



The Spanish Culture of Charles I's Court

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King Charles I lost his head twice. The second time we know about, on a scaffold in 1649. But the first time, when he was Prince of Wales, is much less well known. As a 23-year-old, wearing a wig and dodgy false beard, and taking the name of Mr Smith, he rode across the whole of France with three companions and arrived in Madrid completely unannounced. It was a mad and incredibly dangerous thing for the only surviving son of a king of England and Scotland to do. My lecture tonight tells the story of that madcap adventure and reveals why it was so important in shaping the culture of Early Stuart England.

The story actually starts in the second year of the reign of King James I. Protestant England had been isolated from the Catholic powers of Europe ever since Elizabeth I's excommunication by the Pope in 1570 and England had been a war with Spain for nineteen years. The treaty of London, signed in August 1604, ended the war that had dominated English politics for almost two decades. Spanish territories spread across more-or-less the whole of Europe including most of Italy and, although France was not formally at war with England, travel abroad by the English was dangerous and ill advised. Many luxury goods that were common in Paris and Madrid struggled to make their way into the Port of London and, in many ways, England was cut off from the cultural currents of contemporary Europe.

Negotiations for the peace had taken place in London at Somerset House in series of protracted meetings commemorated, at their conclusion, by a large painting showing all the participants. James I signed in London but the plan was for King Philip III to ratify it in person in Spain in the presence of Charles Howard the earl of Nottingham and around 500 English courtiers. Their vast embassy to the court of King Philip was the most splendid and extravagant appearance of the English court abroad for nearly a century. A trip to Spain was a visit to the centre of the European world, the capital of Europe's largest and most powerful empire and, as the English wagon train of 800 mules made their way across the sun-scorched landscape, the cream of the Jacobean court were exposed to a novel set of cultural influences.

They assembled at Valladolid, the Castilian city to which King Philip III had moved his court in 1601. As the capital of Castile, it was a fine place with an ambitious but unfinished 16th century cathedral and many large houses, churches and colleges. The royal palace was originally a private mansion built between 1526 and 1534; in 1600 it was acquired by the Duke of Lerma, who sold it to Philip III the following year.

Philip III's palace remains, but much altered from its early 17th century state, and it is now a military headquarters. But what the English visitors saw was a double-courtyard residence in an early Renaissance style similar to many of Henry VIII's houses. It was far smaller than Hampton Court or Greenwich, but familiar in the arrangement of rooms graduating from the public to the private quarters of the king. On the street front was a great festival hall overlooking a square in which the principal events of the reception were held. It must have been an exotic and exciting time because the Spanish laid on magnificent entertainments: a triumph, bull fights, a tournament, a parade, masques and feasts. It was noted that the royal palace was 'furnished with many excellent pictures, all the good ones made by Italians or come out of Italy'.

Despite embodying the future hopes of king and country, in his teens James I second son, Prince Charles was a lost figure at court. He had been robbed of his elder brother, Henry Prince of Wales, in 1612 and, the

following year, his beloved sister Elizabeth had married Frederick IV, Elector of the German Palatinate, one of the seven princes who chose the Holy Roman Emperor. When they left, England Charles was left to his own devices at St James's palace where he continued to receive a princely education devised for him by the king. James made little effort to involve him in the governance of the land and Charles had no political influence.

Worse still was the fact that in 1614 the king's eye fell upon a new favourite, George Villiers, who accelerated himself into James's affections capturing them completely by early 1616. Charles was now, more than ever, a bystander at court, his father's attention completely captured by his new love. Soon the king had adopted Villiers as his 'son' and the king became his 'dear Dad'; the only way forward for Charles was to join this new extended family as a junior member, which is what he did in 1618 as 'baby Charles'. For the last six years of James's reign England was effectively governed by this triumvirate.

Buckingham rose from virtually nothing to become, in 1623, the only Duke in England and his rise to wealth and power was accompanied by all its trappings, including those of art and architecture. It is likely that Villiers' interests in this sphere helped stimulate those of Prince Charles who began to take a greater interest in the collections amassed by his brother, Henry Prince of Wales, still on show at St. James's palace.

