FEMALE SELF-PORTRAITURE
AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SELF

Mémoire présenté
à la Faculté des études supérieures de l’Université Laval
dans le cadre du programme de maîtrise en Histoire de l’Art
pour l’obtention du grade de Maître ès arts, (M.A.)

DÉPARTEMENT D'HISTOIRE
FACULTÉ DES LETTRES
UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL
QUÉBEC

2006

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Résumé

Au milieu du seizième siècle, les femmes artistes occidentales commencèrent à créer des autoportraits autonomes. Exclues du canon, elles se créèrent une image d'elles-mêmes dans ces œuvres afin de prouver qu'elles étaient parfaites en tant que femmes et artistes. Au moins jusqu'au début du dix-septième siècle, différents objets étaient souvent utilisés à cette fin, tels des miroirs, des matériaux d'art, des instruments de musique, des bijoux et des vêtements dispendieux ou d'apparat et démonstration savante. Certains de ces éléments avaient comme source des textes importants, notamment Le Livre du courtisan de Castiglione. L'accent était placé à la fois sur les filiations artistiques féminines et sur l'individualité des femmes artistes. L'autoportrait était d'une telle importance pour elles que certaines décidèrent même d'inclure leur image dans d'autres genres d'œuvres, tels les natures mortes.

Abstract

During the middle of the sixteenth century, female artists in the West began making autonomous self-portraits. Excluded from the canon, they created their images through these works in an attempt to prove that they were perfect artists and perfect women. Until at least the early seventeenth century, certain objects were repeatedly used in this self-fashioning, including mirrors, artistic materials, musical instruments, jewelry, and expensive or scholarly clothing. Some of these items were inspired by important texts, notably Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier. These women both placed themselves within a female artistic lineage and emphasized their uniqueness as female artists. Self-portraiture was of such importance to them that some even decided to include their image in other genres, such as still-life paintings.
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Introduction

For a long time in art history, there was a lack of good studies on female artists and on some of the genres and topics often used in their works, including self-portraiture. While most of these women were recognized during their lifetime, art history tended to ignore them soon after their death. Many were only rediscovered a few decades ago. Others were never completely forgotten, but must now be restudied and reanalyzed; they have been presented in such an unfavorable light (at least by today's standards) that one sometimes wonders if, in the long run, it would have been less damaging if they had also been forgotten. Since about the early 1970s, art historians have had to fight to reverse "traditional", sexist views about female artists which had existed for four centuries. Still, the research produced over these past thirty years or so, as interesting and useful as it has been, has nonetheless been far from perfect.

For instance, although feminists did much to bring obscured female artists to light, there have been problems with some of the scholarship. Many works by feminist art historians are written in a way that is too personal to be considered seriously. Some will relate their own life in their books, and although the occasional, brief mention of their experiences might be in context, it is usually neither relevant nor brief. A variation of this can be found with certain feminist authors who, when writing about female artists, will sometimes try to liven up the issues by making the work more "personal"; they will not speak of their own personal life, but will try to guess the thoughts, feelings, and actions of their subject. Although in some cases it is probably safe to assume more or less obvious reactions of an individual, some are more abstract. Indeed, sometimes an author will present his guesses as facts, and so it is difficult to trust his or her work. This happens especially with works on women, in particular female artists of the Renaissance, for which there is still a lack of information; some authors seem to want to fill the gaps with little fact and much, sometimes whimsical, guesswork. The result is often a cross between an incorrect art history book and a bland novel. Others are more interested in writing a "pretty book" than giving serious information about the artist. Here, we shall concentrate instead on a scientific search for the truth. Nothing will be casually assumed, and fiction will not try to be passed as fact. The work is based solely on historiographic research, not flights of fancy.
Accordingly, the artists are gathered together under the subject matter of female self-portraiture, and are not divided in the usual categories. We will not study Renaissance female artists as a whole, but women from the late Renaissance and early Baroque periods, which indeed seem to form their own particular group in relation to such things as influences and themes. We shall study common themes within this group. This will differ from the many works about female artists which only give an overview of their life, work, and context, and where the authors tend to concentrate more on a specific century and/or a movement than on a theme. In the case of monographs, these are usually mostly on the facts of the artist's life and work. Their authors are concerned only slightly with common themes that continue from one century to the next, and even less with theory. Unlike their male counterparts, each female artist generally has only a few monographs rather than a dozen. For some women, such works have not yet been written or are so rare that they are difficult to find. For others, such as Sofonisba Anguissola, their monographs are more common but tend to have a lack of good scholarship. Indeed, with works on Renaissance female artists in particular, there seems to be less than thorough research in general; for example, authors will mix up dates, events, and other facts, and contradict themselves. In works where a specific topic is studied, art historians will still often fall back on an individual analysis of artists after a brief overall study of the theme, and so do not deeply explore the common thread that exists between them. In this work we shall explore rather certain key points and topics that have been largely ignored and/or misanalysed in the study of female self-portraiture. This includes, for instance, the study of the influence of Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, as well as of other important texts.

Unless specifically about female artists, books and articles about a movement or topic usually have only a few of these women mentioned. Texts written as lately as within the past five years may include little or no information about female artists, regardless of the topic or period studied. When they are included, these women will often be segregated to their own section. Indeed, a problem in these works, as well as those concentrating on female artists specifically, is the lack of historical context. Key events and concepts are often ignored. A book on women in the Renaissance, for example, will devote only a few pages to humanism. Female artists are often not studied in relation to each other and their male counterparts, especially from one time-frame to the next. Authors will also give a
basic visual description of a work and some basic explanation of context rather than provide a thorough contextualization or theoretical analysis. In this work, historical context shall be therefore of the utmost importance. Unlike many art historians from the Renaissance to the mid-twentieth century, we shall not consider artists as geniuses who are a creative force independent from their environment. Nor shall we go down the path often taken by some feminists since the 1970s: in their female version of the myth of the genius, they state that women are influenced by their life experiences only, and not by any outside forces such as popular themes in art.

Like some more recent feminists (c.1980s onward) and post-modernist thinkers, such as Whitney Chadwick, Joanna Woods-Marsdeen, and Caroline P. Murphy, we shall study instead artists and their works as being a product of their time. The myth of the artist, whether male or female, will be seen for what it is: a myth. Artists, although interesting people, are in reality but common mortals. We shall analyze also the different dimensions of the subject of a work, rather than having primarily esthetic concerns. Esthetics will therefore be considered here as being part of the subject. We shall try moreover to step away from the work of feminist art historians who ask too much of the world. They expect/present the women they study to be goddess-like in their perfection, and forget particular socio-political contexts. Many also expect people in the past, such as during the Renaissance, to have been politically correct, and articulate a feeling of scandal when they discover otherwise. They forget that progress is made in small steps, not great leaping bounds, and so have an “all-or-nothing” attitude. One should thus keep in mind a sort of variation of Occam's Razor when searching for explanations of artists and their works: the answer is usually an accumulation of many relatively simple things rather than a single, very complicated thing.

The exact definition of a self-portrait is difficult. For example, images of Adrian Piper can be found in many of her photographs and movies, but these are not always meant to be self-portraits. Instead, she used herself as model because, as she put it, “I find myself to be punctual, reliable, courteous, scrupulous in carrying out orders, disinclined to go on strike or give management any lip, and, above all, willing to work gratis.” Still,
most of these works do have an autobiographical aspect in them, and can be said to be in some way self-portraits.

When looking at the evolution of self-portraiture, we can see three types of self-portraits: self-representations, non-autonomous self-portraits, and autonomous self-portraits. The oldest of the three, self-representations, are images that do not specifically represent the artist—their specific facial features are not shown, for example—but that are still meant to represent him or her on some level. While the image does not stand for a specific "me", in other words, the image is still based on the "me" of the artist, and therefore constitutes a reference to the self. In the other two types of self-portraiture, the features of the artist are clearly recognizable within the work. With non-autonomous self-portraits, the main goal of the work is not the self-portrait itself. Instead, the artist has included his or her image within a work of another genre. The artist can be, for example, one face in a crowd in a religious painting, or be one figure lurking around the text of a manuscript. He or she is therefore only one element amongst many. With time, some artists decided that their image should become independent both conceptually and physically, and so made works on an individual piece of panel or canvas, for example, in which they were the main subject. This constitutes autonomous self-portraiture, and is a genre in itself. Self-portraits, particularly those made in the last hundred years or so, do not always show the artist's everyday appearance, however.

