

GARY SCHWARTZ

THE BARBERINI AND ORANGE INVENTORIES: A COMPARISON OF THE COLLECTIONS AND THEIR PUBLICATION¹

Who can count the ways one might express admiration for Marilyn Lavin? I'm sure that the contributions in this volume go some way to indicating their scope. But I'm equally sure that they do not exhaust the possibilities. From my own knowledge I could have written about her pioneering work on computer applications in the humanities. The most inspiring recollection I have of her use of computers in analyzing Italian fresco cycles was her struggle to learn to pose questions that can be answered yes or no. For an art historian to accept that limitation was heroic enough. But Marilyn came to see it not as an unfair impediment but a conceptual boon. For her this realization came at the end of a long, difficult process, but once she was there she could elevate the consciousness of the rest of us in a few sentences.

I could have praised her as the inventor of the Consortium of Art and Architectural Historians (CAAH), the mother of all Internet listservs in art history, an innovation that made Marilyn the godmother of us all.

Even more than as the inventor of CAAH, Marilyn deserves limitless admiration for continuing to manage it, year in year out. With inspiring modesty, she shows that it is not beneath the dignity even of a scholar as senior as herself to perform the daily drudgery that it takes to keep an invaluable facility like CAAH up and running.

I could have complimented a little-known achievement of Marilyn and Irving Lavin as fellow Rembrandt scholars, for an article on love in *The Jewish Bride*.

Instead, I have taken up another of her endless labors of love, her 1975 publication of the Barberini inventories. This book is too little acknowledged as an early stimulus for the surge of interest our field has been enjoying in the history of collecting and patronage.

Easier than finding adequate ways to express admiration for Marilyn Lavin is expressing affection. Marilyn lavishes warmth on her colleagues and accepts

1. Based on a lecture delivered at a symposium on the use of archival inventories in art history; The Hague, Royal Library, 6–7 June 1996.

it readily in return. With admiration and affection, then, Marilyn, I offer you the following tribute.



To compare the House of Orange to the Barberini as patrons of the arts may seem more than a little preposterous. The Barberini were after all legendary patrons and the House of Orange is still considered by most a perpetual disappointment in that regard. Even the most old-fashioned histories of art, with their systematic non-coverage of patronage, exalt the Barberini, while none even mention the House of Orange. How could those Dutch Calvinist minor-league aristocrats match up to the most extravagant princes of the world church Rome had ever seen except in pathetic inferiority?

I must admit that it would probably never have occurred to me to compare the two families to each other were it not for the stimulus of a patron not of the arts but of scholarship. From 1993 to 1995, I participated in a mega-project in the humanities run by the Netherlands Organization for Scholarly Research, NWO. The title of the project was "Dutch culture in European context." The project had an interesting form. As NWO describes it: "The programme was started in 1992, due to the realisation that national boundaries were increasingly losing their importance as a result of European unification. The research concentrated on four reference points, namely 1650, 1800, 1900 and 1950. A book was published for each reference point and the series is concluded with the volume *Accounting for the Past* which reflects on the four reference points."² In that ambitious enterprise I was responsible for reporting on Dutch painting in the year 1650. It was the search for comparative materials, in the spirit of that program, that led me to examine the structure of the patronage networks of Pope Urban VIII (Maffeo Barberini; 1568–1644) and Frederik Hendrik (1584–1647). They revealed greater correspondences than I expected to find.

Stadholder Frederik Hendrik, the prince of Orange, was the single most important patron of the arts in the Netherlands during the period covered by the papacy of Urban VIII. Their reigns overlap, with the 22 years of Frederik Hendrik's stadholdership (1625–47) beginning two years later than Urban's papacy (1623–44) and ending three years later. Their behavior as central figures in a seventeenth-century power system is strikingly similar. (TABLES 1 and 2.) Like Urban, Frederik Hendrik too surrounded himself with courts run by relatives. In one regard he was at a disadvantage to Urban: most of his nephews were illegitimate sons of his half-brother Prince Maurits (1567–1625) and could not well be put in charge of family courts. But he was lucky with his wife and cousins, who ran patronage networks with great skill without getting into serious

2. Taken from the now inactive NWO internet page: http://www.nwo.nl/nwohome.nsf/pages/NWOP_65YFNU_Eng.html.

conflicts with him or the outside world. One of his cousins and one of his nephews indeed enjoyed major reputations as patrons of the arts: Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen (1604–1679), the governor of Brazil and builder of the Mauritshuis, and Kurfürst Friedrich V von der Pfalz (1596–1632). Friedrich was the husband of Elizabeth Stuart (1596–1662), the sister of Charles I of England (1600–1649; reigned 1625–1649). After the death of Frederik Hendrik, his widow Amalia van Solms (1602–1675) became an important dispenser of patronage.