After the death of his brother Prince Charles became the focus of intense discussions about his marriage. These centered on the possibility of him marrying Phillip III of Spain's daughter, the Infanta Maria Anna, a project which had strategic benefits to both nations, but which was beset with problems. The marriage was promoted by the Spanish ambassador in London Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuna, Count Gondomar and by George Digby, earl of Bristol, the English ambassador in Madrid who painted such a picture of the infanta that Charles fell for the idea of her completely.

In early 1623, with marriage negotiations bogged down in matters of religion Charles and Buckingham conceived a plan to appear, unannounced, at the Spanish court in Madrid and to win the hand of his princess blasting away contractual niceties. Like his dead brother Henry who had been obsessed with chivalric exploits, Charles was seized by visions of chivalry and romance and saw himself embarking on a princely quest to win his bride. The quest may have been given additional romantic allure by the fact that his father, as a young king, had made the hazardous journey across the North Sea from Leith docks to rescue his bride, Anna of Denmark, in 1589.

But young Charles's scheme was even more perilous than the choppy sea crossing braved by his father. It was winter, and Lent, and Charles and Villiers planned to ride incognito across France with only three servants arriving, unannounced, at Europe's most splendid and formal court with nothing but their riding habits.

In March 1621 King Philip III had died and his heir, Philip IV, was a youth of just 16 dominated by his tutor Gaspar de Guzmán, Count of Olivares. Philip's was an enormous, but fragmented, monarchy that stretched across the world. In Iberia alone he held three crowns and to these had to be added sovereignty over the Spanish Netherlands, the Duchy of Milan, the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily and the territories in the New World. Philip was *el rey planeta*, the planet king, an epithet that not only referred to his vast territories but to his personal glory. For Olivares ensured that Philip was a model of princely magnificence, reserved, dignified, pious and excelling in all princely virtues from hunting to connoisseurship. The reception the Prince of Wales would receive at this mighty court, breaching every known diplomatic protocol, was completely unknown.

The importance of the eight months Charles was away from England cannot be overestimated. The prince's trip was no weekend mini break: he lived at the Spanish court for five and a half months completely immersed in its etiquette, entertainments and architecture, and observing, firsthand, its religious practices. To get there, he had travelled across France; his first stop was Paris where he spent a day seeing the sights. In fear of being unmasked he and Villiers (travelling as Jack and Thomas Smith) bought new periwigs and, in disguise, obtained access to the court at the Louvre where they saw the queen mother dining in public, the king in his gallery and the queen and her ladies practicing for a masque. Leaving Paris, they embarked on a ten-day, 500-mile, dash for the Spanish border which they crossed at Irún and, three days later, on March 7, they reached Madrid. Having ridden on ahead, Charles and Villiers arrived at the house of the English Ambassador to the Spanish Court, the first earl of Bristol with only one servant: his surprise was complete and his consternation absolute.

Madrid had become the principal seat of the Spanish court in 1561 and had only begun to acquire the appearance of what we would call a capital City after 1610. It was not a particularly promising location - at the centre of the land mass, with a meagre river, it was boiling in summer and freezing in winter, nevertheless, by 1623, there were some 10,000 private houses including many mansions belonging to the nobility. King Philip III had commissioned his court architect, Juan Gómez de Mora, to build a huge civic square symmetrically lined with houses built above arcades. This, the Plaza Mayor, according to Sir Richard Wynn, one of the English sent by sea to attend Prince Charles on his arrival, was 'the only thing in that town which a man would stand and look at'. A broad street, the Calle Mayor led up to the Alcázar, the royal residence sited in a large medieval fortress on rising ground on the west of the city.

