti, Medaglie, Avorii, Ecc: Dal Secolo XV Al Secolo XIX*. ed. Giuseppe Campori (1689; Modena: C. Vincenzi, 1870), 336-76.

¹¹⁴ Giovanni Pietro Bellori, *Nota delli Musei, Librerie, Gallerie & ornamenti di Statue, e pitture, ne' Case, e ne' Giardini di Roma* (Rome: Stamperia del Falco, 1664), 52-54; Pietro De Sebastiani, *Viaggio curioso de palazzo e ville più notabili di Roma* (Rome: Per il Moneta, 1683), 13-15.

The Inventories

Of the four inventory authors, Nicodemus Tessin the Younger (1654-1728) is the best known. His father, Nicodemus Tessin the Elder (1615-81) began working as a Swedish royal architect in 1636 and became Christina's personal architect in 1639. Like his father, Tessin the Younger worked as the court architect in Stockholm and travelled throughout Europe to expand his stylistic vocabulary.¹¹⁵ During two of his three professional trips abroad, Tessin spent several years in Rome. On his first trip to Rome (1673-77), he travelled with the Orazio del Monte, a member of Christina's household, to train as an architect. On his next trip (1687-88), Tessin took copious notes on architecture, decoration, and customs in preparation for his redesign of the Royal Palace in Stockholm.¹¹⁶ He and his travelling companion, nobleman Mårten Törnhielm, recorded nearly identical inventories of Christina's Palazzo Riario.¹¹⁷ Tessin's inventory provides the most detailed extant description of the artworks and textiles in Christina's palace and the arrangement of her collections. As a Swedish architect trained in Rome, Tessin offers reliable information, though his opinions about the quality of his former sovereign's collection may be biased.

While Tessin's inventory offers a thorough account of Christina's palace layout, Lorenzo Belli's 1689 inventory provides the most detailed descriptions of the works in her collection. The full inventory was organized by medium and compiled by a number of

¹¹⁵ Ragnar Josephson, *Tessin* (Stockholm: Sveriges Allmänna Konstforenings, 1938), 15-18.

¹¹⁶ Börge Magnusson, "Introduction," in *Travel Notes 1673-77 and 1687-88*, vol. 3 of *Nicodemus Tessin the Younger: Sources, Works, Collections*, ed. Merit Laine and Börge Magnusson (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 2002), 27; Martin Olin, "An Italian Architecture Library under the Polar Star: Nicodemus Tessin the Younger's Collection of Books and Prints," *Art Bulletin of Nationalmuseum Stockholm* 20 (2013): 111.

¹¹⁷ Based on the similarities between the texts and Törnhielm's reference to Tessin's opinion of Correggio's *Jupiter and Io*, it can be assumed that either the inventories were created simultaneously, or Törnhielm copied Tessin's after its completion. Törnhielm's inventory is published in J. H. Schröder, "Om drottning Christina och hennes konstsamlingar I Rom," *Svea* 13 (1831): 414-25.

scholars under the public notary Lorenzo Belli's supervision.¹¹⁸ In his list of Christina's paintings, Belli included artists, subjects, descriptions, and measurements. His collaboration with scholars and detailed entries support the credibility of this inventory.

The two other inventories referenced here, Trichet's of 1652 and Le Rousseau's of 1656, include less detail but provide useful information. Trichet, a bibliophile and art connoisseur, was Christina's librarian in Stockholm from 1652 until her abdication.¹¹⁹ Formerly, he had headed the French Royal publishing house where, in 1651, he edited the Italian edition of Leonardo da Vinci's *Treatise on Painting*.¹²⁰ At the end of this book, Trichet included the first published bibliography of books dealing with art and artists.¹²¹ Following this habit of thorough documentation, Trichet's inventory of Christina's collections notes which works came from Prague, private collections, and other locations. Trichet did not mention any artists, however, and included only brief characterizations of the works. In 1896, Olof Granberg published Trichet's inventory in *La Galerie de Tableaux de la Reine Christina de Suede*, along with Nils de Brahe's 1648 inventory of Rudolf II's collection in Prague and two inventories of Christina's paintings from 1689 and 1721. Through careful examination of these inventories, Granberg identified the artists and titles of several works within the brief descriptions provided by Trichet. Unlike Trichet, Le

¹¹⁸ Giovanni Pietro Bellori, for example, was responsible for the inventory of coins and medals. Archivio di Stato di Roma, Inv. No. Not. Del Trib. dell'A.C. Prot. 917, described in Tomaso Montanari, "Bellori and Christina of Sweden," in *Art History in the Age of Bellori: Scholarship and Cultural Politics in Seventeenth-Century Rome*, ed. Janis Bell and Thomas Willette (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 108-09.

¹¹⁹ Montanari, "Bellori and Christina of Sweden," 97.

¹²⁰ Jacques Thuillier, *Nicolas Poussin* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 162-63; Leonardo da Vinci, *Trattato della Pittura di Lionardo da Vinci* ed. Rafaele du Frene (Paris: Appresso Giacomo Langlois: 1651).

¹²¹ Lee R. Sorensen, "Art Bibliographies: A Survey of Their Development, 1595-1821," *The Library Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (1986): 36.

Rousseau, a Spanish royal notary, included artists and subjects in his 1656 Antwerp inventory of Christina's post-abdication collections. He did not note, however, which works came from Stockholm and which were acquired during Christina's journey to Rome.

Giovanni Pietro Bellori's description of Christina's collections from his *Nota delli Musei, Librerie, Gallerie & ornamenti di Statue, e pitture, ne' Palazzi, nelle Case, e ne' Giardini di Roma* (1664) also provides useful information. Bellori (1613-96) was a well-known Roman antiquarian, philologist, numismatist, and art connoisseur.¹²² He held the office of Commissioner of Roman Antiquities for the Vatican, wrote *Le vite de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni* (1672), and became Christina's personal librarian, antiquarian, and custodian of medals.¹²³ At the Palazzo Riario, Bellori took on several projects, including the creation of an academy of sculpture in 1686.¹²⁴ Tomaso Montanari has suggested that Bellori was familiar with Christina's collection long before his appointment to her service in 1677. He based this conclusion on a letter from Camillo Massimo to Bellori in 1661 that urges him to take advantage of his access to Christina's library.¹²⁵ Bellori's résumé and knowledge of the queen's collections supports the credibility of his description.

¹²² Tomaso Montanari, "Introduction," in *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects: A New translation and Critical Edition*, trans. Alice Sedgewick Wohl, notes by Hellmut Wohl (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1.

¹²³ Montanari, "Bellori and Christina of Sweden," 94-99.

¹²⁴ The description of the academy at the Palazzo Riario is in the Archivio di stato di Roma, *Miscellanea di carte politiche diverse*, 7, 359. For discussions of the academy, see: Montanari, "Bellori and Christina of Sweden," 108; Tomaso Montanari, "Bernini e Cristina di Svezia: Alle origini della storiografia berniniana," *Gian Lorenzo Bernini e i Chigi tra Roma e Siena*, ed. Alessandro Angelini (Siena: Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 1998), 427-77.

¹²⁵ "Il già signor Luca Holstenio mi disse che la Regina di Svezia haveva molti libri di Pirro Ligorio pregiatissimi. Io terrò il secreto, ma Vostra Signoria procuri d'ispiarli distesamente, perché non è facile ad haver questa fortuna." Archivio Massimo, Rome, 276, c. 461r; Montanari, "Bellori and Christina of Sweden," 98.

All of these documents reveal that Christina had a distinct taste for Italian Renaissance paintings and classical sculptures. According to Trichet, in 1652 her collection of paintings totaled around 750.¹²⁶ When she left Stockholm in 1654, Christina brought roughly seventy paintings, including about forty-five Italian Renaissance paintings from Prague and twenty-five portraits.¹²⁷ Following some acquisitions in Antwerp, Christina's painting collection totaled 103,¹²⁸ and by her death in 1689, Christina owned 306 paintings.¹²⁹ Belli attributed two-thirds of these to Italian artists. Although she eventually collected more than three times the number of paintings she had brought from Sweden, the core of Christina's most impressive gallery, her *stanza dei quadri*, consisted of Venetian Renaissance paintings plundered from Prague (see Appendix).¹³⁰ By consulting these inventories and descriptions of Christina's palace, this chapter will compile a list of works that were displayed in the *stanza dei quadri* and assess how they functioned as a whole.

The Artwork

Nicodemus Tessin's inventory gives the most detailed description of the Palazzo Riario's decoration.¹³¹ Tessin describes a three-story palace. The ground floor held Christina's collection of antique sculpture, programmatically arranged in rooms lined with ancient Roman frescoes and Renaissance tapestries. Christina's bedroom and her *sala dell'udienza reale* were on the second floor, along with two rooms referred to by Tessin as

¹²⁶ Trichet, "Inventaire."

¹²⁷ Nordenfalk, ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 431, n. 1043.

¹²⁸ Le Rousseau, "Inventaire de la Reine Christine de Suede," 176-92.

¹²⁹ Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 336-76.

¹³⁰ Trichet, "Inventaire."; Le Rousseau, "Inventaire de la Reine Christine de Suede," 176-92.; Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 182-86.

¹³¹ Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 182-86.

the *galleria* and the *grosse gemach* (or grand chamber), which will be referred to here as the *stanza dei quadri*, as it was called by Belli.¹³² The third floor housed her library, festival chamber, and rooms dedicated to her coins and medals and several paintings (mostly by Peter Paul Rubens and Giulio Romano).¹³³ The *galleria* held fifty-seven paintings by primarily Italian artists such as Tiziano Vecelli, Antonio da Correggio, Giovanni Bellini, Giovanni Lanfranco, and Andrea del Sarto.¹³⁴ Tessin accounts for forty-seven paintings in the *stanza dei quadri*, as well as a bronze head of Alexander the Great and Bernini's mirror.¹³⁵ He claims that the room was unmatched in Rome or anywhere else, and thus suggests that this was the most impressive group of paintings in the queen's collection.

Although Tessin's inventory is the only one that names the rooms in which Christina's collection were displayed, the order in which the paintings are listed in Belli's inventory closely follows Tessin's ordering. Thus it seems that Belli also listed the works by room. Of the forty-seven works Tessin listed, he only described thirty-four. All of the works Tessin named correspond with the first fifty-two of 306 paintings listed in Belli's inventory. The remaining works mentioned by Tessin are portraits and mythological paintings attributed to Paolo Veronese and Tiziano Vecelli (Titian). These twelve paintings are likely

¹³² Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini alla Lungara*, 34; Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 184; Though the names of rooms are not listed in Campori's transcription of Belli's inventory, Tomaso Montanari cites the original document (Archivio di Stato di Roma, AC, L. Belli, 917, *Inventarium bonorum hereditatis gloriosæ Christianæ Alexandræ Svecorum reginæ in Alma Urbe defunctæ*, 1689) when referring to the *stanza dei quadri* in Montanari, "Bernini e Cristina di Svezia," 436-37.