Frederik Hendrik did not have an artistic familiar like Urban's Bernini (1598–1680), but he had something nearly as good: a devoted secretary with extensive artistic knowledge and taste as well. This was the poet Constantijn Huygens (1596–1687), who worked for the stadholder throughout his reign. Aided by the architect Jacob van Campen (1596–1657), he had the ability to conduct the artistic affairs of the court with considerable distinction. This included the construction and decoration of palaces on a scale that rivaled that of the royal courts of his time.

The role of poet intermediaries in the Netherlands, aside from that of Huygens, was not as essential as in Rome. The lines were shorter, with less need for recommendation and brokerage. Yet, the professions and relative place in the social hierarchy of the individuals involved are perfectly comparable to those in the Rome of Urban VIII.³

These charts (see Tables 1 and 2 below), which of course are merely flat indicators of far more complex relationships, suggest the existence of a certain pattern in the exercise of power and the dispensing of patronage that may go far beyond the specific circumstances of Europe in the seventeenth century.⁴ They postulate the existence of an economy in which political clout, family and personal relationships, money, talent, jobs, favors and recommendations are put into play or exchanged. This is a richer mix than the usual picture of patronage as a one-way street. It speaks of relationships of mutual dependency more than of the exercise of arbitrary authority.

An impetus to expand my comparison of Barberini and Orange patronage came my way in 1996, with the invitation to participate in a symposium in The Hague, jointly sponsored by the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities and the Netherlands Institute for Art History, the RKD. The title of the symposium was "The Use of Archival Inventories in Art History."

3. The above paragraphs, and Tables 1 and 2 below, were previously published in Gary Schwartz, "The Structure of Patronage Networks in Rome, The Hague and Amsterdam in the 17th century," in Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed., *Economia e arte secc. XIII–XVIII: Atti della "Trentatreesima Settimana di Studi," 30 aprile–4 maggio 2001* (Prato: Le Monnier for Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica "F. Datini," 2002), 567–74. Discussion of this and other papers is also published in those proceedings, pp. 575–90.

4. In the discussion cited in the previous note, Evelyn Welch remarked: "What you've described for artistic patronage sounds very similar in many ways to the work that has been done on familial strategies in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy, particularly for papal families."

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Table 1. Barberini patronage under Urban VIII (1623–1644)

<i>Anthony van Dyck</i>	<i>Andrea Camassei</i>	<i>Angelo Giori</i>	<i>Gianlorenzo Bernini</i>	<i>Lodovico Cignani</i>	<i>Mattia Preti</i>	<i>Peter Paul Rubens</i>
<i>Nicholas Poussin</i>		<i>Guido Bentivoglio</i>	<i>Tommaso Campanella</i>	<i>Enzo Bentivoglio</i>		<i>Valentin</i>
<i>Agostino Tassi</i>	<i>Giulio Rospigliosi</i>	<i>Duke Carlo Barberini (brother)</i>	<i>Cardinal Francesco Barberini (nephew)</i>	<i>Cardinal Carlo Barberini (nephew's son)</i>	<i>Giulio Sacchetti</i>	<i>Giovanni Francesco Romanelli</i>
<i>Filippo Napoletano</i>	<i>Lelio Guidiccioni</i>	<i>Cardinal Antonio Barberini (nephew)</i>	<i>URBAN VIII Barberini Pontifex Maximus</i>	<i>Cardinal Antonio Barberini (brother)</i>	<i>Lucas Holsteijn</i>	<i>Pietro da Cortona</i>
<i>Orazio Gentileschi</i>	<i>Francesco Bracciolini</i>		<i>Taddeo Barberini, prefect of Rome (nephew)</i>	<i>Donna Anna Colonna (nephew's wife)</i>	<i>Marcello Sacchetti</i>	<i>Domenichino</i>
<i>Guido Reni</i>		<i>Cassiano del Pozzo</i>	<i>Girolamo Teti</i>	<i>Virginio Cesarini</i>		<i>Simon Vouet</i>
<i>Lanfranco</i>	<i>Claude Lorrain</i>	<i>Pietro Testa</i>	<i>Andrea Sacchi</i>	<i>Francesco Borromini</i>	<i>Carlo Maratta</i>	<i>François Duquesnoy</i>