As with anything, there are of course gray areas in self-portraiture, especially between non-autonomous and autonomous self-portraits. One of these is double portraits in which one of the two sitters is the artist. In some, the artist is the principal sitter and the second person is, in a way, just another element in the work, such as in Lavinia Fontana's *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with Maidservant*. In others, however, both figures have as much or almost as much presence, as in Anguissola's *Self-Portrait with a Maidservant*. Sometimes, as with one painting by Anguissola, a work is identified in its title as a portrait while at least one of the people shown in the image is the artist herself. Another case where the identification of a self-portrait is difficult is when the artist is indeed shown alone in a work, but is representing someone other than him- or herself, such as a saint. In such cases, one has to ask if the subject is the artist him- or herself, or rather, the
individual or personification being portrayed; is this a character worn merely as a light
disguise, or is the artist acting as a sort of vessel? In some of these cases, the answer can
depend on the viewer's point of view. Some works could therefore be said to be both a
self-portrait and, for example, a religious painting.

In the following we shall examine the construction of the self found in portraits of
Western women. We shall mostly study autonomous self-portraits, though some non-
autonomous works, in particular still lifes by Peeters which contain her reflection, shall
also be analyzed. We shall concentrate on paintings and drawings. These two media are
very similar in that the artist chooses every aspect of the esthetic of the work: the artist
applies the lines and superimposes the layers of pencil or paint, literally constructing their
image on a blank surface. This is different from sculpture, where the artist begins with
three-dimensional matter and then shapes it; as well as photography, where the image is,
more than anything else, an imprint of reality. With painting and drawing there are no – or
at least very few – limits. We shall therefore study women artists of the mid-sixteenth to
the early seventeenth centuries, when professional female artists began to appear and
autonomous female self-portraiture emerged and developed. At this time, art became seen
as being separate from craft and was canonized. The status of the artist was raised, and
male artists came to be viewed as geniuses and even gods. It is therefore interesting to see
how women chose to portray themselves in a world that usually gave them – and would
continue to give them for the next three centuries – the role of muse to male artists. We
shall see how they maneuvered around and within a system which they could not openly
criticize and which placed them in the margins when it included them at all, and how this
affected the construction of their image. We will observe how they presented themselves
as women as well as artists, and how these two elements, which were largely considered
as opposites, were unified in their work.

These issues shall be investigated over the course of two chapters. The first chapter
will concentrate on the separation of the artist from the artisan and the development of
self-portraiture. Here, we shall see the place of female artists and their self-portraits
amongst these events, and compare them to that of their male counterparts. We will see
how female artists were regarded in courts, and how this affected their work. Anguissola's
Self-Portrait at Three-quarter Length will particularly be examined in this context. One key topic studied will be the emergence of self-portraits, particularly those by Catharina van Hemessen and Sofonisba Anguissola, in which female artists are shown using artistic materials. The second chapter will concentrate primarily on the negotiation female artists during the late Renaissance and early Baroque periods had to make between their image as artist and as woman. Of special interest will be Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier, a text which women such as van Hemessen, Sofonisba and Lucia Anguissola, Marietta Robusti, and Fontana used to construct their self-image. We will examine the significance of various objects. This includes that of mirrors, particularly in the works of Anguissola, Fontana, and Clara Peeters. We will see how it was important for female artists to both place themselves in a group by using references to precedents, and to demonstrate that they were rare and unique beings. Indeed, with works such as those by Peeters, female artists made parallels between themselves and rare, collectable objects.

It is always interesting to see what aspects of him- or herself an artist wished to show. It can be almost as interesting to determine who their public was, and how it affected the contents of the work. The various influences an artist receives can be not only abundant in number, but also diverse in kind. As we shall see, female self-portraiture has a long and fascinating history filled with works that are rich in style and content. The artists who created these images, while not being "perfect geniuses", did tend to be talented, educated, and creative. One cannot but admire their determination in creating images that were both acceptable to society, and a revelation of who and what they were.
Chapter One: The Renaissance and the Beginning of Independent Self-Portraiture

From Artisan to Artist: Prelude to Renaissance Autonomous Self-Portraiture

A Short History of Pre-Fifteenth Century Self-Portraiture

The earliest extant self-portraits may have been made by women if the Upper Paleolithic Women figures (previously called "Venuses") such as the Woman of Willendorf (c.22 000-21 000 BCE, Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna) are self-representations. Indeed, what looks like exaggerated body features on some of these Women appear more natural if the point of view is changed from a frontal to an aerial one; these small statuettes then resemble what a pregnant woman would see of her own body when looking down. As for non-autonomous self-portraits, the first extant examples can be found in Egyptian tomb paintings. None of these have been specifically dated, and all seem to be by male artists. Men and women made self-portraits during classical times, and at least some of these were autonomous. However, no autonomous self-portraits have been found during the Middle Ages and until sometime in the fifteenth century. Instead, we generally find non-autonomous self-portraits by men and women as part of private works, such as illuminations in manuscripts. As many (although not all) of the women who made books at this time were nuns, most female self-portraits were by women attached to religious orders.

These works usually show them in either of four contexts. The first is amongst the text itself. We can cite as an example Self-Portrait in the Letter D (Homeliary of St Bartholomew, twelfth century, Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, Frankfurt-am-Main), by the Westphalian nun Guda (twelfth century). Here, we see Guda in her nun's habit, with her right hand raised and her left one holding a scroll on which is written "Guda, a sinner, wrote and painted this book". We therefore see a great amount of self-consciousness both through the self-portrait and in the signature itself. Another, slightly earlier example is the twelfth-century work by Claricia of Augsburg (born in the twelfth century, died in the thirteenth century), Self-portrait on the Letter Q (c.1200, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore) (figure 1). In this illumination from the Saint Memin Psalter, she holds on to a circle so that, with her body forming the tail, she creates the letter "Q". As with Guda, there is a signature, her head dividing the "cla" and "rica" written above her. Although this work
was made in a nunnery, the beautiful dress and two long braids indicate that she was an unmarried layperson. A second context is when the artist shows herself in a real or realistic situation, as with an illumination by Abbess Herrade von Landesberg (born 1125/1130 – died 1195). In the Self-Portrait (1160-1170, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire, Strasbourg) located in her Hortus Deliciarum (Garden of Delights), the abbess of the Alsatian Monastery of Hohenburg shows herself with the sixty nuns of her congregation. Interestingly, she is the only one to be shown in full length, as the other women are portrayed in bust length. Each has their name written above them. The inscription written above Herrade and on the scroll she holds up is addressed to the nuns: it explains who she is and why she wrote the work. At the other end of the spectrum is the third context, where we find mystical/imagined religious situations. In 1020, Abbess Hitda (died 1041), showed herself in an illumination for her manuscript The Hitda Gospels (Abbess Hitda Offering the Gospel to St Walburga, Hessische Landes-und Hochschuls-Bibliothek, Darmstadt) in which she is outside, amongst wheat plants and with her convent in the background; she is presenting her work to Saint Walburga (figure 2). The fourth context was to have a self-portrait in the guise of someone else, as did Caterina de Vigri (b. c.1413-d.1463) in an illumination for her Omnium Sanctorum, where she used her features for a representation of Saint Catherine set within a letter "D" (N/A). This work is prophetic in that de Vigri was herself canonized in 1703 and so herself became a Saint Catherine (Saint Catherine of Bologna). In all four of these situations, save perhaps the last one, the women made sure to present themselves properly according to their position in society. The nuns were therefore pious and dressed in their habits. As for laywomen, we can use the example of Claricia, who was presented in the fashionable clothes of an unmarried noblewoman.