¹³³ Nordenfalk, ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 320 n. 738.

¹³⁴ Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 184; Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 345-48.

¹³⁵ Although Tessin states that only forty-four paintings hung in this room, he erroneously claims that Giulio Romano's *History of the Sabines* (today recognized as *Scenes from Ancient Roman History* by Giulio Licino at the National Gallery, London and the Morrison Collection, Basildon Park) included three paintings. The series actually includes six panels, as noted in Belli's inventory, so Tessin's total count should equal forty-seven; Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 185; Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 345.

among the eighteen portraits and mythologies described in the first fifty-two entries of Belli's inventory that cannot be certainly connected to Tessin's.¹³⁶ This observation indicates that the first fifty-two paintings in Belli's inventory hung in the *stanza dei quadri*. These begin with the works by Veronese on the ceiling and end with the same works that conclude Tessin's description: Jacopo Bassano's portraits and Giulio Licinio's *Scenes from Ancient Roman History*.¹³⁷

Although the fifty-two works in Belli's inventory were probably located in the *stanza dei quadri*, this thesis will consider only the works mentioned by both Belli and Tessin (with one exception). This approach will allow for more in-depth analysis of the permanent adornments of the *stanza dei quadri*. In seventeenth-century Rome, art displays were frequently moved around the palace to accord with different seasons, visitors, and events.¹³⁸ By examining only the works that appear in both inventories, this discussion will focus on the works that Christina must have viewed as the most important components of the message she aimed to convey through her *stanza dei quadri*. These paintings and their corresponding inventory numbers are listed in the Appendix.

Tessin claims that seventeen paintings by Titian hung in the *stanza dei quadri* and that six of these were portraits.¹³⁹ Belli's first fifty-two entries include only two portraits by Titian: one of a widow and the *Portrait of Laura de Dianti, Duchess of Ferrara* (c. 1523;

¹³⁶ Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 185-86.

¹³⁷ Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 336-45.

¹³⁸ Barbara Furlotti, "Display in Motion," in *Display of Art in the Roman Palace, 1550-1750*, ed. Gail Feigenbaum (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2014), 146-47.

¹³⁹ Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 184.

Heinz Kisters Collection, Kreuzlingen).¹⁴⁰ Two portraits were also wrongly attributed to Titian in Tessin's list: Dosso Dossi's *Portrait of a Man Wearing a Black Beret* (thought to be a portrait of Cesare Borgia, Duke Valentino;¹⁴¹ Nationalmuseum, Stockholm); and Palma Vecchio's *Portrait of a Doge* (location unknown, formerly Bridgewater House, London). Of the remaining twelve paintings by Titian in Tessin's list, seven mythologies are described well enough to identify them in Belli's inventory (see Appendix). These are *Venus Crowned by Amor with a Lute Player* (1555-65; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), *Venus Anadyomene* (c. 1520; National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh), *The Three Ages of Man*, (c. 1512-14; National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh), *The Death of Actaeon* (c. 1559-75; National Gallery, London), *The Education of Cupid* (now attributed to Lambert Sustris, c. 1540; El Paso Museum of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection), *Toilet of Venus* (now attributed to Titian's workshop, c. 1555; Karl and Dagmar Bergsten Collection, Stockholm), and two paintings of Mary Magdalene that have not been located.¹⁴² The only other works by Titian in Belli's list (besides his portraits) are *Venus and Adonis* (1559; Patrick de Charmont Collection, Switzerland) and *Sleeping Venus with Roses and Cupid* (present location unknown).¹⁴³ These probably account for two of the five works that are not described in Tessin's account.

¹⁴⁰ Harold E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian II: The Portraits* (London: Phaidon Press, 1971), 92-94, n. 24.

¹⁴¹ Tessin attributes this painting to Titian, but Belli attributes it to Correggio. Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 184; Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 344; Nordenfalk, ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 477, n. 1178.

¹⁴² Harold E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian III: The Mythological and Historical Paintings* (London: Phaidon Press, 1975), 196 n. 46; 187-8 n. 39; 182-4 cat 36; 136-8 n. 8; 223-4 n. X-43; 202-3 n. 53; Biermann, "The Virtue of a King and the Desire of a Woman?" 217.

¹⁴³ Rona Goffen, *Titian's Women* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 248; Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian III*, 241 n. L-18.

Tessin states that eleven paintings by Paolo Veronese hung in the *stanza dei quadri*, but his descriptions of them lack detail. He first notes the four *Allegories of Love: Respect; Unfaithfulness; Happy Union; and Scorn* (c. 1575; National Gallery, London) that hung on the ceiling of the room.¹⁴⁴ Seven other works by Veronese occupied the highest register of paintings on the walls. Tessin refers to four of them as *Mars and Venus, Venus with Mercury and Cupid, Venus and Adonis*, and a painting of *Europa*. All of the works by Veronese listed at the beginning of Belli's inventory came from Prague (besides a lost *Rachel at the Well* that Tessin does not mention; see Appendix). These include the four *Allegories of Love* and seven paintings that correspond with Tessin's descriptions. It can be inferred that the works hanging beneath the *Allegories of Love* were *Mars and Venus United by Love* (1570s; Metropolitan Museum), *Mercury, Herse, and Aglauros* (1576-84; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), *Venus Deploring the Death of Adonis* (c. 1570; Nationalmuseum, Stockholm), *Wisdom and Strength* (c. 1565; Frick Collection), *Vice and Virtue* (c.1565; Frick Collection), *The Rape of Europa* (c. 1575; National Gallery, London), and *Venus Arming Mars* (known only through a copy in a private collection).¹⁴⁵

Both inventories include four paintings by Antonio da Correggio and one each by Annibale Carracci, Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola (Parmigianino), Guido Reni, and Guido Cagnacci. Two Correggio paintings are originals: *Leda and the Swan* (1531-32; Gemäldegalerie, Berlin) and *Danaë* (c.

¹⁴⁴ Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 185; W. R. Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 126, n.64.

¹⁴⁵ Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese*, 133 n. 68; Biermann, "The Virtue of a King and the Desire of a Woman?," 218; Nordenfalk, ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 484 n. 1195; Xavier F. Salomon, *Veronese* (London: National Gallery Company, 2014), 261 n. 38; Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese*, 132, fig 43.

1531; Galleria Borghese, Rome).¹⁴⁶ The other two were thought to be originals in their day but have since been deemed copies. These are *Jupiter and Io* (present location unknown, formerly in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin) and *Education of Amor* (Le duc d'Ursel, Brussels).¹⁴⁷ The locations of Caravaggio's *Sacrifice of Isaac*, Michelangelo's *Ganymede* (now thought to be a copy), Cagnacci's nude female martyr, and Guido Reni's *Head of a Man (Saint Peter)* are currently unknown.¹⁴⁸ Annibale Carracci's *Danaë* was destroyed at Bridgewater House in 1941, so the copy after Parmigianino's *Cupid Whittling his Bow* (c. 1600; Collection of Mr. Jan and Mr. Anders Pyk, Stockholm) is the only extant work from this group besides the three by Correggio.¹⁴⁹

Both inventories list two portraits each by Anthony van Dyck and Jacopo Bassano.¹⁵⁰ The current locations of all four are unknown. Tessin lists Van Dyck's portraits as a mother and son, and Belli characterizes them as a young noble boy and an English woman. Tessin does not characterize the portraits by Jacopo Bassano, but Belli describes them as an old man and old woman.

At the end of both inventories of the *stanza dei quadri* is a series of six paintings by Giulio Licinio, listed as the history of the Sabines by Giulio Romano.¹⁵¹ Today these are known as the *Scenes from Roman History* (after 1566), and they include four works at the

¹⁴⁶ Nordenfalk, ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 472; Biermann, "The Virtue of a King and the Desire of a Woman?," 213.

¹⁴⁷ Biermann, "The Virtue of a King and the Desire of a Woman?," 215, 218.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 218.

¹⁴⁹ Biermann, "The Virtue of a King and the Desire of a Woman?," 217; Nordenfalk, ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 475, n. 1174.

¹⁵⁰ Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 185; Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 340, 343-45.

¹⁵¹ Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 185; Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 345.

National Gallery in London (*The Attack on Cartagena, The Continnence of Scipio, The Rape of the Sabines*, and *The Intervention of the Sabine Women*) and two in the Morrison Collection at Basildon Park (*Coriolanus* and *Scipio Rewarding the Soldiers*).¹⁵²

Tessin introduces the *stanza dei quadri* with a description of an ornamental mirror commissioned by Christina from Gianlorenzo Bernini.¹⁵³ While visiting Christina, Tessin also drew a copy after the mirror, preserved today at the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm (Fig. 4).¹⁵⁴ His description in the inventory includes several panes of glass joined by Bernini's sculpted marble frame. His drawing corroborates this description and shows a winged figure of Time at the top of the mirror pulling back drapery to reveal the reflection of the viewer as Truth. An ancient Greek bronze head of Alexander the Great (today in the Prado, entitled *Head of an Athlete*; Fig. 5) sat directly in front of the mirror so that the viewer would see his or her reflection alongside Alexander.¹⁵⁵ Bernini's mirror and the bronze head were the only works of sculpture and the only examples of commissioned or antique art in the *stanza dei quadri*.

As stated previously, only the works that appear in both Tessin's description and Belli's inventory will be discussed in this thesis, with one exception.¹⁵⁶ Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino (Raphael)'s *Madonna del Passeggio* (c. 1516; National Galleries of Scotland) is the

¹⁵² Nordenfalk, ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, 486, n. 1203.

¹⁵³ Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 185.

¹⁵⁴ Inv. No. NMH THC 1109. Zirpolo, "Christina of Sweden's Patronage of Bernini," 40.

¹⁵⁵ Biermann, "The Virtue of a King and the Desire of a Woman?," 218.

¹⁵⁶ The works from Belli's inventory that will not be considered are Jacopo Tintoretto's *Portrait of a Gentleman* (c. 1580; National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh), a portrait by Correggio, two portraits by Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino (Raphael), Palma Vecchio's *Sibyl* (Royal Collection, Windsor), and Veronese's *Rachel at the Well* (lost). Nordenfalk, ed., *Christina Queen of Sweden*, n. 1185, 475 n. 1173; Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 336-45, inv. nos. 38, 22, 35, 39, 24, 11.

only work that does not appear in Tessin's inventory that will be included in this discussion, because Bellori groups it with two works that hung in the room.¹⁵⁷ He characterizes Christina's collection by naming Raphael's *Madonna del Passeggio*, Correggio's *Leda*, and Annibale Carracci's *Danaë*.¹⁵⁸ According to Tessin, the *stanza dei quadri* held the queen's most prized possessions, and, as she esteemed Raphael above all other artists, it follows that the *Madonna del Passeggio* (her largest and most impressive work by Raphael) would have been displayed there.¹⁵⁹

The Observations

Having identified forty-eight works to consider, a few interesting points may be made regarding the artists and subjects represented in Christina's most prized room. There were at least sixteen painters represented: Paolo Veronese (1528-88); Tiziano Vecelli (Titian; 1485-1576); Lambert Sustris (c. 1515-84); Dosso Dossi (c. 1490-1542); Antonio da Correggio (1489-1534); Annibale Carracci (1560-1609); Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610); Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564); Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola, called Parmigianino (1503-40); Guido Cagnacci (1601-63); Guido Reni (1575-1642); Palma Vecchio (c. 1480-1528); Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641); Jacopo Bassano (1510-92); Giulio Licino (c. 1527-84); and Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino (1483-1520). According to the inventories, Christina's contemporaries considered the works by

¹⁵⁷ Biermann, "The Virtue of a King and the Desire of a Woman?," 217; Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 336-45, inv. no. 41.