PRIMARY PATRON Poet client-brokers

Poet clients

Artist client-brokers

Power client-patrons (family) Artist clients

The theme of the symposium suggested a second possibility for confronting the houses of Barberini and Orange. Inventories of both families were published in the same period — the mid-1970s, before the late twentieth-century wave of interest in the subject had broken. Both home in on eminently interesting documents of this kind. As a contribution to the congress, I read a paper entitled “The Barberini and Orange Inventories: A Comparison of the Collections and their Publication.”⁵

Between 1974 and 1976 appeared the three volumes of *Inventarissen van de inboedels in de verblijven van de Oranjes en daarmede gelijk te stellen stukken, 1567–1795* by S.W.A. Drossaers — Sophie Wilhelmina Albertina, but she always signed by her initials — and Th. H. (Theodoor Herman) Lunsingh Scheurleer and in 1975 the single volume of Marilyn Aronberg Lavin’s *Seventeenth-Century Barberini Documents and Inventories of Art*. The titles themselves form a first indication of certain differences in approach. The Dutch title is a series of

5. “The Use of Archival Inventories in Art History,” *Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie*, The Hague, June 5–7, 1996.

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Table 2. Orange-Nassau patronage under the stadholderships of Frederik Hendrik (1625–1647) and Willem II (1647–1650)

<i>Anthony van Dyck</i>	<i>Jacob Jordaens</i>	<i>Abraham Bloemaert</i>	<i>Jacob van Campen</i>	<i>Jan Lievens</i>	<i>Rembrandt van Rijn</i>	<i>Peter Paul Rubens</i>
<i>Jacob Lois</i>		P.C. Hooft	<u>Constantijn Huygens</u>	<u>Caspar Barlaeus</u>	Reinier Anslø	<i>Salomon de Bray</i>
<i>Bartholomeus van Bassen</i>	<u>Petrus Scriverius</u>		Amalia van Solms (wife)	Willem II (son)	Jacob van der Burgh	<i>Pieter Saenredam</i>
<i>Michiel van Mierevelt</i>	Samuel Coster	Willem Frederik van Nassau-Diez (son-in-law)	FREDERIK HENDRIK prince of Orange	Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen (cousin)	Tessel-schade Roemers Visscher	<i>Christiaan van Couwenbergh</i>
<i>Jacob van Swanenburgh</i>			Frederik V of the Palatinate (nephew)	Elizabeth Stuart (nephew's wife)	Jacob Cats	<i>Albert Eckhout</i>
<i>Wybrand de Geest</i>		Jan Zoet	Joannes Brosterhuysen	Jan Jansz. Orlers		<i>Pieter Post</i>
<i>Abraham van Diepenbeeck</i>	<i>Gonzales Coques</i>	<i>Adriaen van de Venne</i>	<i>Gerard van Honthorst</i>	<i>Pieter de Grebber</i>	<i>Caesar van Everdingen</i>	<i>Frans Post</i>

Sources for Tables 1 & 2: Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (London, 1963); John Beldon Scott, *Images of Nepotism: The Painted Ceilings of Palazzo Barberini* (Princeton, 1991).

qualifications and the American one a string of generalizations. “Furnishings in the Residences” (“Inboedels in de verblijven”) as opposed to just plain “art,” “inventories...and instruments of a comparable nature” (“inventarissen en daarmee gelijk te stellen stukken”) as opposed to “documents and inventories” and “1567–1795” as opposed to the “seventeenth century.” Being an American Dutchman myself, I have an instinctive sympathy for both approaches.

The institutional backgrounds for the respective projects also display characteristic differences. The Dutch team was appointed by a government committee — the National Committee for the History of the Fatherland (Rijkscommissie voor Vaderlandse Geschiedenis), installed in 1948 — on the basis of a document entitled “Survey of the Sources the Publication of Which is Desirable for the Study of the Cultural History of the Netherlands” (Overzicht van bronnen waarvan de uitgave wenselijk is voor de studie der cultuurgeschiedenis van Nederland). The series was conceived as “a contribution to the understanding of ‘de cultuur van het wonen’” — household culture — in the seventeenth and

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eighteenth centuries. It would seem as if the funding possibilities available in a project set up to investigate everyday material culture were put into the service of basic research on a very non-quotidian collection.