As of the fourteenth century, non-autonomous self-portraits started to appear in semi-public and public works such as frescoes and altarpieces. The first of these seems to be in a religious work by the painter and sculptor Andrea Orcagna. While his Dormition and Assumption of the Virgin (1359, Orsanmichel, Florence) is a marble tabernacle, paintings followed the same model it established; the artist's self-portrait is usually found in the crowd witnessing the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin Mary. Eventually, these self-portraits came to appear throughout Western Europe in both religious works
depicting other events, as well as in secular works. As with Medieval illuminations, the artist could be shown as someone else, such as a rich man with costly clothing or an apostle with a hand positioned in a gesture of debate. Artists could also be present in the work as themselves, and would even sometimes be shown apart in a trompe l’oeil frame, as did Cola Petrucciolo in the border of his c.1400 frescoes (choir of S. Domenico, Perugia). These works were therefore significant for artists as they permitted them to either change their image so that they were presented as important figures, or to declare that they, as they were in reality, were important enough to be included in such works. Most, if not all these self-portraits, were made by men, however; indeed, the first woman to really make a number of public works was Lavinia Fontana towards the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁵

Conceptual Changes in Art during the Renaissance

Writings and the Rise of the Artist

In the earlier part of the Renaissance, creative circles were divided not only by media but also by other variables such as class and language.¹⁶ In Italy, for example, the upper class usually practiced literary pursuits, participated in a university milieu, and used Latin. Meanwhile, visual arts were practiced in workshops by people of the artisan class who, for the most part, spoke only Italian. Indeed, artists as we now know them did not begin to exist until the Renaissance. Instead, painters, sculptors, and others were seen as artisans who practiced a craft. Many tried to get/show a higher socio-economical position by becoming, for example, richer and more educated, and some presented themselves as being such in their work. Some learned Latin, although the growing use of the vernacular found in at least some intellectual circles as that of Petrarch was also to their advantage. Written works, including texts on art theory, by both artists and scholars (and indeed, some were both) proved to be very important for the rise of the artist. Artists/artisans did not seem to have been interested in theory or any other written intellectual musings and debates until the shift that occurred between the late fourteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries. In the 1390s, Cennino Cennini wrote Il Libro dell’arte (The Craftsman's Handbook), a sort of primer for artisans concerning techniques for painting. It was not a very scholarly work, still being about "craft" rather then "art".¹⁷ This was the last major
thesis on art by an artist/artisan for some time, as during the next decades such technical advice can be found at the most in a few letters.

In 1435 came a major change, when artist and scholar Leon Battista Alberti wrote his revolutionary work *Della Pittura (On Painting).* In this text, Alberti attempted, and to an important extent succeeded, in raising the status of the artist/artisan. One of the main ways in which he did this was to give for the first time a scientific base for painting and the other fine arts. He stated that a good artist should have a training in the four mathematical subjects that make up the Quadrivium, with geometry being the most important one. Because of their scientific knowledge, painters and such others would therefore not be mere craftsmen doing mechanical work, but educated people using their mind to create art. We even see an early reference to the artist as a living god, a concept which by the mid-sixteenth century would prove to be central in the mythology of the (male) artistic genius. *On Painting* was very influential not only amongst the working class, but also in intellectual circles. Indeed, the first edition of the work was in Latin, and therefore aimed mostly at the higher classes. The problem with the education of artists, however, was that essential subjects such as Latin and the Quadrivium disciplines were at this time only taught in universities, which were inaccessible to them. Alberti's treaty was also important for female artists. Although he did not write much about them, Alberti did recognize in a positive way that they existed. For example, he mentioned the Classical artist Marcia and said that her talent was cause for praise. This was much different from Cennini, who not only let it be understood that women could not paint, but identified them as being harmful to the craft because they made the hand of men unsteady. Indirectly, Alberti also helped women by generally raising the status of the artist and of visual arts.

Alberti engendered a movement of written works about art and its theory by scholars and/or artists. The first of these after *On Painting* was Ghiberti's *Commentarii (Commentaries)* of c.1450. Anticipating Giorgio Vasari's *Vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori et scultori italiani (Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Architects, Painters and Sculptors,* first edition 1550, second edition 1568), this text is not only the first coherent history of Italian artists, but also the first autobiography by an artist. It is also the first modern book written by a "regular" artist (as opposed to scholar/artists such as Alberti).
By the mid-sixteenth century, such treatises had become quite popular. Even da Vinci worked on a *Treatise on Painting*, in which he stated that painting was the highest of sciences because it required both training and natural talent. Artists responded to both past and contemporary works. Some tried to show off their intellectual prowess not only through debates on the visual arts, but also by pursuing other literary avenues, such as poetic writing. Autobiographies became popular, demonstrating that artists now had the confidence to talk about themselves, their ideas, and their work, and that the public was interested in these subjects. It was not only artists of the working class that wrote about art, but also, as seen with Alberti, scholars and artistically inclined individuals of the higher class. Indeed, art seems to become important enough to even be debated at courts and in various intellectual circles, thereby helping the image of the fine arts.

A subject that was popular amongst all and which helped the situation of the artist was the paragon debate, where the superiority of painting and sculpture over each other was discussed. Like many interests during the Renaissance, this issue had its roots in Antiquity. In the third century CE, for example, Philostratus the Elder had declared in the introduction of his *Imagines* that painting was superior to sculpture because of its use of color. Similar, and new arguments began to be discussed once more as of the fifteenth century. Alberti helped renew the interest with a mention of it in both *On Painting* and *Della Statua (On Sculpture, c.1450)*. By the mid sixteenth century, the topic was very popular, and the debates were no longer made mostly by scholars, but also by artists and their patrons. An important point made by da Vinci in his *Treatise on Painting* and subsequently much used by others, was that painting was superior because it was less manual, less messy (for instance, it did not include dust), less noisy, and, most importantly, could be done while wearing nice clothing. Painting was therefore an artistic activity well suited for a gentleman. Such negative arguments about sculpture may explain in part why there were few women practicing this art during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Indeed, after Properzia de' Rossi (active 1514-29), there seems to be no female sculptor until Luisa Roldan (1652-1706). A sort of third party in the paragon debate was drawing, which Alberti and subsequent writers, such as Vasari, stated to be important for both sculpture and painting. It was perceived as the least manual of the three media as most of the work was done in one's head with the help of one's creativity and
intellect. This seems to be the reason why, as we shall see, many artists chose to show themselves in their self-portraits with a drawing rather than a sculpted or painted work.

**Self-Fashioning in the Renaissance**

An important element for the rise of the artist and the development of autonomous self-portraiture during the Renaissance was the emergence of the concept that humans had the ability to transform and recreate themselves. This self-fashioning could be done both in real life as well as through art making, including the fine arts and literature. Indeed, it came to be considered as an art form in itself. By the sixteenth century, the verb "to fashion" had as one definition the process of creating a distinct personal style. One could shape and transform one's physical image, social position, mind, etc. This shaping could be made by choosing a type of personality to adhere to and by adopting a specific and constant mode of behavior. Etiquette books such as Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano* (*The Book of the Courtier*) were seen as helping to enable this, and so became quite popular. The idea that people had the ability to shape themselves was in great part due to the humanists, as they were much interested in the human experience, in our abilities, and in our place in the universe. They claimed that people could control their own destiny and, as they had the ability to make choices, could transform themselves. Ideas concerning fine arts came into play in these theories, with humans sometimes bringing to mind both clay and a potter. For example, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola said in his *Oratio de hominis dignitate* (*Oration on the Dignity of Man*) that God told Adam that he (Adam) was the sculptor and creator of the self. For artists in particular, such ideas had important connotations. First, comparisons between creation and the god-given ability of humans to create and shape things, including themselves, could be linked to the growing concept of (male) artists as creators with almost divine-like power. Secondly, it was also related to the perceived ability of artists to perfect nature. Thirdly, it meant that artists, like other people, had the right and ability to change their image/status from craftsmen to gentlemen. For those practicing the fine arts, one could create this image not only in real life through such things as mannerisms and clothing, but also more literally through self-portraiture.
The Emergence of Autonomous Male Self-Portraiture