Bristol, in conference with Gondomar, who was in Madrid at the time, decided that Villiers should pave the way with King Philip, and he was taken by Olivares to the Alcázar where, by the backstairs, he was ushered into the king's private apartments where he had an audience with the 18-year-old monarch. The Spanish court was gripped by a crisis of etiquette. Charles could not meet the king's sister, Maria Anna, without considerable preparation and so it was arranged that he should at first spy her from his shuttered carriage, the princess wearing a blue ribbon to mark her out. She was beautiful, and the glimpse of his future wife further inflamed Charles's desire. The protocolists convened a council to determine the proper steps for a reception of the prince at court. The cost of doing this properly would be enormous and it was joked that Charles had managed to sack Madrid without an army.

Before he had left England James had furnished the prince with letters of presentation for King Philip which explained that his son was 'a prince, the sworn king of Scotland'. This ingenious piece of mumbo-jumbo was to guarantee that Charles would be treated as sovereign and not just a prince of the blood. It worked. Preparations were advanced on the basis that Prince Charles had equality with the King and members of the Spanish royal family. Key to this was his introduction by way of a public entry, the mechanism by which Spanish royalty took the public stage. On 16 March Charles was accorded this honour.

Charles and Philip rode through the carefully swept and richly decorated city streets beneath a canopy carried high by 12 gentlemen accompanied by drummers, trumpeters and surrounded by foot guards. Behind them rode Olivares and Villiers and an assortment of ambassadors and nobles; a contemporary print shows the procession arriving at the Alcázar where they were met by the queen in her audience chamber. He was then escorted to the prince's quarter where he was delivered into his very bedroom where, within an hour the queen's lord chamberlain arrived laden with valuable gifts.

Although the Alcazar of Madrid was an ancient Moorish fortress in origin it had been adapted and extended by the Hapsburgs to form a large double-courtyarded palace with a principal façade only completed two years before the arrival of Prince Charles. Sir Richard Wynn thought the front 'very fair', though the rest of the palace was not 'worth much observation', Lord Roos who had seen it a few years before thought it not very large 'but beautiful commodious and stately'. In truth the façade was more impressive by its size and apparent regularity than by any sophistication of its architecture.

In plan the Alcazar would have been of a familiar type to the English visitors. It comprised two courts, one for the king and the other for the queen; the royal family occupied the principal floor, below were not only the offices of state but also various commercial enterprises. Access to the royal apartments was via a grand stair that occupied the block between the two courts, this gave onto an upper cloister that ran round the interior of each court. The first chamber on the king's side was for the royal guards and led to a small hall which was where the king would dine in public. Beyond this was the king's principal reception room, known as the antechamber. In here there was a canopy and chair of state beneath which Philip received councillors and washed the feet of poor men on Maundy Thursday, a ceremony observed by Charles during his stay.

Then came the principal audience chamber, the cámara containing a ceremonial bed in its corner. As ambassadors were received in here, and royal councillors attended to kiss the royal hand, it was part of the outer part of the palace, not the inner apartments. These started at the cámara door and access to them was highly restricted to gentlemen of the bedchamber and other named court officials. This was not at all unlike the Elizabethan court where a tiny proportion of courtiers had access to the queen's privy lodgings. The access that Prince Charles was given to Philip's private apartments on the west and southwest of the Alcazar was exceptional. Here there were three small rooms for the private reception of ambassadors, but beyond these, at the end of a long gallery, was the king's study, where few courtiers ever penetrated. A back staircase

gave access to rooms below where the Prince of Wales was lodged. Philip generally ate alone, served by his groom of the stool, in an alcove off the gallery and his bedchamber was only accessed by the groom and a small number of menial servants. Spanish Kings lived a much less public life than had become the norm across the rest of Europe, principally venturing from their private apartments on religious and court feasts, and then with great splendour.

On the south side of the Alcazar was originally the great hall of the ancient fortress but in the years immediately before Charles's visit a new range of rooms was built against it giving Philip IV two great new chambers in which to hang his paintings and conduct affairs with his family. The room that would be later called the hall of mirrors, had been painted and gilded and hung with easel paintings while Charles was living there, several canvasses by Titian. In due course this room was to contain the cream of Philip's collection of paintings.