Miss Drossaers and Professor Lunsingh Scheurleer had optimal access to their materials in the National Archives and the Royal Archives and all the salaried time they needed to complete their task. Once the research was done, the publication was taken on as a matter of course by the National Committee. The process took twenty years, from October 30, 1956, when the commission was given, until 1976, when volume 3 appeared.

The idea of publishing the Barberini papers, by way of contrast, was the unofficial inspiration of two American art historians, Irving and Marilyn Lavin. Permission to consult this private archive housed in the Vatican Library was obtained in 1961; the manuscript was completed in 1971 and seen through publication at New York University Press in 1975. Support was available only for parts of that period, from a variety of sources to which the Lavins had to apply. Far from having optimal access, Marilyn Lavin had to rely on the good offices of the chief usher of the Vatican Library, who “was allowed to go to the archive deposit (in the public corridors of the Vatican Museum) only between the hours of 7:00 and 8:00 A.M.”

Source publications of this kind project heavy authority and integrity, qualities they possess only in relative measure. The choice of documents to be included and the principles of introducing, transcribing, editing, footnoting and indexing them are subject to a wide range of contingencies and judgment calls that leave their mark in the books themselves. This reveals itself in a tabulary comparison of the two books under discussion

Table 3. Comparison of contents of publications of inventories of the houses of Barberini and Orange

	Lavin	Drossaers & Lunsingh Scheurleer
Foreword	The late Urbano Barberini (a few lines)	Authors (3 ½ pp.)
Preface	Author 1971/1974 (½ p.)	Drossaers (2 ½ pp.)
Introduction	Author (2 ½ pp.)	Lunsingh Scheurleer (23 pp.)
Illustrations	7 portraits of Barberini	--
Patrons of the documents	2 pp.	---
Buildings	1	Spread throughout volumes in headnotes

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Documents other than inventories	443 docs. in 61 pp., characterized by author as "more or less random and [making] no claim to completeness"	---
Inventories	(extracts from) 26 inventories with individual introductions and occasional intermediate explanations, no notes, concentrating on the high arts: 393 pp. (avg. 15 pp.)	102 inventories, apparently complete, with equal attention paid to furniture and objets d'art as to painting and sculpture, frequent notes, detailed introductions: 1735 pp. (avg. 17 pp.)
Introduction to indexes	1	2
Artist index, A-Z	76 pp., annotated, all objects from different inventories considered identical joined, with references to documents not in volume	Incorporated in index of persons and places
Subject index, A-Z	181 pp.	--
Index by object per medium, A(ardewerk) - Z(silver)	--	105 pp.
Index of museums and private collections	--	2
Artisans not in documents or master index	3 pp.	--
Names other than artists or subjects	5pp.	--
Persons and places	--	43 pp.
Concordance of numbered paintings	5 pp.	--
Glossary	½ p.	20 pp.
List of mss. consulted	11 p.	--
Bibliography	2 pp.	24 pp.
Abbreviations of names of archives	--	1/4 pp.
Family tree	--	foldout

For the purposes of comparison, it will be plain, the two editions are as poorly matched as possible. None of the indexes cover the same material, and neither provides statistical or tabulary information. Nor does either provide indexes that might facilitate a comparison of the collections of the Barberini and Oranges

toward 1650. I therefore made a simple database of my own of the appropriate documents. The best comparison, as it emerged, was offered by the inventory of the goods of Cardinal Francesco Barberini (1597–1679) of 1626–1627, with addenda to 1631, and that of Stadholder Frederik Hendrik of 1632, with addenda to 1634. The Barberini inventory covers the first eight years of the pontificate of Urban VIII and the cardinalship of his nephew Francesco, whereas that of Frederik Hendrik ends in the ninth year after he became stadholder.

The comparison joins the central figure of the Dutch court with a satellite of the papacy. The Barberini holdings are only partially represented, as are those of the court of Orange. A more complete comparison would include the collections of Antonio and Taddeo and Maffeo Barberini, but also those of Johan Maurits van Nassau and the Count Palatinate Frederick V and his wife Elizabeth Stuart. There is no doubt that the Barberini collections were richer in sixteenth-century painting. But in terms of patronage of living artists, the comparison revealed quite a different and rather surprising situation.