Not only do we not know which work was the first autonomous self-portrait of the Renaissance, but its possible artist, country of origin, and even century, are also uncertain. Self-portraits by van Eyck and Dürer seem to be the earliest surviving examples of this type of work and indicate that this genre began in the Netherlands in the fifteenth century. However, some works may have been produced before theirs and elsewhere. One indication of this is an illumination from a *De cleres et nobles femmes* manuscript made in Paris around 1402 (Ms Fr. 12420, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris). In this French translation of Giovanni Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris* (Concerning Famous Women), we are presented with an image of the Classical artist Marcia (figure 3). As was common practice, Marcia is shown in a contemporary setting despite being from another era. She is shown in full length in a room in which all the objects are functional, including the table-like easel at which she sits and the table holding pigments behind her. This helps to show her as a serious artist. However, the most interesting aspect of the illumination is the autonomous self-portrait she is shown making. While the text does mention that she was known for making such a self-portrait, the illuminator could have chosen to ignore or change this information (as was done in the case of Thamyris, as we shall see). She could also have been shown making a non-autonomous self-portrait, including a sketch. Instead, she is not only clearly making an autonomous self-portrait, but one of relatively large scale. That the illuminator could even fathom such a thing seems to indicate that this activity was practiced at that time in France, perhaps even by women.

The first extant autonomous self-portrait may be Jan van Eyck's *Man in a Red Turban* of 1433 (The National Gallery, London) (figure 5). One of the main reasons why this work is suspected to be a self-portrait is that the sitter bears a resemblance to van Eyck in both his features and his red turban, as seen in the mirror of the *Arnolfini Double Portrait* (1434, The National Gallery, London). Another indication are the words "ALS ICH CAN" ("As best I can") placed on the upper part of the painting's frame. This was his personal motto and was used as an inscription in many of his works. The visual coupled with the written elements result in putting an emphasis on the "I", and, as in subsequent self-portraits, this inscription plays a part in the self-fashioning. Because of the frame and its inscription, we can deduce that this was meant as an autonomous work rather than as an
exercise. This painting was possibly sent to a prospective client as a kind of advertisement; one of the chief *raisons d'être* of self-portraiture was therefore present since its beginnings.\(^{32}\) Most of the self-promotion is centered around the turban. Visually, this accessory shows the artist in a distinctive way and makes him easy to remember. Its folds and texture would have been difficult to depict, and so it advertises his skills in reproducing fabric, an important factor in Flemish paintings at this time.\(^{33}\) Indeed, the rich piece of clothing also serves to show van Eyck's own economic success and assures the viewer that his artistic talents have led him to have many satisfied customers.\(^{34}\)

Van Eyck's painting is the only potential autonomous self-portrait of the Early Renaissance, as such a work did not seem to reappear until Dürer in the later half of the High Renaissance. Dürer is the first artist to show himself with such a high socio-economic position.\(^{35}\) The first of these works where he shows himself with such a high status is his *Self-Portrait* of 1498 (Museo del Prado, Madrid), made when he was twenty-six.\(^{36}\) He shows off his success here mainly through his clothes: a fashionable tunic with the sleeves and collar striped black and white, a cap also with black and white stripes, and a brown cloak thrown over his left shoulder and tied with a black and white cord. The most important piece of clothing however is the doeskin gloves.\(^{37}\) Gloves were a symbol that indicated the wearer's noble status, as only aristocrats could afford to both buy gloves and wear them because they did not do any work that would dirty and ruin them.\(^{38}\) Even more extravagant in its clothes, and therefore in its message, is the 1500 *Self-Portrait* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek) (figure 6). His brownish coat with a fur trim around the collar identifies the artist as a wealthy man in part because the amount of fur trim was regulated by the Nuremberg city council. Even more important, however, is that this was a style of coat worn by patricians and scholars (many of whom were themselves of aristocratic background).\(^{39}\) Dürer shows himself as a man of education and refinement, and not just as a "flashy" and vulgar *nouveau riche*. The background here is a sober, uniform black, save for the pale colored signature. On the left is his monogram surmounted by the date, and on the right is the sentence "I, Albercht Dürer of Nuremberg made this image of myself with colors at the age of twenty-eight". This inscription is relatively long and written in good Latin, demonstrating his education.\(^{40}\) It proudly identifies him as an artist, showing that he was not afraid to make some reference to manual work. This was a rather daring thing to
do at this time, as we shall see. The statement is also important in relation to the paragon debate, stating that painting was a gentlemanly activity that could be done while wearing the finest of clothing.

In Italy, self-portraiture as a genre seems to have begun with Raphael, and his early self-portraits are amongst some of the very first autonomous self-portraits in Western Europe. His earliest seems to be the c.1505-06 *Self-Portrait* (Royal Collection, Hampton Court) (figure 7), a work which would have been made when he was about twenty-two years old. Like van Eyck and Dürer, Raphael makes no direct visual reference to himself as an artist, but instead shows the socio-economic results of art making, both through his pose and fashionable clothing as well as with the self-portrait itself. On the two top eyelets of his bodice is his signature: the word "RAFFAELLO" is written on one, and "VRBINVS" ("Urbino") is on the other. This may symbolize that the clothes make the man. Thus, Raphael was approaching the fine arts from the other direction, one could say, as he had grown up at the great humanist court of Urbino and was a successful courtier. Indeed, in a possible second self-portrait, *Portrait of a Young Man* (? *Self-Portrait*) of c.1512 (now destroyed), he wears the clothes of the courtier, complete with a dark colored hat and a robe of fur and silk, and his loose pose shows the easy grace that would be identified by Castiglione as being essential.

The Emergence of Female Self-Portraiture
Changes in Renaissance Female Portraiture

Before we address autonomous female self-portraiture, let us first discuss some of the changes in female portraiture during the Renaissance, as the progress of both is connected. Indeed, it is important to remember that self-portraits are a form of portraiture. Like autonomous self-portraits, autonomous portraits disappeared during the Middle Ages, but their reappearance occurred earlier. It is interesting that this rebirth may involve both humanism and a female model, as the first Renaissance autonomous portrait may be Simone Martini drawing *Laura* (mid fourteenth century). In Italy, one development during the second half of the sixteenth century that may have proved crucial for the development of autonomous female self-portraiture was the return of the three-quarter pose in female portraiture. Unlike those in Northern Europe, Italian women were usually
shown during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in profile. What is important in these works is the display of the woman's beauty, clothes, jewels, and other things belonging to her, her family, and/or her in-laws. This pose would also show off elaborate hairstyles, including the plucked forehead and the various ornaments placed amongst the hair. The emphasis was therefore on the display.

Portraits of women in a three-quarter view began appearing in Italy around the 1490s, and the profile poses were out of fashion by the early years of the 1500s. For female self-portraiture, this meant that it was now possible for a woman to paint herself without having to use a complex arrangement of mirrors. The return to a three-quarter view was also conceptually important because women now had at least the possibility of having a gaze, and because it was easier to show personality. Another important factor for Italian self-portraiture that appeared around this time was that autonomous female portraits were increasingly being made during the sitter's life and not only post-mortem. The socio-economic status of women was therefore acknowledged in painting while they were still alive. There came to be a recognition that, as for men, major events in women's lives, such as weddings, were important enough to be commemorated by a portrait. This helped the place of women in art and society. Later female artists, such as Anguissola and Fontana, would even make portraits of themselves to mark important occasions in their lives.