The largest hall was the *salón de las comedias*, the hall of plays; in 1626 this was described as 'the great hall in which celebrations with plays and balls are held and in which the king and queen dine in public on the wedding day of ladies who marry in the place'. Sir Richard Wynn described the staging of a play in the Hall of comedies which he called 'an indifferent fair room'. It contained a canopy of state under which there were five chairs for the king, queen, Prince of Wales and the two royal brothers.

Philip had decreed that the prince be served exactly as he was, and he sent him half his personal bodyguard and assigned him a chamberlain or mayor-domo to be in charge of his household. Not giving the prince gentlemen for his bedchamber, he presented him, instead, with two gold keys, which were the master keys to the apartments; these he passed on to Buckingham and the earl of Bristol. Various aristocrats were also assigned to the prince's household to wait upon him.

The king saw to it that there were few days when there was no entertainment for Prince Charles. In quieter times the prince would hunt and hawk in the parks near to Madrid, but every week there were plays, bull fights, displays of martial skill, music, pageants, feasts, firework displays, torchlight processions, picnics, visits to places of interest, in short, an itinerary that gave a fun-packed façade to the hard-nosed marriage negotiations behind the scenes.

On his third day in the Alcazar, the Prince of Wales was taken by the king on a tour of paintings in the royal apartments. Philip was already a connoisseur of painting, literature, poetry, music and theatre and had inherited perhaps 2,000 paintings from his father hanging at the Alcazar and the other royal houses. To these he was already adding acquisitions of his own especially Venetian paintings. Charles had the opportunity to examine much of this collection at leisure. Two of the servants who had ridden across France with him were Francis Cottington and Endymion Porter both extremely knowledgeable about Spain and about painting, they were soon joined in Madrid by Buckingham's artistic advisor Balthasar Gerbier.

Covetousness filled the prince's eyes, especially for the king's Titians, of which there were many. Charles dropped hints and hoped for a big gift and was rewarded by two large and important canvasses Titian's portrait of the Emperor Charles V with a hound (now in the Prado) and his *Venus du Pado* (now in the Louvre). Gerbier, Cottington and Porter scouted Madrid for other paintings, both those commercially available, but also those in private collections. According to the contemporary art critic Vincente Carducho who observed the prince, every painting he saw was at risk from the acquisitive Englishmen. A score or more paintings were bought and crated ready for shipping to London, mainly, but not exclusively Italian 16th century pieces, including Titian's erotically charged *Woman with a fur coat* (now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum) and the enigmatic *Conjugal allegory* (now in the Louvre).

Charles was also a guest at El Escorial the colossal palace-cum-monastery 28 miles north of the capital. The Escorial had been started by Philip's Grandfather and was something of a mystery to many of the English who went there. Lord Roos described it as 'so great, so rich, so imperial a building that in all Italy itself there is nothing that deserves to be compared with it'. Sir Richard Wynn praised it as 'the only thing talked of in those parts to be worth seeing' and was impressed by its size and beauty but, 'when they had showed us most of the house... we desired to see the king's lodgings, which we found poorly furnished and nothing proportionate to the rest of the house' confirming his opinion that 'it was never intended for the king's palace but for the goodliest monastery in the world (which it is)'.

The English royal party, and their swollen baggage train, began to make their way to the coast in September after extracting themselves from the Spanish with treaties, promises and oaths, all soon to be broken. The Prince travelled via Segovia where he visited the cathedral and the palace where he was put up and feasted. They then went on to the former royal capital at Valladolid where he went shopping and perused the royal picture collections in the palace where he was given a fine sculpture by Giambologna and a luscious Mars and Venus by Paolo Veronese (now in the National Gallery of Scotland).