As published documents, the two inventories — the goods of Francesco Barberini in 1626–1631 and those of Frederik Hendrik in 1632–1634 — compare very nicely. In terms of legal status, they seem equivalent. Each of them names the residences where the possessions were located, each was drawn up by a financial controller of the court and each identifies in the header the official responsible for managing the residences. Each took about one month to compile.

In numbers of paintings — the art form I had been commissioned to study — the two collections are strikingly similar. The inventory of Francesco Barberini includes, by my count, 301 oil paintings. The contemporary inventory of Frederik Hendrik's goods lists 315. The latter figure is demonstratively on the low side. Although Drossaers and Lunsingh Scheurleer do not comment on this, the appendixes for 1633 and 1634 do not include paintings. Among other acquisitions of these years, Rembrandt's first two paintings of the Passion series are therefore missing from the count. The appendixes to the Barberini inventory do list paintings.

Neither inventory is provided with cost prices or estimates, with the exception of a telling series of seventeen works in the Barberini collection. These entries contain two figures: an estimate or first asking price and the amount actually paid. What makes these items especially interesting for our purposes is that it reveals how the Barberini went about negotiating art purchases.

The listing begins with a *Woman playing Spanish Guitar with Three Men Singing and Playing by Candlelight* by Gerard van Honthorst (1592–1656). The first asking price of the seller was 100 scudi, but Francesco ended up paying only 40 scudi. The average discount negotiated by the buyers was actually higher than this, approaching 65 percent. The average estimated

value was 84.5 scudi, the average amount paid 30. Among these paintings, aside from the Honthorst — the only one in the collection — were pictures by Andrea del Sarto (1486–1531), Jacopo Bassano (1515–1592), Federico Barocci (1528–1612) and Annibale Carracci (1560–1609). A *Nativity* by “il Vecchio Bassano” was evaluated at 100 scudi and paid for at 30. If this was typical of the buying practices of the Cardinal, we may imagine that the Roman art trade did not flock to his *portone* with the best of their wares. It is just as well for them that nearly 60 of the paintings were gifts from the pope and fellow cardinals, but also from dependents of Francesco Barberini, such as his majordomo Giovanni Battista Scannaroli, the titular archbishop of Sidon.

As one would expect, the percentage of paintings identified by master was higher in these inventories than in a run-of-the-mill bourgeois estate. However, the actual coverage is not that impressive. Exactly 50% of the paintings in Frederik Hendrik’s collection are identified by artist. That percentage is lower for Francesco: 130 out of the 301, or 43%. Of another ten paintings the painter was known, but not by name. These are designated as “un Giovane che stave col S.r Cardinale del Monte” or “uno del Civolo.” In addition to apprentice work of this kind, the Barberini collection also included the amateur productions of painting aristocrats such as Giovanni Battista Muti and his unnamed brother. The financial picture suggested by these circumstances — that the average value of Frederik Hendrik’s paintings was higher than that of Francesco — is borne out by other indications as well. The masters named in the Dutch inventories are all known to us and enjoyed high regard in their time and thereafter. This is not true of the bulk of the artists patronized by Francesco Barberini. The largest number of paintings — no fewer than 25 — is credited to an artist, apparently a house artist identified only as Francione. From another inventory Marilyn Lavin was able to provide him with the first name Giovanni. There is only one more clue: in one entry of the inventory he is designated “Francione fiamingho.” The main painter of Francesco Barberini, then, was an unknown Dutch or Flemish artist whose name must have been something like Jan Franssen or Hans Francken.

The numbers of works ordered from living masters reveals that this pattern prevails throughout. Francesco preferred unknowns, while Frederik Hendrik patronized recognized artists.

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Table 4. Artists in inventories of Francesco Barberini and Frederick Hendrik ranked by number of paintings in their respective collections

Francesco Barberini		Frederik Hendrik
"Giovanni Francione"	25+	Evert Crijnsz. van der Maes
"Maltese" (Giovanni Domenico Martiani?)	10–15	Francois Knipbergen and helpers Cornelis van Poelenburgh
"Urbinese" "Filippo Angeli Napolitano"	5–9	Gerard van Honthorst Michiel Jansz. van Mierevelt Peter Paul Rubens Jacob Isaacsz.van Swanenburgh Hendrick van Balen Anthonie van Dijck Hendrick Cornelisz. Vroom
"Mariano de Vecchi" Cav. Giovanni Battista Muti Domenico Passignano "Silvestro Eclipse"	3–4	Jan Bruegel Jan Lievens Roelant Savery Daniel Clitsert Alexander Keyrinx Paulus Moreelse Jan Anthonisz. van Ravesteyn
Cavaliere d'Arpino Giovanni Lanfranco "Giovanni Fontana da Venezia" Guido Reni Alessandro Veronese Valentin de Boulogne Anna Maria Vaiano "fratello di Cav. Muti"	2	Denijs van Alsloot Balthasar van der Ast Jan van Bijlert Paul Brill Ferdinand Elle Rembrandt Hendrick van Steenwijck Moses van Uyttenbroeck Cornelis de Visscher
"18" + 22	1	15