Basic Concepts and Key Figures in Female Self-Portraiture

As of the sixteenth century, we see more professional female artists emerge. During the second half of that century, about forty women were active as artists in Italy alone. Western female painters include, amongst many others, Levina Teerlinc, Catharina van Hemessen, Lavinia Fontana, and the Anguissola sisters, notably Sofonisba and Lucia. Many elements contributed to the increase in numbers of female artists at this time. First, as we have seen, the status of the artist was rising, and so it was more advantageous for a woman to become an artist: she would not be seen as an artisan, but as a lady and even a scholar. This view was advanced by texts from various authors, in particular Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier, in which, as we shall see, he declared that the perfect court lady must be able to paint well. Becoming an artist was a way for
noblewomen to show good breeding and taste, and provided women from the artisan class with the chance to rise up socio-economically.

An art training could also help in lowering the amount of money asked for a woman's dowry, as it did for Fontana. Nunneries could also take into account the value of a woman's artistic talent, and while the dowry required for becoming a nun was usually twenty percent of that needed when becoming a wife, a lower monetary price was always welcomed, particularly in families with several daughters. In Northern Europe, especially in Flanders and in Germany, female artists may have been particularly encouraged by a range of professions acceptable for women that was wider than in Italy. In general, women had a higher social status there then elsewhere in the West at this time. There were more portraits of women made in Northern Europe than in Italy during the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries and, as we have seen, they were always in a three-quarter pose. All of this may explain why the first autonomous female self-portrait was by a Flemish artist. Likewise, the re-emergence of the three-quarter pose in Italy and the context in which portraits were commissioned very probably helped the emergence of female self-portraiture and, in correlation, the growing number of women artists.

However, receiving a good art education could be problematic as the rise of the status of the artist brought about a more complex art training. Artists were to have both a humanist education, particularly in mathematics and ancient literature, and a technical training that included the drawing of nudes and corpses. The first was expensive, and the second was generally questionable for women. The best chance a woman had in receiving such a training was to be part of an artistic family, where relatives could teach them, and where they would at least have access to plaster casts. Women from wealthy families interested in giving their daughters an artistic training, such as the Anguissolas, also had a chance as they would be able to afford the materials and teachers needed for all subjects from Latin to painting.

Autonomous female self-portraiture began at about the same time that female artists started to appear in greater numbers. The first of these works seems to be Catharina van Hemessen's (born 1528, Antwerp - died after 1587, Antwerp) Self-Portrait of 1548.
This was only about fifty years after self-portraiture had been established as an autonomous genre by artists such as Dürer and Raphael. It was also about the same number of years since female portraits in Italy were no longer in profile. The van Hemessen self-portrait was quickly followed by many similar works by female artists. Indeed, it is very interesting that, while there were many more male artists than female ones, the ratio of female self-portraits seems to be much higher. Many, if not most, female artists seem to have made at least one self-portrait during their career. Sofonisba Anguissola (born c.1532, Cremona - died 1625, Palermo) is the artist who produced the most self-portraits between Dürer and Rembrandt. Anguissola is therefore also the artist who made the most self-portraits in the second half of the sixteenth century. Some of the other women also made an important number of works in this genre, including Lavinia Fontana (born 1552, Bologna - died 1614, Rome), who created at least nine self-portraits. Another interesting aspect of female self-portraiture is the age at which women usually created these works. While most male artists tended to create their self-portraits during middle-age, female artists usually started to make their self-portraits during their late teens and twenties. Also, breakthrough works in this genre seem to have mostly been made by people in their twenties: women such as van Hemessen, Anguissola, Fontana and Peeters, as well as men such as Dürer, Raphael, Allori, and Parmigianino. These works seem to have been made to impress their audience and help establish their artistic reputation rather than marking their career.

Self-portraits were therefore used as advertisements in which artists created their self-image. They demonstrated their great technical skill and creativity, and their image could present them as beautiful, young, modest, educated or with other such elements that could impress patrons. In a way, and particularly important for women, self-portraits also helped prove that they were the authors of their work, and in this sense, they served as documents.

Art, Female Artists, and West European Courts
The Basics of the Renaissance Court Structure

Until the end of the sixteenth century, Western courts (especially those outside Italy), were not a location per se. Instead, they consisted of the physical, social, and
political space around a ruler, and of the people, from the servants to the nobles, that occupied that space. Rulers had to move so that they could both see their country and be seen by their subjects. They also traveled in order to fight, either to gain or keep their territory, or to help allied rulers with their campaigns. Of course, the bigger the ruler's domain, the longer and more often the ruler and his court had to move. Rulers with smaller territories traveled less often, but still did not usually stay in the same space. Even in Italy, where the city-states were relatively small in comparison to Northern countries, rulers such as Guidobaldo di Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, who for part of his life remained at home because of illness, were an exception.

Courts had different sizes, which depended more on the time and the specific ruler and less on the size of the domain itself. Some rulers tried to save money by reducing the court. Courts could even change numbers depending on the season. For example, both the court of Henry VII in England and the papal court had less people in winter, but for opposite reasons: in England, it was because the king stopped moving during the harsher season, and in Rome, it was because the pope traveled to his summer lodgings at Avignon. This moving about provided much discomfort for whatever members of the court were following the ruler, as they had to sleep in tents and so forth. Benventuo Cellini of Francis I's court, for example, compared the court to a band of Gypsies, and complained greatly of the discomfort. Such travels could hinder the work of some members of the retinue, such as the court artists, who nevertheless came along for some reason or other. Despite the traveling, however, courts were by the sixteenth century, along with cities, a meeting place for ideas, a major intersection where all the roads that carried people and written words met. Courts also permitted the ruler to keep an eye on his courtiers, and to make sure they were not scheming against him; one of the best ways to do so was to make them scheme against each other, and make them compete for his favor. This has been called by some scholars the "Versailles Syndrome". A less paranoid reason for having courts was that the courtiers usually had the same tastes and education as the ruler, and were able to give him counsel.
Art and Nobility

Conceptually, images of art-related saints such as Saint Luke or Saint Catherine of Bologna helped associate artists to holiness and mystic knowledge. Images of creative divinities such as the Christian God and Greek/Roman deities, for their part, showed parallels between creations on canvas and the creation of the world. Images of real-life nobles drawing, however, provided a more concrete, albeit a more mundane link between powerful beings and the fine arts. In the sixteenth century, the status of the artist was helped by aristocrats interested in practicing the fine arts. Some of these were artists of the lower nobility, such as the Anguissola sisters. However, those who were perhaps the most influential in this regard (in part because they would probably not be too openly criticized) were important members of powerful families. These included rulers of both Northern European and Italian territories. Traditionally, nobles were forbidden to do any manual work, or at least none that did not involve fighting. They could therefore not paint or practice any other fine arts when these were considered crafts. The message given by powerful aristocrats who decided to learn these media was that these were now part of the liberal arts: logically, if a noble is painting, this activity cannot be a craft, as nobles do not practice crafts.

Some portraits of aristocrats using artistic materials were even made. For example, in Jacopo Pontormo's Portrait of Alessandro de'Medici (Muséum of Art, Philadelphia), made in 1534, we see the first de'Medicis to be the Duke of Florence drawing the portrait of a lady in silverpoint (figure 8). As we shall later see, that a sitter of high rank is shown in the process of art making in a work dated as early as this one is rather incredible. As this work shows, most of the high nobility who practiced the fine arts seem to have concentrated on drawing and painting portraits. This is very interesting, for portrait painting was seen in many artistic and intellectual circles as a lower genre. Nobles, however, had a great deal of contact with those who painted them, and they regarded these artists with some level of respect. Also, in court life, where portraits played such an important part, painting one's friends and family may have seemed like great fun. Such works may not have been for the public, but the activity of the noble would be known, at least in some important circles. Isabelle de Valois's artistic activities, for example, would have at least been known in the Spanish and French courts. She was a person with much
influence, as she was not only married to Philip II but was also a member of the de'Medici family, her mother being Catherine de'Medici. Aware that his teenage queen was interested in the fine arts, Philip had brought Sofonisba Anguissola to his court in part so that she could teach de Valois drawing and painting. In a 1560 letter to Catherine de'Medici, the French ambassador Limage mentions on de Valois's behalf that she would like to be sent some colored chalk. That she knew, as the letter indicates, which ones to get and who to get them from demonstrates that she may have made some attempts at drawing before. If she had brought some with her, it is telling that she already needed more.