Negotiations for a marriage between a Protestant Prince and a Catholic Princess were never going to be straightforward, nor were the European power-politics that lay behind the proposed dynastic alliance. Discussions were detailed, vexed and lengthy and, as negotiations dragged on in Spain, and while Charles and Buckingham consumed the £30,000 that they had brought with them, preparations were afoot in England to receive the Infanta. The day after Charles and Buckingham arrived in Madrid the Secretary of State, Edward, Viscount Conway consulted the Lord Chamberlain and Inigo Jones on which houses would be most suitable for receiving the Infanta and her entourage. They thought Denmark House would be the cheapest and easiest to prepare but St. James's was the seat of the Prince of Wales, and it was decided that this would be the Infanta's 'constant seat', although Denmark House would also be assigned to her as her London residence in due course.

In preparing St. James's the most complicated issue was provision for the princess to exercise her religion. In April 1623 the Pope granted a dispensation for the marriage on the condition that her religion could be freely practiced in her own establishment. This necessitated new chapels at both Denmark House and St. James's. The two residences were inspected by the Spanish Ambassador, Don Carlos Coloma, who was insistent on the importance of both chapels. These were required, by an advisory panel of Spanish theologians, to be 'public churches' which were 'sufficiently large in which all the divine offices may be celebrated... [and] where Catholics may be buried with the ceremonies that are customary'.

On May 3rd Inigo Jones was ordered to prepare designs for a church, or more properly a chapel, for St. James's 'with great state and costliness'. For its design there were no English models, and it is hard to see any Spanish influence despite the close scrutiny given to Jones's designs by the Spaniards. It had been nearly 100 years since a church had been built for Roman Catholic worship in England. The design had to adhere to the (lost) specification from the Spanish royal household, but, more significantly, drew on the most up-to-date ecclesiastical architecture Jones had seen in his two trips to Italy; in fact, he had probably studied more contemporary Roman Catholic churches than any living Englishman.

The building now known as the Queen's chapel at St. James's was begun, but as the Spanish match collapsed and Charles expressed his interest in marrying a French princess instead work slowed and then eventually halted.

On March 27th, 1625, King James died and the day after the Privy Council assembled at St. James's and kissed the hand of King Charles. As a mark of respect Charles, at first, kept to his bedchamber but presently, dressed in black, dined in his privy chamber and, after dinner, went to chapel. The body of James was laid in state at Denmark house and so, on April 5th, King Charles slipped through St. James's Park and took up residence at Whitehall.

In 1625 Charles I's reign started with a revolt against the behaviour of his father's court. A proclamation of May 1625 stated: 'in the late reign of our most dear and royal father, we saw much disorder in and about his household by reason of the many idle persons and other unnecessary attendants following the same, which evil, we, finding to bring much dishonour to our house, have resolved the reformation thereof'. Charles was a small, neat and private man whose world picture was ordered, moral and hierarchical. He had been repulsed by the Jacobean court's disorder, coarseness and sexual ambiguities and was uncomfortable with his father's lack of dignity and majesty. Within days of his accession, he reasserted court regulations that dated from Tudor times. He was also structuring his own life, establishing regular times and days for all his activities, a habit he kept until the end of his life.

At first, he was forced to retain some of his father's servants and court officials a factor that must have inhibited his reforms, but four years into his reign, with more of his own men in place, he asked a commission to propose the best means of effecting a court of, what he called, 'civility and honour'. As a result, in 1630-31, a series of regulations were published governing conduct in the king's and queen's courts. As well as

ensuring that people entering court precincts were vetted for respectability, the new rules forbade drunkenness, swearing and public immorality. These were not empty threats as the gentlemen of the privy chamber who were sacked for swearing found out.

The emphasis on dignity and order was reinforced by his marriage to the moralistic and prudish French Princess Henrietta Maria, and by his experiences in the Spanish Court in 1623. Here, just two years before he ascended the throne, he had been exposed to the extreme privacy and asceticism of the Spanish monarchy. Order, dignity and deference reigned in a way that he had probably never thought possible in the chaos of James I's Bedchamber. Returning to England he even briefly adopted the extremely sober Spanish fashions of court dress. No wonder John Chamberlain a close and acute observer of the court thought that the court was 'more straight and private than in former time' and in 1701 Sir Philip Warwick could call it 'the most regular and splendid court in Christendom'. A more sceptical observer was Lucy Hutchinson, daughter of the Lieutenant of the Tower of London and wife to a Parliamentary Colonel, she could recall that 'king Charles was temperate, chaste and serious, so that the fools and bawds, mimics and catamites of the former court grew out of fashion'. But she also noticed that 'the nobility and courtiers, who did not quite abandon their old debaucheries, had yet that reverence to the king to retire into corners to practice them'.