Of the 56 identified artists who filled the palaces of Francesco Barberini with paintings, only 29, a little more than half, were known to Thieme-Becker. This record is only marginally better than that in a random sample of seventeenth-century documents from all sources. In stark contrast, all 41 painters who occur in the inventories of Frederick Hendrik have made it into the handbooks. Another statistic helps to explain this disparity. The average number of works ordered from a painter on the Orange rolls is 7.7 as opposed to 5.4 in the Barberini. This reflects a more dedicated style of patronage over a

longer period of time, the kind of patronage that helps to establish reputations as well as covering wall space.

The variety of subjects to which Frederik Hendrik paid attention is also richer, more balanced and more varied than we observe in the collection of Francesco Barberini.

Table 5. Ranking of subjects by degree of correspondence in collections of Francesco Barberini (1626–1631) and Frederik Hendrik (1632–1634). The lower the fraction, the closer the percentage of that subject in both collections.

	Categories (differential)	
Francesco Barberini		Frederik Hendrik
	Animals (1.1)	+
	Landscapes, marines (1.2)	+
	Still life, decoration (1.25)	+
+++	Military (1.5)	
	Portraits (2.2)	+++++
[Males (1.85)	+++]
[Females (5.0)	+++++++]
	Genre (2.6)	+++++
	Mythology, pastoral etc. (3.1)	+++++
+++++++	Sacred history (3.8)	
+++++++ +++++++	Madonnas, saints (14.5)	
	Architecture (∞)	+++++++ +++++++

In seven out of ten general subject categories, Frederik Hendrik owned more paintings than Francesco Barberini. Only in military and sacred subjects did the cardinal have more than the stadholder. The more even spread of subjects in the Orange collections goes hand in hand with the wider diffusion of patronage. It indicates a broader interest in the subject matter of painting as well as in painters as artists. The Orange collection also has the air of a more personal choice. Of course it included gifts, but even those, such as the gifts to Amalia van Solms upon the birth of Prince Willem in 1626, were obviously commissioned with an eye to the taste of the princely couple. It does not include items such as Francesco Barberini's cache of generic Madonnas "per donare," to give as gifts.

Insofar as the inventories published by Lavin and Drossaers and Lunsingh Scheurleer are reliable indications for the artistic holdings of the individuals concerned, these findings call for a re-examination of the status of Frederik Hendrik as a patron of the arts in Europe. Note the proviso, however. Neither author systematically places the documents they publish in a larger context.

We do not learn from them, for example, the relationship between their subjects' expenditures on easel paintings, wall paintings and architecture. Before we can make firm judgments about the contents of the inventories, we must first establish critical principles for judging their degree of completeness and accuracy and their place in the total picture of personal, family, dynastic or corporate ownership of goods.

In this regard, the American and Dutch scholars whose work I have discussed both made the same valuable observation, which has however been largely ignored since. Both insist on the importance of studying inventories in relation to each other rather than in isolation. As Drossaers and Lunsingh Scheurleer put it: "The evocative potential of the inventories is in large measure dependent on the study of parallel documents." They and Lavin were referring in the first place to series in the history of a single collection. However, the same can be said of the value of comparing inventories of different collections, as in the present surface-scratching example. This is another approach than the study of statistical aggregates, which is practiced widely and is of course of great use to all of us.

Two theses in closing:

1. The comparative study of inventories — in which I include trans-historical and trans-cultural comparisons as well as international and local ones — should stand higher on the agenda of inventory studies. It should be practiced not only as a tool for improved accuracy in identifying objects but as a necessary measure to grasp the significance of the individual documents we are now studying.

2. More work should be done on inventories already published rather than putting all our effort into bringing new ones to light. Whether the Barberini inventories have been mined for all that they can tell us I do not know. The Orange documents certainly have not. We are courting the danger known for a long time to archaeologists, that is too much digging and not enough analytical study and publishing.