Court Artists, Familiars, and Ladies-in-Waiting

The position of the court artist in Western Europe has its origins in the mid-thirteenth century, when certain artists would be rewarded with a promotion from a religious or secular leader. In Italian courts, cherished artists were made familiaris, while in Northern ones they were named valets de chambre or kammerdiners. Eventually, artists were given their very own positions. Before the creation of court artists proper, however, being promoted to the rank of familiar provided an early occasion for some artists/artisans to be identified as being in a separate, higher position than other craftsmen. It therefore constitutes an early chapter in the rise of the artist. They were made familiars in recognition not only of their artistic talents but also of their general loyalty and good services to the ruler. For example, Giotto, who was made a familiar by King Robert of Anjou, was referred to by the monarch in a January 1330 letter as "our familiar and faithful servant" and was commended by the ruler for his talents, his honesty, and his loyalty.

Courts were divided into two groups of people. First, there were the courtiers, who for the most part were of the aristocracy. The other group consisted of the servants, including the tutors, musicians, artists/artisans, and other trades and craftsmen. These were the people who did the various types of manual work. Each group had its own hierarchy, which was based on the frequency with which an individual had contact with the ruler. Familiars were servants, but because they had the important task of being responsible for their ruler's welfare, they had an overall high social standing. The familiars had the social benefits of being trusted by their king, prince, or other master. They were also in a better
position than many other artists to have contact with other noble members of the court. A familiar, as the later court artists, could subsequently be promoted to a higher position, even sometimes (but rarely) could be made a nobleman. This continued with court artists. While nobility was generally seen as something obtained by birth, there was a recognition that there could be exceptions. Titles could be given as an acknowledgement that an individual was a noble in all ways – including in thought, action, and spirit – save on what could be termed the more technical aspect. For artists, such promotions were rare, but even the few examples helped to demonstrate that they were not "mere artisans". By the fifteenth century, intellectuals such as Alberti in his *On Painting* declared that it was crucial for an artist to obtain a title, and this became a goal for many of the best artists. There was some success. In the fifteenth century, twelve Italians managed to be knighted, although only five of these were given their titles by an Italian ruler rather than a foreign one. Many aristocrats would of course protest such promotions, but for nobles who wanted to practice art, helping them instead was to their advantage. As already stated, they could not traditionally practice manual work. The logical train of thought regarding the giving of titles to artists would be that if painters are noble, then painting must be a noble activity, and so would be a liberal art instead of a craft.

By the Renaissance, courts were a profitable, safe place for artists. This was especially true for female artists for whom the open market was either difficult or completely impossible to access. Like their male counterparts, they were also usually exempt from guild fees and membership, as well as from taxes and customs duties. This helped to set artists apart from artisans. Female artists had been present at court for a significant amount of time. In the early fifteenth century, for example, we find Caterina de Vigri (c.1413-1463) at the Faranese court. De Vigri was part of a noble Faranese family in the service of the Marchess Niccolò II d'Este; her father was the lawyer for Niccolòs's daughter Margherita, and the young de Vigri was one of her ladies-in-waiting. She seems to have received a good education there that included classical literature, Latin, music, and drawing and painting (including the making of illuminations). In 1427, when Caterina was about fourteen years old, she left the court after the death of her father and Margherita's engagement. That same year, she entered the Faranese convent of Corpus Domini. In 1456, she was sent to Bologna to establish another convent, and was its abbess until her
death seven years later. During her time in Bologna, she not only wrote, but also painted many works, including illuminations and devotional paintings. While her art was not of a particularly superb quality, she was remembered for it in Bologna, and by the sixteenth century her popularity was such that she had joined Saint Luke in being the patron saint of artists in that city.

During the sixteenth century, when more women were becoming professional artists, we start to see female artists being invited to courts specifically or partly because of their artistic talents. Others came as part of a "family package" of sorts, as in the case of Susanna Hornebou. The list of sixteenth century women who were already artists when they came to court includes Lavina Teerlinc, Catharina van Hemessen, Sofonisba Anguissola, Lavinia Fontana, Ester Kello (or Hester Inglis/Anglois), Anne Killigrew, and Susanna Hornebou. Other professional female artists, such as Marietta "Tintoretta" Robusti (born c.1552/60, Venice – died 1590, Venice), were invited to courts but declined the offer for one reason or other. It is interesting that this list includes women of both the noble and artisan classes. No woman seems to have been officially made court artist until the middle of the sixteenth century. The first of these appears to be Teerlinc, who was invited to the court of England by Henry VII and who did not seem to have been made a lady-in-waiting.

If so many female artists were made ladies-in-waiting rather than actual court artists, it may be because that while there was an interest for having artistically talented women at court, no one quite knew what to do with them. After all, the position of the court artist itself was still fairly new. The solution seems to have been made, consciously or not, to parallel what had been done for the men; just as in the thirteenth century rulers were able to bring male artists/artisans to court by making them familiars, so were female artists named ladies-in-waiting. These two positions were roughly similar. It also helped that a few of the women who were already ladies-in-waiting did have some interest in the arts. One can even theorize that the life of the highly regarded de Vigri may have affected the decision in at least some quarters. As had happened with their male counterparts, female artists eventually came to be usually appointed court artists per se.

When it came to artistic competition, being a lady-in-waiting rather than a court artist did have some significant advantages. There was a high level of competition at court,
including between court painters. For female artists, being "merely" a lady-in-waiting meant that they would not officially be seen as being in competition with the court artists, even if in reality they did receive some prestigious projects by both the men and women of the royal families. For example, Anguissola did her first portrait of de Valois in 1561. Versions of her painting were placed in the royal treasury and the portrait gallery at the Prado, as well as sent as a gift to Pope Pius IV. Indeed, it became the most copied portrait in Spain at this time. As ladies-in-waiting, there was not only a conceptual distance, but also often a physical breathing space between them and the male court artists. They also had an advantage if their mistress was the ruler or another powerful figure. Also, because female artists were still considered rare in the sixteenth century, they were probably seen as an exception, and so not perceived by male artists as a very serious threat. Furthermore, there was some division of labor. Some of the tasks given to female artists, whatever their official position at court, were the same as that of the male court artists, including portrait painting. Their artistic talent and presence were also meant to increase the glory of the court and of its ruler. Unlike men, however, female artists did not create any very large works of art, such as sets for plays. Women could, however, do small works, and it is suspected, for example, that Teerlinc may have created a seal for Elizabeth I.

Female artists could do more "féminine" tasks, such as creating gowns. This activity should not be downplayed, as a gown could be a work of art in itself. Clothing was an important status symbol for the wearer, and could be so expensive that mistakes in the design were not an option. Other tasks could vary depending on the needs of the court. Anguissola, for example, taught de Valois to paint, an activity that because of the age, gender, and status of the pupil may have been more appropriate to learn from a female artist. Indeed, even portraits of women, because of the time and privacy needed to make them, would have been more appropriate if painted by a woman. Art advice and other such counsel to a noblewoman would also be more appropriate if coming from a female artist. It is therefore clear that even as ladies-in-waiting, female artists had recognition of their artistic talents.
Salaries, Gifts, and Other Rewards and Awards

There had been many economic benefits for the familiar, and these were carried over to the position of the court artist. Unlike regular artist/artisans, who were paid by commissions, familiars and court artists were given, at least in theory, a regular salary. This was also the case for female artists hired as ladies-in-waiting. Anguissola, for example, was given as of June 1560 a salary of 100 ducats per year. She was therefore given the usual salary of a foreign lady-in-waiting, even though Cremona was under Spanish rule, and so was paid the same wages as the French ladies-in-waiting. Like all other ladies-in-waiting, she was also given money to pay the salary and pension of her maidservant and of her groom, as well as for living expenses such as candles, laundry, and feed for a mule or horse. As for Teerlinc, she was awarded the annual wage of 40 pounds as of her arrival at the court of Henry VII in late 1456, and this salary was made life-long by Elizabeth I in 1559. The problem with salaries was that the economic situation of most Western rulers was usually erratic. The only stable thing for the Hapsburg finances, for example, seems to have been its state of bankruptcy. Salaries would therefore rarely be paid with any regularity, when paid at all. Popes as well as secular rulers tended, in particular, to not want or not be able to pay artists and mercenaries. Artists were at a disadvantage, as mercenaries could at least collect money by either pillaging the city they were sent to attack or turning on the one who hired them and pillage them instead. Artists could not wave such threats, as in a non-figurative way the sword is mightier than the pen or brush. An artist at court did have the benefit of being in a better position to remind the ruler of the missing salary payments, and, as also mentioned, some of the living expenses at least were paid for.