Historians are very rude about Whitehall Palace. It is generally considered to be incoherent, confusing, and old fashioned. King James had little time for Whitehall, or indeed for London, over and above the requirement to have a ceremonial seat. But Whitehall was in fact a well-ordered, carefully maintained, and smoothly functioning royal residence. Throughout the Elizabethan and Jacobean years great care had been taken to ensure that new additions elegantly blended in with older work. It was also a treasure house, a point comprehensively made by surviving 16th century inventories and dozens of foreign visitors.

Yet, in 1625 Charles had only recently returned from his visit to Spain where the Escorial, in particular, had made a big impression on him and his companions. Within a month of his accession, it was common knowledge that the king wanted to rebuild Whitehall, but there are no official documents to show what was in his mind. A drawing now at Chatsworth House shows a design, probably dating from this period, and possibly in the hand of Issac de Caux, to rebuild the privy gallery and create a new wing in the privy garden, but it is not known whether it was even seen by the king.

We will return to Charles's plans for Whitehall in a moment, but in 1625, it was not only Whitehall that had been shown up by the Spanish King. It was London itself. Just over a month after Charles I came to the throne, he issued his first proclamation regulating building in London. It was the most comprehensive one yet and the detailed architectural specifications were again drafted by his architect Inigo Jones. Charles had seen in person how royal intervention could shape a capital city. He had been profoundly impressed by the Plaza Mayor in Madrid. In this huge civic square, commissioned by Philip II and built in 1583-5, Charles had been treated to the most spectacular festival of his stay. The tournament in his honour, according to a Spanish witness, was attended by some 50,000 people and was memorialised in a series of paintings. The Plaza Mayor was the centrepiece of Philip's remodelling of Madrid, achieved through private owners building to specifications set out and policed by court architects. The completed square became the principal marketplace of the city, surrounded by uniform brick-built houses raised up on a stone colonnade. Shops under these porticoes sold luxury goods to the court and, from the balconies above, residents watched spectacular royal festivals. In 1623 Charles had also spent two days in Paris and must have seen the Place Royal, Paris's first formal square built by Henri IV and completed by 1612.

In 1629 an opportunity arose for the king to emulate the Spanish and French monarchs. One part of the vast Westminster estate that was not held by the Crown was a 40-acre area on the east side of Westminster known as the Covent Garden. This had been acquired by John, Baron Russell 1st earl of Bedford. In 1629 the entrepreneurial 4th earl decided to try and develop this land despite royal prohibition. Charles I instantly took an interest in his plans and viewed the site with his building commission with Inigo Jones at his side. The earl's plans, he decided, were not ambitious enough and the king ordered Jones to draw up a scheme that would create a square like the Plaza Mayor. As building commenced the king and Jones intervened several more times to ensure that the development accorded with his vision, even to the degree of approving building materials during construction. According to the earl interference by the king and by Jones cost him an additional £6,000 on the development.

In the hands of Inigo Jones, the new square became something far more sophisticated and elegant than the

Plaza Mayor. It was never a full square, or Piazza, as it was christened, as only the north and east sides were intended to be built up; the west was occupied by the new church of St. Paul and the south opened onto the gardens of Bedford House. But the sides that were erected were raised on an elegant rusticated arcade that became known to Londoners as the 'piazzas'.

King Charles's vision for a more majestic London came to a culmination with a series of immensely ambitious projects that would have transformed the status of the capital and the monarchy within it. These were brought forward in 1638 at a turning point in the king's life and reign.