¹⁵⁸ Bellori, *Nota delli Musei, Librerie, Gallerie & ornamenti*, 53.

¹⁵⁹ According to Belli's inventory, Christina owned ten paintings by Raphael: *Madonna del Passeggio* (p. 344), two portraits (p. 343), a head of an old woman 354, a depiction of an antique bust 357, and the five predella panels from the Sant'Angelo convent (p. 358-59). His measurements of these works suggest that the *Madonna del Passeggio* was the largest, and its mention by Bellori in his *Nota delli Musei* supports that it was considered the most impressive.

Palma Vecchio, Lambert Sustris and Dosso Dossi to be by Titian and those of Giulio Licinio to be by Giulio Romano.

Except for Lambert Sustris (Amsterdam) and Van Dyck (Antwerp), all of these artists were Italian.¹⁶⁰ Both Sustris and Van Dyck, however, worked in Italy and were influenced by Titian, and Christina and her contemporaries would have viewed their works as Italianesque. Sustris painted landscape backgrounds in Titian's workshop and adopted his master's style for his own paintings.¹⁶¹ This information explains why Belli's inventory attributes Sustris's *Education of Cupid* to Titian. Van Dyck was also highly influenced by the work of Titian and made several drawings in his Italian sketchbook after Titian's works in the 1620s.¹⁶² He even sketched some of the works that would later hang in Christina's *stanza dei quadri*, including Veronese's *Respect* and *Unfaithfulness* from the *Allegories of Love*.¹⁶³ Van Dyck was famous in Italy for his portraiture. In fact, Giovanni Pietro Bellori wrote in his *Lives of Modern Painters* (1672) that Van Dyck was the best portrait painter since Titian.¹⁶⁴ Given the Italian influence on Van Dyck's work and the Roman attitude toward his portraits, it is not surprising that Christina chose to display two of them among her treasured collection of Venetian Renaissance paintings.

¹⁶⁰ Sydney Joseph Freedberg, "Venice 1540-1600," in *Paintings in Italy, 1500-1600*, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 534; Giovanni Pietro Bellori, "Life of Anthony van Dyck of Antwerp, Painter," in *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. Alice Sedgewick Wohl (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 215.

¹⁶¹ Freedberg, "Venice 1540-1600," 534.

¹⁶² Anton Van Dyck, *Italienisches Skizzenbuch eine Nachauflage der 1940 von Gert Adriani* (Vienna: Verlag Anton Schroll & Co, 1965); Christopher Brown, "The Italian Years and the Influence of Titian: 1621-1627," in *Van Dyck* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983): 69.

¹⁶³ Van Dyck, *Italienisches Skizzenbuch*, 35-36.

¹⁶⁴ Bellori, "Life of Anthony van Dyck of Antwerp, Painter," 217-18.

The life dates of the painters range from 1475 to 1663, but only six works (by Van Dyck, Caravaggio, Carracci, Cagnacci, and Reni) in the room could have been made in the seventeenth century.¹⁶⁵ Most of the paintings were created during the Renaissance. Veronese and Titian painted about half of the art in the *stanza dei quadri*. According to Tessin, Veronese's works were displayed in the most prominent positions at the top of the walls and on the ceiling.¹⁶⁶ These statistics suggest that Christina was less active as a collector of contemporary paintings than as a collector of paintings from the previous century, primarily from the Venetian school.

The subjects represented in the *stanza dei quadri* included twenty-one mythologies, six allegories, nine portraits, six biblical scenes, and Licinio's series of six *Scenes from Roman History* (see Appendix). The mythological paintings dominated the room. More than half of the mythological paintings and about a quarter of the works in the *stanza dei quadri* included depictions of Venus, the Roman goddess of love and beauty.¹⁶⁷ She appeared with Mars, with Adonis, with Cupid, and by herself. Belli attributes six of these depictions to Titian, five to Veronese, and one to Correggio. Thus, eleven of the twelve depictions of Venus came from the Venetian Renaissance school. Veronese was especially well known during Christina's time for his paintings of Venus. In Marco Boschini's *La carta del navigar*

¹⁶⁵ This excludes the copy of Parmigianino's *Cupid Whittling his Bow*. The painting was considered autograph by Parmigianino (1503-40), so its estimated date of 1600 will be ignored in this discussion of how the paintings would have been categorized by Christina.

¹⁶⁶ Tessin, *Nicodemus Tessin*, 185.

¹⁶⁷ This calculation includes Veronese's *Respect* and *Unfaithfulness* from his *Allegories of Love* because Belli's inventory identifies the figures in these paintings as Venus and Mars. Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 337.

pitoresco of 1660, he claims that Venus would have wanted to be portrayed by Veronese, because he could depict her beauty better than any other artist.¹⁶⁸

The twelve large representations of the nude Venus created a program of overt eroticism in Christina's room. In fact, the abundance of female nudity and eroticism is the most striking element of the series of paintings in the *stanza dei quadri*. At least seventeen fully nude and ten half-nude women appear in the forty-eight paintings considered in this thesis (see Appendix).¹⁶⁹ Perhaps the three most erotic paintings, Correggio's *Leda* and *Danaë* and the copy of his *Jupiter and Io* (Figs. 6-8) come from a series of works depicting the loves of Jupiter that also included *Ganymede and the Eagle* (c. 1531; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).¹⁷⁰ In this series, the four figures engage in or await passionate sex with Jupiter, personified in different forms. Ganymede and Leda embrace Jupiter as a bird, while Io and Danaë appear with clouds of smoke and gold respectively.

Although Christina did not own Correggio's *Ganymede and the Eagle*, she completed her set with a painted copy after Michelangelo's drawing of the subject.¹⁷¹ It is interesting to note that Ganymede, a male figure engaging in sex with a male god, was present in Christina's room along with depictions of heterosexual activity. Although the location of Christina's painting is currently unknown, an autograph drawing at the Fogg Museum at

¹⁶⁸ Marco Boschini, *La carta del navegar pitoresco*, (Venice: Baba 1660), 664.

¹⁶⁹ This number includes the cupid in the copy after Parmigianino's *Cupid Whittling his Bow*. In Belli's inventory, the central figure is referred to as a nude woman. This suggests that visitors to Christina's palace probably would have interpreted the cupid as a female figure. Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 342.

¹⁷⁰ David Ekserdjian, "The Mythologies," in *Correggio* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 280.

¹⁷¹ Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 336-76.

Harvard University (Fig. 9) provides clues as to how the painting may have appeared.¹⁷² The drawing shows Ganymede as a nude, grown man succumbing to Jupiter's embrace.¹⁷³ This rendering differs from Correggio's conception of the scene, in which Ganymede appears as a young boy, and sexual activity has yet to occur.¹⁷⁴ Michelangelo later created a second drawing of Ganymede (now lost) for Tommaso de' Cavalieri, a young Roman with whom he was infatuated.¹⁷⁵ This action demonstrates Michelangelo's conception of the subject as sexual and suggests that Christina's copy was overtly erotic.

The three women in Correggio's series, Leda, Danaë and Io, do not resist Jupiter, and Io and Danaë take evident pleasure in his embrace. According to David Ekserdjian, this mutual pleasure would have increased the male viewer's erotic enjoyment.¹⁷⁶ In fact, a later owner of *Leda and the Swan*, Louis, the pious son of Philippe, duc d'Orleans, and regent of France (1715-23), was so aroused by Correggio's depictions of Leda and Io that he destroyed both of their heads and cut Leda's canvas into three pieces to save himself from temptation.¹⁷⁷ The artist who later repaired *Leda and the Swan* depicted her with a

¹⁷² Ekserdjian, "The Mythologies," 289.

¹⁷³ Inventory no. 1955.75. Michael Hirst, "The Making of Presents," in Michelangelo and his Drawings (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 111-13; Ekserdjian, "The Mythologies," 282-84.

¹⁷⁴ Ekserdjian, "The Mythologies," 282.

¹⁷⁵ Michael Hirst argues that the two drawings for which Cavalieri thanks Michelangelo in a letter from Jan. 1, 1533 were the Windsor *Tityus* and the lost *Ganymede*. The letter is published in P. Barocchi and R. Ristori, ed. *Il Carteggio di Michelangelo*, Vol. 3 (Florence, 1965), 445-46; Hirst, *Michelangelo and his Drawings*, 24, 112.

¹⁷⁶ Ekserdjian, "The Mythologies," 288.

¹⁷⁷ Pierre-Jean Mariette, *Catalogue des tableaux, desseins, marbres, bronzes, modèles, estampes et planches gravées ainsi que des bijoux, porcelains, et autres curiosités de prix, du cabinet de feu M. Coypel* (Paris: 1753), 1-5, L1-2.

downturned head and warm smile. A copy of Correggio's original (Prado Museum; Fig. 10), however, shows that, in Christina's time, Leda's head and neck were twisted in ecstasy.¹⁷⁸

The erotic charge of these paintings must have been even more pronounced in a room lined with nude women. When he visited the queen's palace, Philip Skippon remarked that Christina and Cardinal Azzolino received him in a room filled with "indecent" paintings of women, where they listened to music and talked for two hours.¹⁷⁹ Christina was known to speak lustfully of the women in her works. As previously noted, Christina claimed a sexual attraction to a statue of Truth as a nude woman.¹⁸⁰ In her autobiography, Christina declared that, if God had made her a man, she would have been able to refrain from wine, but would have been drawn to sexual excess with women.¹⁸¹ Understood in this context, the works in the *stanza dei quadri* seem more scandalous than they would have in the palace of a woman who appeared modest and heterosexual. Toward the end of Christina's life, Lazare Meysonnier, a seer from Lyon, sent her a letter predicting her imminent death and advising her to publicly burn all of her indecent paintings and break up her sculptures of nude figures.¹⁸²

Although most of the works in the *stanza dei quadri* portrayed pagan mythological subjects, Christina also displayed six Christian paintings: Caravaggio's *Sacrifice of Isaac*; Cagnacci's nude female martyr; Reni's *Head of Saint Peter*; Raphael's *Madonna del*

¹⁷⁸ Ekserdjian, "The Mythologies," 288.