Gifts were therefore very important, as they provided a way to supplement the salary and even, in some cases, to replace it. These gifts could be from the ruler or any other courtier. They could be given at various gift-giving times, in thanks for a particularly well rendered service, as part of a will, or at various other occasions. They could be given to the artist's family as well; for example, Teerlinc's husband received ten pounds from Queen Elizabeth when his wife died. While most presents could arrive with more regularity than the salary, and usually did not require any waiting, this was not always the case with monetary ones. Pensions were particularly problematic. As of July 1561, for
example, Anguissola had been awarded by Philip II a life-long pension of 200 scudi in thanks for a portrait of him. In 1563, she asked the king for a delayed payment that totaled 12,000 imperial lire. Still, like salaries, the theoretical amount of one's pensions could be used at least as a kind of status symbol.

Material gifts could be as valuable as monetary ones. If anything, they could be later sold or exchanged for money. Jewelry was a popular form of gift, and silverware could also be very welcomed. Some gifts may have been more valuable than money because of their symbolism, such as when Teerlinc, her husband, and their only child, Marcus, received the honor in 1566 of being made English citizens. An important gift for men and women were fabrics and clothing, as clothes at court were of great importance. One had to be suitably dressed for one's position, and the cost of clothes could be quite high. Even the clothing familiars had been allowed to wear, while not that of nobles, showed them to have a higher standing than regular artisans. Clothes were one of the best ways to show one's position, both in everyday life and in portraits. Unlike other status symbols such as houses, clothes were portable and so could be admired by all who saw the wearer. They could also be more or less easily replaced or altered to reflect the fashion of the day. A court painter walking around in silks and velvets enforced the idea that he was not a manual worker, for unlike the artisan and even the sculptor, as we have seen, he could work in such fine clothes. The gift of cloth or clothing would therefore be of great importance to an artist for both economic and symbolic reasons. For example, we can cite Susanna Hornebout, who received twelve yards of black satin from Princess Mary in August 1544. For women, such gifts could be placed in their wedding trousseau. By her first wedding in 1573, Anguissola had received so many gifts that her trousseau was worth about 12 000 scudi; the linens were valued at 5 800, the clothes and furniture at 3 250 scudi, and the jewelry and silverware at 2 780 scudi. She also had been given a second life-long pension of 1000 ducats.

Some artists were also given various awards. Anguissola in 1565 was part of de Valois's retinue on her diplomatic mission to Bayonne to speak to Catherine de'Medici. Because she impressed the courtiers there, she was given one of six medals for virtue. The most prestigious award that she was ever given, however, was what might at first
seem like a rather simple gold chain. During the early sixteenth century, some of the more powerful Western rulers once again began to reward their subjects for excellent and honorable behavior by giving them a gold chain. Unlike the original awardees of Roman times however, these chains were now given to such people as scholars and artists rather than to soldiers. These gold chains were highly valuable for two reasons. One, they symbolized the high esteem that a most powerful patron had for the recipient, and had strong connotations of ancient glory. Two, because they were large and made of gold, and so monetarily were worth much. These gold chains were a practical form of reward, as they could be worn and displayed at court or wherever else the recipient went. While they were quite rarely given at first, they gradually became more common as the second half of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century progressed. It became not only more common for artists to receive a gold chain, but also for some to be awarded more than one.

Rubens, Van Dyck, and Zuccari, for example, received several from the rulers of Spain, the Spanish Netherlands, England, and Italy. Many artists who had received such an honor, whatever the decade, made a self-portrait or commissioned a portrait in which they would show off their reward. These paintings commemorated the event, and served to advertise their talent and connection to the ruler. The first of such self-portraits may be in a non-autonomous work of 1504, where Gentile Bellini showed himself in the foreground of his *St Mark Preaching in Alexandria* (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan) wearing a red toga and a gold chain. This work may have been an inspiration for early autonomous self-portraits showing such a prize. This may have been the case with Titian, one of the few artists to receive a gold chain in the first half of the sixteenth century, as Bellini was his celebrated predecessor as court painter in Venice.

Sofonisba Anguissola received a gold chain sometime between her arrival at the Spanish court and the end of the 1560s. She seems to have made a work to commemorate the event, her *Self-Portrait at Three-quarter Length* dated from the 1560s. This work is not longer extant, but a copy of it exists through an engraving by Johan N. Muxel, published in 1851 (formerly Leuchtenberg Collection) (figure 9). While gold chains were at this time becoming more common, they were still relatively rare. That she was a
female artist and officially a lady-in-waiting must have made this honor even more immense. Receiving this chain would have been the apex of her career, and there were not many other awards which she could receive that would surpass this one.\textsuperscript{113} In a way, this work replaces a wedding portrait in marking the most important moment of her life. The work is of three-quarter length, making it longer than any of her previous works. That she does not show herself in a full length pose indicates a desire to keep some of the modesty found in her other self-portraits; such works were for the nobility, and while she was of an aristocratic family, she may not have wanted to seem to be comparing herself to the royal family whose full length portraits she often painted. She is, however, wearing very expensive jewelry and clothing. It is therefore the only work in her career where she presents herself so richly dressed.\textsuperscript{114} If the point of the work was to commemorate her success at court, it is logical that she decided to show herself not only with the prestigious award, but also with other riches she had received that would serve to show her position.

Anguissola wears a heavy dress, with buttons running down the front of the bodice, and what seems to be a large jewel hanging between the folds of her skirt. The large sleeves are richly decorated with pearls.\textsuperscript{115} She has lace cuffs and a thick, small ruff, which recall and elaborate the light lace she usually wore in her previous self-portraits. Her hair is pulled back in its usual fashion, but here she wears what appears to be a sort of heavily bejeweled headband. She wears both a gold encrusted necklace, which may have been a gift from the queen, and the double coiled gold chain awarded to her by the king.\textsuperscript{116} Anguissola therefore shows herself with important gifts around her neck from two of the highest ranking and most powerful patrons an artist could have at this time. Her right hand holds the chain, bringing it to our attention. In her other hand she holds a pair of gloves. The gloves are a show of nobility, but may also be a reference to her \textit{Bernardino Campi Painting a Portrait of Anguissola} (1559-1560, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Sienna) (figure 10). This earlier work is the first one in which she showed herself with such rich elements as earrings and gloves, and, as we shall see, seems to have been made to commemorate her appointment to the Spanish court. As the later work apparently commemorates the fabulous success she had there, it is thus a sort of "part two". The gold chain and the gloves in the 1560s self-portrait may symbolize the duality of her role as court artist and lady-in-waiting. Her right hand, which is her painting hand, holds an award given to her
for her "manual" artistic work and humanist pursuits. The left, "passive" one holds gloves, which serve to indicate her noble rank and background, as well as her official position as a Lady-in-waiting. Both objects serve to show her social and economic success. The gold rings on three of her fingers, as well as the round jewels on her sleeves, recall the larger links of the gold chain and help to bring our attention to it. Paired with the chain, these jewels may also symbolize, as with the gloves, the duality/unity of her position at court.\textsuperscript{117}