In July 1637 the king had told his nephew, the Elector Palatine, that he was 'the happiest king or prince in all Christendom'. He would have been ungrateful to think otherwise. He was in his prime, happily married, with healthy sons, the country was peaceful and prosperous and the legality of his non-parliamentary taxation, Ship Money, had been upheld in court. Just 11 months later this self-satisfaction had been shattered, and he was involved in military preparations to go to war against his Scottish subjects.

It was the imposition of a new form of worship by Scottish bishops under royal authority that triggered a revolt in Scotland. In February 1638, the protestors drew up a covenant in defence of religion asserting parliamentary supremacy and questioning Charles's authority. By the early summer a furious king, unwilling to concede either his power, or that of the bishops, was already considering military action against the covenanters. In the short space of a year a happy, a quietly confident, monarch had been transformed into a prince determined to assert his might, majesty and right against his subjects.

Over the next three years Charles was a more visible presence in his capital than he had been during the previous decade, and he embarked on a series of schemes that would have asserted royal magnificence on the capital. The most spectacular of these was a complete rebuilding of Whitehall Palace. The ideas that seem to have been briefly contemplated in 1625 were for a reconstruction of the privy gallery, but in 1638 the scheme was for a hugely ambitious recasting of the whole of Westminster. The problem with Whitehall had always been that it was bisected by a main road; half of the palace was in St. James's Park and the other half on the riverside.

Jones devised a plan that re-routed King Street further east to run alongside the river joining Charing Cross with Cannon Row and terminating on axis with the north door of Westminster Hall. The new Whitehall, itself with a spectacular street frontage, would be, like St. James's, within the secure walled compound of the royal parkland. Jones, and his draftsman, John Webb, must have been intensively concentrating on the project because 40 drawings for it survive, perhaps only half of the number originally produced. The idea was for a single rectangular building perforated by 11 courtyards, the central one a great colonnaded square. Unconstrained by pre-existing structures a square is an obvious form to adopt, but it is possible that Jones was asked to base his plan on the Escorial, seen by King Charles in 1623, to which the Whitehall design bears a strong resemblance. It is also possible that Jones was influenced by a conjectural reconstruction of the Temple of Solomon published in 1596 by a Spanish Jesuit, Juan Bautista Villalpando, which is also a square containing multiple courts.

What is certain is that as the plans developed the king was closely engaged. Sketches were shown to him and options discussed; the favoured solutions were marked 'taken' and the rejected options crossed out. Indeed, the drawings that remain are an extraordinary chronicle of the evolving ideas about what a new royal palace should comprise. Amongst them there are some that are highly finished and obviously designed for presentation but because many drawings have been lost, it is now impossible to discern the chosen plan if, indeed, there was one.

At any rate, England was on the brink of civil war and the Whitehall plans never progressed further than the paper upon which they were drawn. But Whitehall was by far and away Charles I's most favoured, and frequently visited, residence. In contrast to his father Charles would move to Whitehall whenever he had the opportunity and the winter court season was extended at both ends to become a four or (in the 1630s), a five-month, continuous residence. Like his father, during the summer months he was only there on occasion for business but then, most of the aristocracy and the whole of fashionable society were in the country.

Whitehall had the most extensive privy accommodation of any residence. Confusingly the whole range of buildings was called the privy gallery, but it also contained a long gallery called the privy gallery. The range

connected to the queen's privy lodgings and the matted gallery. The latter was a 380ft long gallery fronting the privy garden and leading to Prince Charles's lodgings. Whitehall can be characterised as 'home' for Charles I and the static court season was his time for pursuing his cultural interests: music, drama, masques and collecting works of art.

Charles was a serious collector: collecting was a structured, almost empirical, activity which combined connoisseurship, scholarship, and classification. Soon after his return from Spain he ordered his first inventory of paintings including the Titian he had bought in Madrid. Two years later, when he became king, he began to commission and purchase large numbers of pictures. In 1627, most famously, he bought a spectacular collection of paintings and sculpture from the Duke of Mantua for nearly £16,000. In fact, in the first five years of his reign, Charles spent some £30,000 on buying painting and tapestries.