¹⁷⁹ Skippon's remarks are quoted in Hugh Honour, "Queen Christina as Art Collector," *The Connoisseur* 163 (1966): 9.

¹⁸⁰ Quoted in Lacombe, *Histoire de Christine, Reine de Suede*, 200.

¹⁸¹ Christina, "La vie de la reine Christine faite par elle-même, dédiée à Dieu," 93.

¹⁸² Quoted from a letter of the 21 January 1689 in Peter Watson, *Wisdom and Strength: The Biography of a Renaissance Masterpiece* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 162.

Passeggio; and two paintings of Mary Magdalene by Titian. Half of these works (by Cagnacci and Titian) feature depictions of nude women.¹⁸³ Caravaggio's *Sacrifice of Isaac* included the only biblical scene in the room. It seems that the placement of religious subject matter next to erotic paintings did not bother Bellori. He praised Christina's display of the *Madonna del Passeggio* (Fig. 11) alongside Annibale Carracci's *Danaë* (Fig. 12) and Correggio's *Leda*, perhaps the most erotic work in the room.¹⁸⁴

Whereas several portraits in Christina's collection must have been chosen for the *stanza dei quadri* because of their well-known artists, others may have been included due to their subjects. Two of the portraits attributed to Titian in Tessin's inventory, *Laura dei Dianti* by Titian (Fig. 13) and *Portrait of a Man Wearing a Black Beret* by Dosso Dossi (Fig. 14) feature prominent figures that play a role in Christina's room. Dianti (died 1573), daughter of a hat maker in Ferrara, was the mistress of Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara.¹⁸⁵ Although they never married, she was recognized as his widow following his death, and their two sons took their father's name. Like Christina, Dianti defied social norms and the restrictions placed upon her due to her gender and station.

Christina's contemporaries considered the *Portrait of a Man Wearing a Black Beret* to be a portrait of Cesare Borgia by Titian or Correggio. Cesare Borgia (1475-1507) was the son of Pope Alexander VI and widely known in Christina's time as the evil, ruthless Duke

¹⁸³ This statement assumes that both Magdalenes were nude. Belli describes one of them in full and states that the other was similar. Belli, "Catalogo dei Quadri della Regina di Svezia," 343.

¹⁸⁴ Bellori, *Nota delli Musei, Librerie, Gallerie & ornamenti*, 53.

¹⁸⁵ Goffen, *Titian's Women*, 62.

Valentino.¹⁸⁶ Tommaso Tommasi published his *Life of Cesare Borgia* in 1655, just after Christina entered Rome, and Gregorio Leti reprinted it with an expansion in 1670.¹⁸⁷ Both authors characterized Cesare as a terrible tyrant. Tommasi claimed that Cesare thirsted for the blood of his enemies, and Leti wrote that one could hear shrieks from his tomb as the devil punished him for his crimes.¹⁸⁸ The many tales surrounding Cesare included murder, incest, and deceit.¹⁸⁹ These acts were especially scandalous because he left his position as cardinal to gain secular power. Here is another example of a figure who challenged the roles placed on him by his family and society to obtain greater power. Christina's display of Laura dei Dianti and Cesare Borgia among her treasured Italian paintings honors them as powerful figures and introduces intrigue and scandal into the room. Their stories become fantastical when placed next to moral allegories and spectacular mythologies.

The four *Allegories of Love* (Figs. 15-18) on the ceiling would have stood out for their distinctive location and perspective. Due to their large size, Xavier Salomon argues that the works were originally intended to hang on the ceilings of four separate rooms.¹⁹⁰ With all four covering the same ceiling, the effect must have been overwhelming. This series served to blur the line in the *stanza dei quadri* between fantasy and reality. The *sotto in sù* perspective of the paintings situates the viewer below the scene, creating the illusion that

¹⁸⁶ J. N. Hillgarth, "Image of Alexander VI and Cesare Borgia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 59 (1996): 123-24.

¹⁸⁷ Tommaso Tommasi, *La Vita del Duca Valentino* (Montechiaro: Giovanni Battista Lucio Vero, 1655); Gregorio Leti and Tommaso Tommasi, *Vita del Duca Valentino, descritta da Tommaso Tommasi; nuovamente ristampata, con una aggiunta confiderabile: il tutto raccolto dalla diligenza e cura di G. Leti* (Montechiaro: Giovanni Battista Lucio Vero, 1670).

¹⁸⁸ Leti and Tommasi, *Vita del Duca Valentino*, 465.

¹⁸⁹ Hillgarth, "Image of Alexander VI and Cesare Borgia," 122-24

¹⁹⁰ Salomon, *Veronese*, 188.

the figures actually stand above the room. The open sky, vegetation, cupids, and classical ruins enhance this illusion by suggesting that the ceiling opens up to the sky and that the viewer stands in a fantastical realm among mythological figures. These paintings place the other works in the room within this realm of fantasy and love. Bernini's mirror would have contributed to this blurring between fantasy and reality as it reflected the viewer's visage among the mythological figures on the opposite wall.

The mirror, titled *Truth Revealed by Time*, and the bronze head of Alexander served a specific purpose as the only sculptures, the only commission, and the only antique object in the room. The figure of Time atop the reflective mirror pulls away the drapery to reveal the reflection of the viewer as Truth.¹⁹¹ Christina's reflection would appear as Truth just above the face of Alexander. This allegorical interpretation would have been obvious in a room covered with mythological allegories. As noted in the previous chapter, Christina identified with Alexander and, in this mirror, would have seen a representation of her Catholic name, Christina Alexandra.¹⁹² In this context, Christina would assume the attributes of Alexander, namely masculinity and power.

Lilian Zirpolo has argued that the mirror was commissioned in response to the scorn Christina received after executing her equerry, Marquis Gian Rinaldo Monaldesco, at Fontainebleau. Based on a letter she intercepted, Christina accused Monaldesco of leaking her intentions to invade Naples and take its throne. She interrogated him and eventually sentenced him to death. Peter Le Bel, the prior of the nearby Monastery of the Holy Trinity, published an account of the event that described how Monaldesco had been struck in the

¹⁹¹ Zirpolo, "Christina of Sweden's Patronage of Bernini," 40.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 41.

abdomen and throat and left gasping for air for fifteen minutes before he died.¹⁹³ The public viewed this execution as extreme and unnecessary.¹⁹⁴ Christina later wrote, “I know in my conscience that I operated within my Divine and human justice.”¹⁹⁵ If the mirror was a response to this public backlash, its placement in the *stanza dei quadri* suggests that the room would have been visited by several people who might have understood its message.

This survey and categorization of works in the *stanza dei quadri* confirms that Christina was especially fond of erotic mythological paintings from the Venetian Renaissance school. The forty-eight works considered in this thesis reflect Christina’s construction of her own public identity and her strategy for remaining in favor with the Roman Catholic Church as a gender-ambiguous, blasphemous queen without a crown.

¹⁹³ Pater Le Bel’s account is in the British Museum (Inv. No. Harleian Ms. 3493, fol. 8-110). Christina later wrote her own account that includes the same details as Le Bel’s, and it is preserved in the Vatican Library (Vat. Lat 8193 [2] fol. 512-17).

¹⁹⁴ For example, see: *Histoire de la vie de la reine de Suede* (Fribourg, 1667); *Il Concubinato scandaloso e publico in Roma dell’ Cardinale Azzolini, con la Regina di Suetia* (Italy, 1679).

¹⁹⁵ Letter from Christina to Captain Santinelli, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 8193 [2] fol. 510, translated in Zirpolo, “Christina of Sweden’s Patronage of Bernini,” 40.

CHAPTER 3.

CHRISTINA'S PROMOTION OF HER 'BODY-POLITIC'

In her book entitled *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces: Use and the Art of the Plan* (1990), Patricia Waddy argues that palace residents used architecture, decoration, and display to reflect their identity and that of their family.¹⁹⁶ She contends that Roman palace construction and art collections influenced public reputation.¹⁹⁷ For example, a resident's rank usually correlated to the number of antechambers preceding the audience chamber.¹⁹⁸ Consistent with this dynamic between resident and palace, Christina went to great lengths to remodel her rented Palazzo Riario. Despite the rental agreement's stipulation that she maintain the structure of the palace, Christina knocked down walls, added secret staircases, and constructed bridges between buildings.¹⁹⁹ Christina's remodeling and redecoration of the Palazzo Riario illustrate her desire to transform the palace into a royal residence that would reflect her tastes and represent her public identity.

This chapter will examine Christina's display of art in her *stanza dei quadri* as an assertion of the masculine body-politic as described in the introduction. It will outline the importance of display and performance in the seventeenth-century Roman palace, consider how Christina's display of art relates to those of other Roman women and royal men,

¹⁹⁶ Patricia Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces: Use and the Art of the Plan* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1990); See also Gail Feigenbaum, "Introduction: Art and Display in Principle and in Practice," in *Display of Art in the Roman Palace, 1550-1750*, ed. Gail Feigenbaum (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2014), 1-24.

¹⁹⁷ Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces*, 58.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁹⁹ Borsellino, *Palazzo Corsini alla Lungara*, 29.

analyze the public image that Christina presented through various media, and decipher the implications of Christina's display of specific works of art in her *stanza dei quadri*.

The Dynamics of Display in the Roman Palace

Seventeenth-century Roman palace residents strove to convey two qualities with their interior and exterior displays: *magnificenza* and *splendore*. Aristotle first introduced the concept of *splendore* in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, but Giovanni Pontano considered both categories in his book, *De splendore* (part of the *Libri delle virtù sociale*, 1498).²⁰⁰ In Rome, *magnificenza* signified a public show of wealth that elicited the admiration of others and led to increased power for the individual.²⁰¹ *Splendore* was, instead, a private virtue that involved the cultivation of taste, brilliance, and cleverness and thus turned wealth into knowledge. In the seventeenth century, high-ranking Romans utilized these concepts to design and decorate their palaces.²⁰² While *magnificenza* was typically associated with the public exterior of the palace, *splendore* could be seen through display and decoration of the palace interior. Both virtues required the acknowledgement and interaction of the public, but the display of *splendore* was typically aimed toward friends visiting the palace interior.

Hosts and visitors alike followed strict, choreographed protocols involving the acknowledgement of rank within the palace interior.²⁰³ Books on etiquette such as *Il maestro di camera*, first published in 1621 by Francesco Sestini da Bibbiena, explained how

²⁰⁰ Giovanni Pontano, *Libri delle virtù sociali*, ed. Francesco Tateo (Rome: Bolzoni, 1999).

²⁰¹ Renata Ago, "Splendor and Magnificence," in *Display of Art in the Roman Palace, 1550-1750*, ed. Gail Feigenbaum, trans. Thomas V. Cohen (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2014), 65-66.

²⁰² Ago, "Splendor and Magnificence," 63-68.