Most of these objects came to Westminster and almost all were placed in the privy gallery at Whitehall and at St. James's. Although the privy gallery had been built by Henry VIII it had not been altered in structure by either Elizabeth I or James I. Such decorative changes as there had been retained the essential structure of a series of rooms backing onto a long gallery with bay windows overlooking the privy garden. The gallery was the spine of the building and ran from the river to St James's Park and, although it had different sections, was essentially a 600ft long passage. The part called the privy gallery was a relatively short section from the door of the vane room to the Holbein gate.

Charles hung the privy gallery with 73 Tudor and Jacobean portraits with a very small number of more recent portraits. The older portraits were paintings inherited by Charles I already hanging at Whitehall. Courtiers using the gallery would thus see the array of traditional dynastic royal painting. Those who wanted to see some of the king's personal collection would need to get access to the matted gallery or the privy lodgings. The colossally long matted gallery was one of the wonders of Whitehall. It faced west overlooking the privy garden and in 1639, on its east wall, was an almost continuous display of 103 paintings, the majority Italian pictures acquired as part of the Mantua purchase. Dotted along the gallery's length were antique marble sculptures on timber pedestals. At the far end hung Anthony Van Dyck's 'Great Piece', a monumental family portrait of the king and his family set at Whitehall itself.

The matted gallery was accessed either from the vane room or from the king's bedchamber. The bedchamber, and the seven rooms beyond it on the south front of the palace, were restricted only to the king's bedchamber staff. James I had sometimes allowed ambassadors and others into his bedchamber but in 1626 the king had all locks changed to treble locks and keys restricted to just the Lord Chamberlain, the king and queen. This was an inner sanctum, hung with a series of new Mortlake Tapestries of the Months of the Year and containing paintings of his wife, siblings, nephews and nieces as well as the Duke of Buckingham and his family placed over the chimney. Next door the breakfast room was also hung with Mortlake tapestry and over the fireplace was Vandyke's gorgeous painting of the king's five eldest children. The king's collections were displayed in four rooms in the western half of this range entered, by everyone but the king and his closest friends, from a door in the privy gallery. The first was filled with canvasses by Titian and the following two rooms overflowed with paintings by Raphael, Correggio and others. The largest room in the privy lodgings was the king's cabinet. contained some 80 paintings including works by Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci but also bronzes, books, medals, drawings and other works of art. Into the ceiling was set Rubens' sketch for the ceiling of the Banqueting House.

It has been a trope of historians to link royal art collecting and the display of power, but what is abundantly clear is that none of Charles I collections were accessible to anyone outside his bedchamber and a few invited guests, and those, almost exclusively at Whitehall and St. James's. In fact, nobody outside this charmed circle had any access to either his high renaissance paintings or the contemporary works of art. Indeed, the only contemporary painting publicly on show anywhere in the royal houses was the banqueting house ceiling. This is the fundamental truth about Charles's court. It was private, inward looking and sustained for the pleasure and enjoyment of the king and queen and their closest friends. In fact, not at all unlike the world of Phillip II and IV of Spain.

So, ladies and gentlemen tonight I hope I have thrown a new complexion on the reign of Charles I. A picture of a man profoundly influenced by an eight month stay in the Spanish Court at the age of 23. Someone who wanted to emulate the dignity and order of the Spanish court, who, like Philip III and IV created private galleries of painting reserved only to himself and his friends, who contemplated rebuilding Whitehall inspired

by Spanish designs and pushed through a remodelling of part of London based on what he had seen in Madrid.

All this and a great deal more about the Stuart age of art and architecture can be found in my new book on the Stuart court and its residences published two days ago and called palaces of Revolution.

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References and Further Reading

S Thurley, *Palaces of Revolution: Life, Death and Art at the Stuart Court* (HarperCollins, 2021)

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