²⁰³ For more information, see Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces*, 6.

the host and guest should interact, depending on the rank of each party.²⁰⁴ These instructions involved details such as: where a host should greet and bid farewell to a guest (measured by the number of steps past a doorway); how many carriages the guest should bring; whether a bell should be rung announcing the guest; how the chairs should be arranged; who should initiate the conversation; and what clothing should be worn. The books delineated rank down to the differences between the ambassadors of Tuscany, Malta, Bologna, and Ferrara.²⁰⁵ Foreigners such as Christina could reference etiquette books that included nuances that might not be apparent to non-Romans.²⁰⁶ Infractions of this performance were deemed highly offensive, and hosts would often put off their visitors for a few hours in order to determine proper protocol according to their rank.²⁰⁷

Visitors to the Roman palace also included those participating in tours of interior collections that were described in guidebooks such as Bellori's *Nota delli Musei, Librerie, Gallerie, & oranamenti di Statue, e pitture, né Palazzi, nelle Case, e né Giardini di Roma* (1664). During these tours, learned men could understand and discuss the hidden meanings and implications of display as representations of the resident's *splendore*.²⁰⁸ In Bellori's book, after praising her palace as "*magnificentissimo*," he mentioned what he considered to be the most impressive works in Christina's painting collection: Correggio's

²⁰⁴ Francesco Sestini da Bibbiena, *Il maestro di camera* (Florence: Z. Pignoni, 1621).

²⁰⁵ Sestini da Bibbiena, *Il maestro di camera*, 219-23.

²⁰⁶ F. Tantouche, *Traicté de tout ce qui s'observe en la cour de Rome, tant par nostre saint Père que par Messieurs les... cardinaux, touchant les cérémonies des chapelles, consistoires, visites, grand jubilé vacances du S. Siège et autres* (Paris: J. Ballagny, 1623).

²⁰⁷ Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces*, 4.

²⁰⁸ Jean-Jacques Boissard, *Romanae Urbis topographiae et antiquitatum, qua succincte et breviter describuntur Omnia qua tam publice quam privatim vedentur animadversioe digna* (Frankfurt: Theodor de Bry, 1597-1602), quoted in Ago, "Splendor and Magnificence," 69.

Leda; Raphael's *Madonna del Passeggio*; Annibale Carracci's *Danaë*; Titian's works; and Veronese's allegories.²⁰⁹ The fact that all of these hung in the *stanza dei quadri* implies that this room was the pinnacle of Christina's display of paintings and would have received great attention from her visitors. According to a history of Christina's life supposedly written by one of her employees, the *stanza dei quadri* was open to visitors, and it was common for him to give a tour to ten people at a time.²¹⁰ The author notes that Christina frequently spied on visitors to her *stanza dei quadri* through a window at the top of the ceiling. Watching her guests allowed Christina to view their reactions to her display of *splendore*. She would also greet guests in the *stanza dei quadri* and spend hours there listening to music and conversing.²¹¹

Bellori's guidebook included only three collections owned by women, and Christina's received the most attention. The two other women were Marchesa Felice Zacchia Rondinini and Marchesa Cristiana Duglioli Angelelli.²¹² Felice became a high-ranking member of Roman society because of her strong ties to the Vatican.²¹³ She was the niece of Cardinal Paolo Emilio Zacchia, daughter of Cardinal Laudivio Zacchia, mother of Cardinal Paolo Emilio Rondinini, and wife of the apostolic secretary Marchese Alessandro Rondinini. Upon becoming the head of household after the death of her husband in 1639,

²⁰⁹ Bellori, *Nota delli Musei, Librerie, Gallerie & Ornamenti*, 52-54.

²¹⁰ Christian Gottfried Franckenstein, *Histoire des intrigues galantés de la Reine Christine de Suede et de sa cour pendant son sejour à Rome* (Amsterdam: Tan Henri, 1697), 224.

²¹¹ Skippon's remarks are quoted in Honour, "Queen Christina as Art Collector," 9.

²¹² A more complete account of Angelelli's collections is recorded in an inventory from 1650, published in Francesca Curti, *Committenza, collezionismo e mercato dell'arte tra Roma e Bologna nel Seicento: La quadreria di Cristiana Duglioli Angelelli* (Rome: Gangemi, 2007).

²¹³ Ingo Herklotz, "Antiquities in the Palaces: Aristocratic, Antiquarian, and Religious," in *Display of Art in the Roman Palace, 1550-1750*, ed. Gail Feigenbaum, 234-49 (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2014), 246.

Felice began collecting art and relics to fill her Palazzo Rondinini. Bellori included a short passage in his book about her collection of antique medals and statues and mentions a fresco by Correggio and some landscapes by Domenichino.²¹⁴ Cristiana Duglioli Angelelli, a prominent Bolognese noblewoman, moved to Rome in 1643 following the assassination of her husband.²¹⁵ Bellori noted her sizeable collection of Bolognese paintings (including Guido Reni's *Saint Francis* and Annibale Carracci's *Resurrection*) and her *cappella delle reliquie* in which she displayed relics of more than two hundred saints and allegedly held public masses.²¹⁶ Female patrons and collectors of art in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were often widows like Rondinini and Angelelli who enjoyed increased financial and legal autonomy following the deaths of their husbands.²¹⁷ These women primarily commissioned works that reflected their family's identity and their religious piety.

Christina's collection differs from these examples in scope and function. As will be described below, her works on display in the *stanza dei quadri* follow the example of male rulers. For now, it is important to note that, as an unmarried monarch who had fled her native country, Christina was not interested in representing her Wasa family identity. One would expect her collections, like those of Cristiana Duglioli Angelelli, to reflect the traditions of her home. Instead, Christina virtually excludes works by northern artists

²¹⁴ Bellori, *Nota delli Musei, Librerie, Gallerie & Ornamenti*, 48.

²¹⁵ Herklotz, "Antiquities in the Palaces," 246.

²¹⁶ Bellori, *Nota delli Musei, Librerie, Gallerie & Ornamenti*, 7-8; Herklotz, "Antiquities in the Palaces," 247.

²¹⁷ David Wilkins, "Introduction: Recognizing New Patrons, Posing New Questions," in *Beyond Isabella: Secular Women Patrons of Art in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Sheryl E. Reiss and David Wilkins (Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2001), 4; Cynthia Lawrence, "Introduction," in *Women and Art in Early Modern Europe: Patrons, Collectors, and Connoisseurs* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 10-11.

(except Rubens and Van Dyck) and focuses her collection on Italian Renaissance paintings depicting classical history and mythology and ancient Roman coins, medals, and sculpture. Although this certainly reflected her taste, it also distanced her from Protestant Sweden and linked her with Catholic Rome as her new and rightful home. However, her collections included very little religious subject matter and an abundance of mythological imagery, so it seems that Christina was more interested in Rome for its ties to classical history than for its contemporary Catholic church.

Christina's Textual, Visual and Performative Self-Presentation

Before considering the works in the *stanza dei quadri* as public statements about Christina's royal identity, it is necessary to examine how she portrayed herself in other contexts and media. Christina's writings include more than 1600 letters, maxims, historical essays, and an autobiography and are preserved mostly at the Royal Archives and Royal Library in Stockholm and the University Library at Montpellier.²¹⁸ In Christina's unfinished autobiography, she consistently describes herself as embodying the royal male gender and triumphing over the weakness of her female sex. She demonstrates these concepts most clearly through a description of her education. Christina claims that she received a princely

²¹⁸ Christina's autobiography is held in Stockholm, Riksarkivet, Azzolino-Samlingen 37. A list and description of these documents is published in Børresen, "Christina's Discourse on God and Humanity," 44. The following sources include transcriptions of some of Christina's writings: Arckenholtz, ed., *Memoires concernant Christine de Suède*; Carl Bildt, ed., *Christine de Suède et le cardinal Azzolino: Lettres inédites 1666-1668*. (Paris: E. Plon-Nourrit, 1899); Carl Bildt, *Christine de Suède et le conclave de Clément X (1669-1670)* (Paris: E. Plon-Nourrit, 1906); Carl Bildt, ed., *Pensées de Christine Reine de Suède* (Stockholm: Norstedt & Söners, 1906); Sven Stolpe, ed., *Drottning Kristinas Maximer. Les Sentiments Héroïques*. (Stockholm, 1959); Jean-François de Raymond, ed., *Christine reine de Suède: Apologies* (Paris: du Cerf, 1994); Marie Conforti, Antonella Moscati and Marina Santucci, ed., *Cristina di Svezia: La vita scritta da lei stessa* (Naples: Cronopio, 2002).

education that created in her an aversion to all things feminine.²¹⁹ Christina further states that, though her body was female, her soul was “entirely male.”²²⁰

Another medium through which Christina displayed her public identity in Rome was portraiture. Specifically, Michael Dahl’s *Portrait of Queen Christina* (1687; Fig. 19) shows her adorned with accouterments of royalty: an ermine mantle embroidered with crowns; her own crown and scepter on the table beside her; and a globe on which she leans. Two elements of the painting tie her to Rome: the portrait of Pope Alexander VII on Christina’s brooch and the view of Saint Peter’s that is visible beyond the swag of red cloth. Despite this reference to the Vatican’s support, Christina proclaims her independence with a gesture toward the inscription on a scroll that falls from the globe. It reads “neither necessary nor sufficient for me” (*né mi bisogna né mi basta*). With this inscription, Christina claims that she does not need to rule over earthly territory to retain her God-given, royal status and that no crown could ever be enough for her.

Christina also communicates this idea through the commission of a portrait medal by Massimiliano Soldani Benzi that was intended as part of a never-completed series of 118 medals showing allegorical representations of her life. Soldani’s design and Cardinal Decio Azzolino’s accompanying descriptions, edited by Christina, are recorded in *Roversci di medaglioni con li loro motti*. One of these designs shows a winged victory figure on the verso crowning herself with a laurel wreath and holding a palm frond. Azzolino’s

²¹⁹ “Le roi avait ordonné à toutes ces personnes de me donner une éducation toute virile, et de m'apprendre tout ce qu'un jeune prince doit savoir. Il déclara positivement qu'il ne voulait pas qu'on m'inspirât aucun de sentiments de mon sexe, que les seuls de l'honnêteté. Il voulait que dans tout le reste je fusse prince, et prince digne de régner. Ce fut en cela que mes inclinations secondèrent merveilleusement ses desseins, car j'eus une aversion et une antipathie invincibles pour tout ce que font et disent les femmes.” Christina, “La vie de la reine Christine faite par elle-même, dédiée à Dieu,” 121.

²²⁰ Christina, “La vie de la reine Christine faite par elle-même, dédiée à Dieu,” 93.

description explains that this design characterizes Christina's abdication as the ultimate victory in which she placed the world at her feet.²²¹ Around the time that Soldani created these designs (c. 1680), he completed a separate portrait medal that shows Christina in a similar manner (Fig. 20). Here, she appears as Minerva, Roman goddess of war, holding an orb that represents the world. A winged Victory figure stands atop the orb and crowns her with a laurel wreath. The inscription, *Possis nihil urbe Roma uisere maius* (May you never see any city greater than Rome), suggests that Christina's victorious abdication allowed her to enter a city worthy of her greatness. With these portraits, Christina presents herself as royal and portrays her abdication and lack of a physical kingdom as testimonies to her divine right to her title and promoters of her status.

Christina also conveyed her royal status and identity through performance. During a visit from Pope Alexander VII to Christina's palace, she met him at the foot of the stairs and walked with him up to the royal audience chamber.²²² At the end of their meeting, Christina followed the pope down the stairs but ordered her guards not to alert him to this act. When he discovered that she did not stop at the top of the stairs, as befitted her rank, he refused to continue his exit until she had retraced her steps. Although it seems as if Christina was suggesting that she considered her rank to be far lower than that of the pope, her deliberate break with protocol suggests that she felt as if she could do as she pleased. It

²²¹ "Questo rovescio ci rappresenta la gloria del regno vittorioso e quella sua gloriosa abdicazione. Questa grande Regina riportò tante celebri vittorie su tutti i suoi nemici per mare e per terra, tanto da ingrandire il suo regno con molte e belle province...Ma tanta Gloria ha ceduto a quella sua abdicazione, in cui essa trionfò di se stessa con la più splendida delle vittorie, ponendo il mondo ai suoi piedi, ed è questa vittoria che merita di esser chiamata la più grande, Victoria Maxima." Transcribed in Zirpolo, "Severed Torsos and Metaphorical Transformations," 47, n.48; Benedetta Ballico, ed. *Le medaglie dei Soldani per Cristina di Svezia*, (Florence: Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 1983), 20.

²²² Pier Bartolo Romanelli, "Etichetta e Precedenze a Roma durante il Soggiorno di Cristina di Svezia." *Il Giornale di Politica e di Letteratura* 7, no. 1-3 (1931): 43.

also forced the pope to insist that she acknowledge her higher rank and treat him as an equal.²²³ From 1681-88, Christina was at odds with a number of cardinals because she granted Orazio del Monte, a high-ranking member of her household, the title *Eccellenza*, the same title given to a cardinal.²²⁴ Christina required that visitors to her palace also address del Monte in this way, because she viewed him as her ambassador and used him as such. Again, Christina broke protocol and asserted her royal power to bend the rules.

The Presence of Christina's Paintings in Royal Male Collections

As noted in the previous chapter, more than half of the paintings Christina displayed in the *stanza dei quadri* came from her 1648 plunder of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II's famous collection at Hradčany Castle in Prague. Like Christina, Rudolf (1552-1612) refused to marry. He became the subject of gossip concerning his sexual escapades with his many concubines.²²⁵ In 1604, Karel van Mander referred to Rudolf as "the greatest art patron in the world,"²²⁶ and his castle became a cultural center where artists could study and show off their works. Many artists, such as Bartholomaeus Spranger, Giuseppe Arcimboldo, Hans von Aachen, and Adriaen de Vries, resided at his court and churned out works of art that

²²³ A guest equal in rank to his host, such as a cardinal and a cardinal, would part ways at the top of the stairs. Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces*, 5.

²²⁴ Camilla Eleonora Kandare, "Figuring a Queen: Queen Christina of Sweden and the Embodiment of Sovereignty" (dissertation, University of California, Riverside, 2009), 304; Following a decree made by Pope Urban VIII in 1630, cardinals were seen as princes of the church and shared equal status with princes of noble blood. Gail Feigenbaum, "Introduction: Art and Display," 6.

²²⁵ Cited in Peter Marshall, *The Magic Circle of Rudolf II: Alchemy and Astrology in Renaissance Prague* (New York: Walker & Co., 2009), 58.

²²⁶ Karel van Mander, "Voor-reden, op den grondt der edel vry Schilder-Const," *Het Schilderboeck waer in Voor eerst de leerlustighe lueght den grondt der Edel Vry Schilderconst in Verscheyden deelen Wort voorghedraghen* (Haarlem, 1604).

were mostly erotic mythologies or flattering allegories.²²⁷ In addition to his patronage, Rudolf inherited a large number of Renaissance works commissioned by his grandfather Ferdinand I and father Maximilian II. Rudolf displayed these collections throughout his castle in Prague.

Twenty-eight of the forty-eight works displayed in the *stanza dei quadri* came from this castle. This group includes all eleven paintings by Veronese, all four of the works considered to be by Correggio, five out of eleven works considered to be by Titian, the six *Scenes from Roman History* by Giulio Licinio, and the copies after Michelangelo's *Ganymede* and Parmigianino's *Cupid Whittling his Bow*. All of these works are Italian Renaissance paintings, and most are Venetian. This selection does not, however, reflect Rudolf's collections. His painting collection contained works from various locations and time periods, and his collections as a whole included a large variety of art objects, such as jewels, coins, sculpture, mosaics, relics, furniture, and tapestries.²²⁸ The artists at his court were mostly Northern European mannerist painters and sculptors.²²⁹ Rudolf's collection can be understood as an encyclopedia of visual culture, and van Mander described it as "a remarkable number of outstanding and precious, curious, unusual, and priceless works."²³⁰

Although Christina's Venetian Renaissance paintings did not reflect Rudolf's collection as a whole, their erotic mythological subject matter reflected the core of his

²²⁷ R. J. W. Evans, *Rudolf II and his World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 168; Marshall, *The Magic Circle of Rudolf II*, 61-62.

²²⁸ An inventory of Rudolf's collections is published in R. Bauer and H. Haupt, *Das Kunstkammerinventar Kaiser Rudolfs II., 1607-1611*, vol. 72 of *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* (Vienna: A. Schroll, 1976); For a description of his collections and curiosities, see Evans, *Rudolf II and his World*, 176-78.

²²⁹ Evans, *Rudolf II and his World*, 163-65.

²³⁰ Van Mander, "Voor-reden, op den grondt der edel vry Schilder-Const."

artistic interests. Spranger, Rudolf's most famous painter, set the precedent for the creation of erotic mythologies at his court.²³¹ The eroticism of Christina's works pales in comparison with paintings by Spranger, such as *Hercules, Deianira and the Centaur Nessus* (Fig. 21; 1580-82, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). Christina did not bring any of Spranger's works to Rome, which suggests that, although she obviously valued the erotic nature of the works in her *stanza dei quadri*, she also had a particular taste for their Venetian style and origins.

Christina's display of plundered artworks links her to centuries of rulers who had claimed treasures in the cities they conquered. Christina, thoroughly versed in classical literature and history, would have viewed her plunder of Rudolf's collection as a symbol of her triumph in war. Their display represents a visual triumph over a powerful male ruler and links Christina to a line of royal men who had owned them previously. According to Vasari's "Life of Correggio," Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, Rudolf's grandfather, received at least two of Correggio's *Loves of Jove* (*Danaë* and *Leda and the Swan*) as gifts from Duke Federigo Gonzaga of Mantua, who stipulated in the commission that they should be worthy of the Emperor.²³² Christina would have known Vasari's account and perhaps inferred that Correggio's *Ganymede* and *Jupiter and Io* were commissioned under similar circumstances, as they also ended up in the collections of Charles V and subsequently Rudolf II.²³³

²³¹ Sally Ann Metzler, *Bartholomeus Spranger: Splendor and Eroticism in Imperial Prague* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014), 44, 47.

²³² Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of Seventy of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, Vol. 3, ed. Blashfield and Hopkins (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1902), 25.

²³³ Ekserdjian, *Correggio*, 284.

Both Charles V and his son, Philip II of Spain (Rudolf's uncle) greatly admired Titian and commissioned several works by him. Among those painted for Philip II are Titian's *Venus at her Toilet*, *Mary Magdalene*, *Venus and an Organist (probably Philip II)*, *Venus and Adonis*, and *Diana and Actaeon*.²³⁴ While none of these paintings appeared in the *stanza dei quadri*, all were represented by a nearly identical version by Titian or a copy that was considered autograph. Philip also received a *Rape of Europa* (Gardener Museum in Boston) and a *Danaë* (The Wellington Collection, Apsley House) by Titian. Both of these subjects also appeared in the *stanza dei quadri*. Xavier Salomon has recently suggested that Maximilian II, Rudolf's predecessor and father, was a possible patron for the *Four Allegories of Love*, *Mars and Venus United by Love*, *Wisdom and Strength*, and *Vice and Virtue*.²³⁵

Whether Christina knew the provenance of each work in her *stanza dei quadri*, she would certainly have known that Rudolf's collection contained works commissioned by previous Hapsburg rulers, such as Charles V and Philip II. She also would have known that Titian and Veronese worked extensively for male rulers. In his expanded 1568 version of *Lives of the Artists*, Giorgio Vasari stated that all princes and distinguished men coveted Titian's works.²³⁶ In 1648, Carlo Ridolfi claimed that there was a taste for Veronese among lords and princes.²³⁷ Due to their princely commissions, many of these works feature subject matter specifically geared toward royalty. By displaying the paintings in her palace,

²³⁴ Goffen, *Titian's Women*, 133, 173, 160, 224, 253.

²³⁵ Salomon, *Veronese*, 175-188.

²³⁶ Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of Seventy of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, Vol. 4, ed. E.H. and E.W. Blashfield and A.A. Hopkins.(New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1902), 296-97.

²³⁷ Carlo Ridolfi, "Vita di Paolo Caliari Veronese, Pittore," in *Le maraviglie dell'arte*, Vol. 1 (Venice, 1648), 333.

Christina suggests that their meanings apply to her as well and presents herself as a powerful royal on a par with these male rulers.

The *Stanza dei Quadri* as a Marker of Christina's Masculine Body-Politic

The *stanza dei quadri* served as Christina's public presentation of her masculine body-politic and suppression of her female body-natural. Due to the large number of works included in the room, the following iconographic analysis considers only the paintings that feature the most frequently represented subjects (allegory and mythology) and that were created by the most frequently represented artists (Veronese and Titian). Bernini's *Truth Revealed by Time* and the antique bronze head of Alexander will also be examined, as these must have stood out prominently in the *stanza dei quadri*.

Veronese's *Vice and Virtue* (Fig. 22) and *Wisdom and Strength* (Fig. 23) present themes especially appropriate to rulership.²³⁸ In *Vice and Virtue*, Veronese depicts the story of Hercules at the crossroads, originally recounted by the Greek author Prodicus.²³⁹ Hercules, a mythological son of Jupiter who was famous for his enormous strength, had to choose between the easy road to earthly pleasure presented by Vice and the more difficult road to eternal fame offered by Virtue. Here, Hercules has already been injured by the female personification of Vice and turns toward the protection of Virtue. In *Wisdom and Strength*, Veronese juxtaposes Hercules with Minerva, who exemplifies moral strength or wisdom.²⁴⁰ While Hercules slouches over, signifying the brevity of worldly, physical strength, Minerva towers over him with her foot on a globe and crowns, scepters, jewels,

²³⁸ Salomon, *Veronese*, 179.

²³⁹ Salomon, *Veronese*, 178-79; Watson, *Wisdom and Strength*, 59.

²⁴⁰ Watson, *Wisdom and Strength*, 58.

coins, and military banners at her feet. She symbolizes wisdom as the more valuable virtue and specifically addresses her message to worldly rulers. Together, these canvases encourage the viewer to engage in the *vita contemplativa* (contemplative life) versus the *vita attiva* (active life), because knowledge and virtue are more important than earthly pleasures and physical strength. Specifically, they encourage Maximilian, Rudolf, and Christina to cultivate their body-politic (which is linked to the divine right to rule) in lieu of the body-natural (which represents only their earthly being). Christina would have displayed these pictures as reminders to her visitors that her wisdom and virtue superseded the limits of her female sex.

Titian's *Three Ages of Man* (Fig. 24) and *Venus and Adonis* (Fig. 25) can be read in two ways within the context of the *stanza dei quadri*: the dangers of love and the swapping of gender roles. *Three Ages of Man* includes a young couple in the foreground, a pair of infants in the middle-ground and an old man with two skulls in the background. These scenes represent the prime of life, the beginning of life, and the end of life respectively. The young lovers lounge on fertile ground, and the clothed woman leans over the nude man and holds two flutes, typically associated with lovemaking, over the man's groin.²⁴¹ The presence of a cupid standing over the sleeping infants further indicates the theme of love in this work. The word "cupid" derives from the Latin *cupido*, which means "carnal desire."²⁴² The skulls in the background remind the viewer of the inevitability of death and the temporality of physical love.

²⁴¹ Goffen, *Titian's Women*, 28.

²⁴² Jane Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3.

Similarly, Titian's *Venus and Adonis* shows the man abandoning the goddess of love though she implores him to stay. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Venus and Adonis desire each other equally, and she leaves his presence before his fatal hunt.²⁴³ In Titian's painting, Adonis leaves Venus while cupid sleeps in the background. Philip II, the patron of the first version of this work, would have seen himself as Adonis and understood the meaning of the painting as a warning against the dangers of love.²⁴⁴ Adonis, though he flees from Venus's embrace, will soon die, as is depicted in the background of the scene. Like in the *Three Ages of Man*, Titian shows love as a catalyst for death and encourages Philip not to indulge in worldly pleasures. Christina's maxim, "Life is too short for love,"²⁴⁵ suggests that she would have understood these warnings and would have been inspired to pursue more lofty goals.

Given her ambiguous gender identity, it is also possible that Christina and her visitors interpreted the *Three Ages of Man* and *Venus and Adonis* as visualizations of gender appropriation. Rona Goffen has argued that the women in these paintings seem to be the sexually active agents.²⁴⁶ In the *Three Ages of Man*, the young woman holds the instruments and leans across the man's body while he sits in front of her nude and with comparably idle hands. In *Venus and Adonis*, Venus longingly holds Adonis's body in an attempt to keep him from pulling away. She visibly declares her sexual desire and attempts to physically control Adonis. The sexually assertive roles of these women were typically associated with men in

²⁴³ Ovid, "Book 10," in *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, trans. Stanley Lombardo (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010), 594-846.

²⁴⁴ Goffen, *Titian's Women*, 248.

²⁴⁵ Christina, *Maxims of a queen, Christina of Sweden*, selected and trans. Una Birch (New York: John Lane Company, 1907), 32.

²⁴⁶ Goffen, *Titian's Women*, 26-30.

both Titian's and Christina's societies. The nudity and passive demeanor displayed by the man in *Three Ages of Man* would have been seen as effeminate. This play on gender roles would have intrigued a woman like Christina, who presented herself as an assertive, strong personality unfortunately packaged in a female body.

Christina's display of and interaction with erotic art can be viewed as gendered performance in the form of the "male gaze." As described in the introduction, the "gaze" is the act of looking through the lenses of gender, desire and power.²⁴⁷ By visually objectifying the passive figures in her works, Christina acts as a male viewer and thus performs the male-gendered role. Christina wrote, "My strongest passion was love of honor, but I also loved with a burning and violent passion all that was beautiful and worthy of delighting or being used by a young prince, whose noble inclinations, You, Lord, have given me."²⁴⁸ Christina thus claims the ability to judge beauty and to actively indulge in activities associated with male rulers. By gazing at the figures in her paintings and being delighted by them, Christina becomes the active subject that uses the passive objects for her own pleasure. This assertion of power adds to the list of attributes and behaviors that Christina adopted to match her interests to those of male rulers. She presents herself as masculine and powerful despite her sex and lack of a throne.

Bernini's *Truth Revealed by Time* functioned in three ways: to justify Christina's execution of Monaldesco; to relate her to Alexander the Great; and to promote the

²⁴⁷ Saslow, "The Desiring Eye," 127.

²⁴⁸ Excerpt from a manuscript variant to Christina's autobiography. Stockholm Riksarkivet, Azzolino-samlingen, K. 430. Quoted in Aurelius, "The Great Performance. Roles in Queen Christina's Autobiography," 61.

importance of her body-politic over her body-natural.²⁴⁹ As previously noted, Christina executed Monaldesco for leaking her intention of taking the throne of Naples. The execution and her defense of it with this mirror provide another example of the queen performing as she pleased within a society that placed great value on adherence to protocol. Christina's reflection as Truth beside the face of Alexander suggests that Christina's true identity is that of a powerful ruler such as Alexander. If her outer body-natural matched her inner body-politic, she would appear strong and masculine.

Christina was a female foreigner, philosopher, scientist, and previous ruler in a city dominated by religious men. This position was unusual, so she created her own rules and constructed her own identity. Through Christina's performance and display in the *stanza dei quadri*, she publically projected the domination of her body-politic over her body-natural by aligning her interests and goals with those of male rulers and appropriating the masculine gender. Though it is impossible to understand how Christina viewed herself privately, we can conclude through her display in the *stanza dei quadri* that she wished to appear to the public as a powerful, virtuous, masculine ruler by divine right.

²⁴⁹ Zirpolo, "Christina of Sweden's Patronage of Bernini," 41.

CONCLUSION

As the first comprehensive study of the *stanza dei quadri*, this thesis provides a list of works in the room and examines Christina's intentions behind her display. With these forty-eight works, Christina asserted her taste for Venetian Renaissance painting, equated herself to previous owners of the works, demonstrated her intellect with complex allegories and mythological subjects, and asserted her masculinity with such themes as gender reversals and the objectification of women. With this display, Christina claimed a masculine, powerful identity comparable to that of an intellectual, virtuous male ruler.

Christina's choice of works to display in her *stanza dei quadri* also allowed her to equate herself with the previous owners of the paintings, including Holy Roman Emperors Charles V and Rudolf II and King Philip II of Spain. The abundance of paintings by Veronese and Titian in the *stanza dei quadri* highlights her royal status, because these artists were known to paint for princes and rulers. Much of the subject matter that appears in these works applies specifically to the virtues that a good ruler should possess. By displaying art that was intended to instruct and inspire male rulers, Christina suggested that she too was chosen by God to hold power and authority, despite her lack of a throne. The *stanza dei quadri* thus provided a visual representation of Christina's opinion that her royalty and authority (or body-politic) were granted by God and did not require a throne.

This display of allegorical mythologies also reflected Christina's intellect and princely education. The complex messages conveyed by the works in the *stanza dei quadri* would have highlighted Christina's cleverness and her knowledge of classical mythology and visual allegory. Bernini's allegorical mirror related Christina's soul to that of Alexander

the Great and conveyed her knowledge of classical history and her ability to understand complex allegory. The mythological scenes displayed her knowledge of classical culture, and the *Scenes from Roman History* by Giulio Licinio showed her fascination with ancient history. The window through which she watched her visitors allowed her to utilize the room as an experimental environment where she could observe behavior and conversation. In this way, Christina also demonstrated her scientific intellect.

The most complex and difficult of Christina's intentions for her display was to present herself as a masculine soul within a female body. Bernini's mirror suggested that Christina's true identity reflected the powerful, masculine Alexander. Several of the paintings supported this assertion with themes of gender switching. In paintings such as Titian's *Three Ages of Man* and Veronese's *Wisdom and Strength*, the women play the strong, dominant roles, and the men appear weak and feminine. While gender reversals permeated early modern European art, they take on a specific meaning in the context of Christina's palace. These masculine women may reflect Christina's view of herself as masculine despite her anatomy. Christina also asserted this aspect of her identity by including several erotic depictions of women and commenting on her desire for them. Christina suggested that she had the sexual preferences of a man and further aligned herself with the masculine gender.

Christina's display of art in the *stanza dei quadri* reflects her intention to create a clear public image. She strove to appear equal to famous male rulers, intelligent beyond the supposed limits of her sex, and masculine despite her female anatomy. Christina utilized this group of works as an extension of her dress, performance, and political endeavors to promote herself as powerful and capable.

APPENDIX

Artworks on Display in Christina's *stanza dei quadri*

Artist	Title	Date	Known Locations	Subject	Nude women / Women present	Belli inv. no.	Trichet inv. no. for works from Prague
Veronese	<i>Allegories of Love: Respect</i>	c. 1575	National Gallery London	Allegorical	1/1	2	96
Veronese	<i>Allegories of Love: Unfaithfulness</i>	c. 1575	National Gallery London	Allegorical	1/1	3	99
Veronese	<i>Allegories of Love: Happy Union</i>	c. 1575	National Gallery London	Allegorical	½ /2	4	97
Veronese	<i>Allegories of Love: Scorn</i>	c. 1575	National Gallery London	Allegorical	½ /2	1	98
Veronese	<i>Mars and Venus United by Love</i>	1570s	Metropolitan Museum	Mythological	1/1	5	88
Veronese	<i>Mercury, Herse, and Aglauros</i>	1576-84	Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge	Mythological	½ /2	6	100
Veronese	<i>Venus Deploing the Death of Adonis</i>	c. 1570	Nationalmuseum, Stockholm	Mythological	1/1	8	80
Veronese	<i>Wisdom and Strength</i>	c. 1565	Frick Collection	Allegorical	½ /1	7	86
Veronese	<i>Vice and Virtue</i>	c.1565	Frick Collection	Allegorical	0/2	10	85
Veronese	<i>Venus Arming Mars</i>	c.1579-80	Dismembered in 19 th century, fragment (<i>Cupid Leading the Horse</i>) survives at Museo del Statue, Pontremoli	Mythological	½ /1	9	79
Veronese	<i>The Rape of Europa</i>	c. 1575	National Gallery London	Mythological	½ /3	12	*657
Titian	<i>Venus Crowned by Amor with a Lute Player</i>	1555-65	Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge	Mythological	1/1	15	83
Titian	<i>Venus Anadyomene</i>	c.1520	National Galleries of Scotland	Mythological	1/1	23	***27
Titian	<i>The Three Ages of Man</i>	c. 1512-14	National Galleries of Scotland	Allegorical	0/1	44	
Titian	<i>The Death of Actaeon</i>	c. 1559-75	National Gallery London	Mythological	½ /1	14	
Titian	<i>Venus and Adonis</i>	1559	Patrick de Charmant, Switzerland	Mythological	1/1	17	115

Titian (workshop)	<i>Toilet of Venus</i>		Karl and Dagmar Bergsten Collection, Stockholm	Mythological	½ /1	28	154
Titian	<i>Mary Magdalene</i>			Biblical	½ /1	32	
Titian	<i>Mary Magdalene</i>			Biblical	½ /1	33	
Titian	<i>Portrait of a Widow</i>			Portrait	0/1	36	
Titian	<i>Portrait of Laura de Dianti Duchess of Ferrara,</i>	c. 1523	Heinz Kisters Collection, Kreuzlingen	Portrait	0/1	30	* 217
Lambert Sustris	<i>Education of Cupid</i>	c. 1540	El Paso Museum of Art	Mythological	1/1	13	
Titian	<i>Sleeping Venus with Cupid</i>		unknown	Mythological	1/1	21	
Dosso Dossi (att. Titian, Correggio)	<i>Portrait of a Man Wearing a Black Beret</i>	c. 1530	Nationalmuseum, Stockholm	Portrait	0/0	43	
Correggio	<i>Leda and the Swan</i>	1531-2	Gemaldegalerie, Berlin	Mythological	3/5	27	82
Correggio (copy)	<i>Education of Amor</i>		Le duc d'Ursel, Brussels	Mythological	1/1	34	87
Correggio (copy)	<i>Jupiter and Io</i>		destroyed at the Kaiser Friedrich Museum	Mythological	1/1	26	90
Correggio	<i>Danaë</i>	c. 1531	Galleria Borghese, Rome	Mythological	1/1	25	81
Annibale Carracci	<i>Danaë</i>		destroyed in 1941 at Bridgewater House	Mythological	1/1	16	
Caravaggio	<i>Sacrifice of Isaac</i>			Biblical	0/0	29	
Michelangelo (copy after)	<i>Ganymede</i>			Mythological	0/0	42	**307
Parmigianino (copy after)	<i>Cupid Whittling His Bow</i>	c. 1600	Collection of Jan and Anders Pyk, Stockholm	Mythological	1/1	31	89
Guido Cagnacci	female martyr			Biblical	½ /1	19	
Guido Reni	<i>Head of an Old Man (Saint Peter)</i>			Biblical	0/0	40	
Palma Vecchio	<i>Portrait of a Doge</i>			Portrait	0/0	18	
Van Dyck	<i>Portrait of a Mother</i>			Portrait	0/1	20	
Van Dyck	<i>Portrait of a Son</i>			Portrait	0/0	37	
Jacopo Bassano	<i>Portrait of an Old Man</i>			Portrait	0/0	45	

Jacopo Bassano	<i>Portrait of an Old Woman</i>			Portrait	0/1	46	
Giulio Licino	<i>Scenes from Roman History: The Attack on Cartagena</i>	after 1566	National Gallery London	Historical		47	94
Giulio Licino	<i>Scenes from Roman History: The Continnence of Scipio</i>	after 1566	National Gallery London	Historical		48	94
Giulio Licino	<i>Scenes from Roman History: The Rape of the Sabines</i>	after 1566	National Gallery London	Historical		49	94
Giulio Licino	<i>Scenes from Roman History: The Intervention of the Sabine Women</i>	after 1566	National Gallery London	Historical		50	94
Giulio Licino	<i>Scenes from Roman History: Coriolanus</i>	after 1566	Morrison Collection, Basildon Park	Historical		51	94
Giulio Licino	<i>Scenes from Roman History: Scipio Rewarding the Soldiers</i>	after 1566	Morrison Collection, Basildon Park	Historical		52	267
Raphael	<i>Madonna del Passeggio</i>	c. 1516	National Galleries of Scotland	Biblical	0/1	41	
Bernini	<i>Truth Revealed by Time</i>	c. 1670		Allegorical	0/0		
	<i>Head of an Athlete</i>		Prado Museum, Madrid	Portrait	0/0		

* These works cannot be certainly identified among Trichet's inventory, but Granberg has argued that they appear in an inventory of Rudolf II's collections in Prague. The inventory numbers listed for these works correspond to the "Inventaire des Tableaux de L'Empereur Rodolphe II a Prague," in *La Galerie de Tableaux de la Reine Christina de Suede*, ed. Olof Granberg (Stockholm: Imprimerie Ivar H. Eggström, 1897), Appendix I.

** Granberg suggests that Trichet's no. 307 is the copy of Michelangelo's Ganymede that Christina took to Rome but is uncertain. Olof Granberg, "Catalogue Rasonné," in *La Galerie de Tableaux de la Reine Christina de Suede*, ed. Olof Granberg (Stockholm: Imprimerie Ivar H. Eggström, 1897), 33.

***This work cannot be certainly identified in Trichet's or the Prague inventory, but Granberg argues that it came from Prague. The inventory number corresponds to Granberg's "Catalogue Rasonné," in *La Galerie de Tableaux de la Reine Christina de Suede* ed. Olof Granberg (Stockholm: Imprimerie Ivar H. Eggström, 1897), 34.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1
Sébastien Bourdon
Queen Christina, c. 1653
Oil on canvas, 72 x 58 cm
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm



Figure 2
Justus van Egmont
Queen Christina as Minerva, 1654
Oil on canvas, 119 x 88 cm
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm



Figure 3
Giulio Cartari/Anonymous
Clytie, antique torso restored c. 1680
Marble
Prado Museum, Madrid



Figure 4
Nicodemus Tessin the Younger
Drawing After Bernini's Mirror, 1680s
Pen and wash, 15.5 x 12 cm
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, Inv. No. NMH THC 1109



Figure 5
Head of an Athlete, c. 300 BC
Bronze
Museo del Prado, Madrid.



Figure 6

Antonio da Correggio
Leda and the Swan, 1531-32
Oil on canvas, 152 x 191 cm
Gemäldegalerie, Berlin



Figure 7
Antonio da Correggio
Danaë, c. 1531
Oil on canvas, 161 x 193 cm
Galleria Borghese, Rome



Figure 8

Antonio da Correggio (copy after)

Jupiter and Io

Oil on canvas, after 1530

Destroyed at the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin

Photo: Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg



Figure 9
Michelangelo Buonarroti
Ganymede, 16th Century
Black chalk on off-white antique laid paper, 36.1 x 27 cm
Fogg Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Inv. No. 1955.75



Figure 10
Eugenio Cajés (copy after Correggio)
Leda and the Swan, 1604
Oil on canvas, 165 x 193 cm
Prado Museum, Madrid



Figure 11
Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino
Madonna del Passeggio, c. 1516
Oil and gold on panel, 90 x 63 cm
National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh



Figure 12
Annibale Carracci
Danaë, 1600-5
Oil on canvas, 170 x 344 cm
Destroyed in 1941 at Bridgewater House, London



Figure 13

Tiziano Vecelli

Portrait of Laura de Dianti, Duchess of Ferrara, c. 1523

Oil on canvas, 119 x 93 cm

Heinz Kisters Collection, Kreuzlingen



Figure 14
Dosso Dossi
Portrait of a Man Wearing a Black Beret, c. 1530
Oil on canvas, 85.5 cm x 71 cm
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm



Figure 15

Paolo Veronese

Allegories of Love: Respect, c. 1575

Oil on canvas, 186.1 x 194.3 cm

National Gallery, London



Figure 16

Paolo Veronese

Allegories of Love: Scorn, c. 1575

Oil on canvas, 186.6 x 188.5 cm

National Gallery, London



Figure 17
Paolo Veronese
Allegories of Love: Unfaithfulness, c. 1575
Oil on canvas, 189.9 x 189.9 cm
National Gallery, London



Figure 18

Paolo Veronese

Allegories of Love: Happy Union, c. 1575

Oil on canvas, 187.4 x 186.7 cm

National Gallery, London



Figure 19
Michael Dahl
Portrait of Queen Christina, 1687
Oil on canvas, 127 x 101.6 cm
Attingham Park, Shrewsbury Shropshire, UK



Figure 20
Massimiliano Soldani Benzi
Queen Christina of Sweden Portrait Medal (verso), c. 1680
Bronze, 61 mm
Collection of Benjamin Weiss



Figure 21
Bartholomeus Spranger
Hercules, Deianira and the Centaur Nessus, 1580-82
Oil on canvas, 82 x 112 cm
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



Figure 22
Paolo Veronese
Vice and Virtue, c.1565
Oil on canvas, 219.1 x 169.5 cm
Frick Collection, New York



Figure 23
Paolo Veronese
Wisdom and Strength, c. 1565
Oil on canvas, 214.6 x 167 cm
Frick Collection, New York



Figure 24
Tiziano Vecelli
Three Ages of Man, c. 1512-14
Oil on canvas, 90 x 150.7 cm
National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh



Figure 25
Tiziano Vecelli
Venus and Adonis, 1559
Oil on canvas
Patrick de Charmant Collection, Switzerland.

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ABSTRACT

Queen Christina Wasa of Sweden (1626-1689), an eccentric personality, attempted throughout her life to fabricate a public identity based on wealth, power, religion, intellect, and gender ambiguity. After abdicating her throne at age 28, Christina settled in Rome and converted to Catholicism. Her Roman Palazzo Riario (today Corsini) served as a museum of antiquities, a school of art, and a locus for scientific debate. As the center of this cultural activity, Christina's *stanza dei quadri* served as a small audience chamber and was visited by foreign dignitaries, artists, intellectuals, cardinals, and the pope. The room also held Christina's most prized art objects. Most of these were erotic, mythological paintings by Veronese, Titian, Correggio, and other Italian Renaissance artists, but there were also a few religious works by artists such as Raphael. In addition, the room housed a sculpted mirror frame by Bernini, an antique bronze head of Alexander the Great, and portraits by Jacopo Bassano and Antonio Van Dyck. Christina amassed these works through acquisitions in Rome, a commission in the case of Bernini's mirror, and her plunder of Emperor Rudolf II's castle when she still sat on the Swedish throne.

In this thesis, I consider how Christina's collection and display of art in her *stanza dei quadri* played a role in her construction of a public image. I examine the intersection between religious and secular imagery, the balance of classical, Renaissance and contemporary works, and the overwhelming amount of erotic content lining the walls of the room. Following an examination of early modern European gender construction, I analyze how Christina utilized these works to represent herself as powerful and masculine despite her female sex. I investigate the *stanza dei quadri* as a place of spectacle where the works, the visitors and Christina herself were viewed.