Interestingly, Anguissola seems here to have kept some of the simplicity of her clothing and the basic ideals seen in her works of the late 1540s to the early 1560s. It is possible that the dress looked slightly less grand in the original painting than it does in this print, where the black lines on white background permit us to clearly see every detail and leave us to imagine what texture is not shown. Because of Spanish fashion at the time, and her own stylistic tendencies throughout the decades, it is very possible that the dress worn here was black rather than of a richer color.\textsuperscript{118} It is also important to remember that changes, even small and accidental ones, may have been made in the print, and so a few key aspects of the original painting could have been quite different. Anguissola could also allow herself to show more elaborate riches here because her humanist tendencies do not need to be indicated by a simple black dress as they are symbolized by the prestigious award she wears around her neck. The image of herself that she presents here is still a more humble one than that found in self-portraits made by male court artists for the Hapsburg dynasty. She is no more richly dressed, for example, than Titian in his self-portrait of the 1550s in which he shows his own gold chain (figure 11).\textsuperscript{119}

In 1533, Charles V had appointed Titian Count Palatine as well as Knight of the Golden Spur, and had given him one of these precious gold chains.\textsuperscript{120} All these awards elevated the painter's status. It was about twenty years before Titian's self-portrait in which he showed that chain. In this \textit{Self-Portrait} of the early 1550s (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin), he, quite like Dürer in his 1500 \textit{Self-Portrait}, demonstrated his position by dressing as a nobleman with a cream-colored shirt and a dark brown coat with large fur lapels.\textsuperscript{121} The chain hangs in three loops on his chest. One must wonder if this Titian work influenced Anguissola, especially as her paintings were often favorably compared to his. For example, in Lomazzo's 1564 \textit{Il Libro dei sogni} (The Book of Dreams), the da Vinci
character comments to the Phidias character that many people thought that Anguissola's brush was guided by the divine hand of Titian. While this seems an odd comment as Titian was still alive at the time, it does show how male artists were perceived as godly. As we shall see, the best "promotion" a woman artist could receive was to be considered manly. More importantly, however, such comments were still, in all, most favorable to Anguissola. Titian was considered one of the best artists of the day, and the court artist of the century, and so to be compared to him, especially if one was "only" a female artist, could but help one's career. Ideas of her as a sort of successor to Titian may have increased once she, like him, was given a gold chain by a Habsburg ruler: Anguissola may have been seen as Philip's prized artist, just as Titian was that of Charles V. Interestingly, Titian's second self-portrait with his chain, *Self-Portrait* of c.1565-70 (Museo del Prado, Madrid) was made at about the same time as this Anguissola work. Since he is in this painting wearing simple dark clothing, such as Anguissola had previously done, one wonders if this work was made in reply, either as a reproach to, or in honor of Anguissola's self-portraits.

**Self-Portraits with Easels, Paint Brushes, and Other Artistic Materials**

Objects placed around a sitter are always important in a portrait because they are indicators of such things as his or her socio-economic position, profession, and interests. Works where an artist is seen with his or her art instruments and other such materials are another important element in the development of self-portraiture and the self-perception of artists. These artist/artisan's tools included malsticks, palettes, paints (including the pigments themselves), chalks, pens, inks, brushes, mirrors, easels, and other working surfaces such as tables and supports including canvas, panel, and paper. Supports could be shown bearing a partial or completed work, or still be blank. In a way, even the setting of the work, and not just the objects in it, could be considered as part of this list if it was, for example, a studio or study. These items all serve to show the creative and technical world of the artist/artisan.

As the Renaissance progressed, artists had more confidence in themselves and in their place in society, as we have seen. As of the fourteenth century, some began to include their self-portrait in more public works, first as part of the crowd in religious
works, and then in more subjects as time went by. Around the fifteenth century, we see another development when some artists – or rather, still at this point, artisans – showed themselves in public and semi-public non-autonomous works as "simply" themselves and surrounded by the tools of their trade. In these works, the art materials were clearly shown, demonstrating that the artisans were proud of their work and of who they were. One of the first of these self-portraits is by the Italian Cola Petrucciolo in his frescoes in the choir of S. Domenico of c.1400 (figure 12). He wears the usual artisan's smock and hat of the people of his trade. As he is holding a pot of paint in his left hand and dipping his brush in it with the other, we have in a way the feeling that we are seeing him painting the frescoes. Importantly, he is looking confidently at the viewer. In such a self-portrait, these simple instruments help to identify their bearer as the author of the work. This could be very important in a largely illiterate society. Artists showing themselves in autonomous self-portraits with their instruments were rare, however. As we have seen, artists were trying to present themselves as well-off, educated gentlemen. To show themselves with paint brushes and such would refer them too visually to artisans and craft, and so would have been counter-productive. When a reference was made to the making of art, as in Dürer's 1500 Self-Portrait, it was rather by writing, where a demonstration of good education could counterbalance this.

One of the few self-portraits in the first half of the sixteenth century where the sitter has artistic tools is Baccio Bandinelli's Self-Portrait of the early 1530s (figure 13). As in most early autonomous and even some non-autonomous self-portraits, Bandinelli does not show himself partaking in the actual process of making art. Instead, we see him with the result, and he brings our attention to the finished drawing with both a gesture with his empty right hand and by pointing with a piece of red chalk held in the left one. The manual connotations are lessened by not seeing him at work but with its results and by using the more acceptable media of drawing. It is also lessened by the columns surrounding him (which was an element usually seen only in portraits of nobles), by his black clothing, and by the knight's insignia. The duality represented by the knight's emblem in particular and the artist's chalk and drawing combine in fact together the world of the artisan and that of the noble in order to create the world of the artist. The work may be characterized as being one big "Hahaha!" as it seems to be both a brag to his fellow
artists and a pied-de-nez to the aristocrats that opposed his appointment to the Order of Santiago. Variations of this tactic were used by subsequent artists. There were also at this time a few portraits where we see artistic materials. One was Titian’s *Giulio Romano* of 1536-38 (private collection), where the sitter is, like Bandinelli, pointing to his completed drawing (here, an architectural drawing). Another is the aforementioned *Portrait of Alessandro de’Medici*. Interestingly, in this last work, we see him in the process of making his as-yet incomplete drawing. This departure from most depictions with art materials may be explained by his position, which guaranteed that he would not be mistaken for an artisan, and that the audience was meant to be private. As for self-portraiture, the only time one really saw an artist in the process of using his instruments before the second half of the sixteenth century was in religious images of Saint Luke painting the Virgin Mary.

That subject of Saint Luke painting the Virgin began in Eastern Europe.\(^{127}\) Legend states that the saint painted the first portrait of the Virgin Mary and that he also painted a self-portrait of himself painting this portrait. In the fourteenth century, this story not only grew in popularity in the East (in part because of the writings of Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos on this subject), but also started to have a significant place in the West, perhaps in part because of the popularity of the Cult of the Virgin.\(^ {128} \) By the sixteenth century, the legend of Saint Luke and the Virgin became even more important as it was used partially as a symbol of the Counter-Reformation. The Reformation was against religious icons, but here was the story of one of the most important saints making a religious icon, which proved that icons must be wanted by God. This further helped show the importance and even holiness of painters and other artisans/artists, as well as that of their work.

Saint Luke became the patron saint of many crafts. By the early fifteenth century, many cities in Northern European countries and in Italian city-states had a Guild of Saint Luke which usually grouped the more art-related craftspeople. The one in Florence, for example, included painters, white washers, sword makers, drape makers, glove makers, hatters, and gold beaters. At least for a time, doctors and apothecaries were also included.\(^ {129}\) This saint therefore brought together art/craft, and science, and this association could be used by artists to prove the validity of their claim to a higher socio-economic position. In
Northern Europe in particular, images of Saint Luke painting the Virgin became important for the Guilds of Saint Luke and were used for such works as altarpieces in guild churches. The image of the great Saint Luke as an artist was therefore very visible. The degree of mysticism of the scene could vary. In most, if not all these works, it is not only the Virgin who appears and is depicted by the saint, but also the Christ Child. The two are sometimes shown appearing with angels on a cloud, while in other examples they resemble instead normal people posing for an artist. They can even be out of the picture plane and seen only through the portrait being made. Saint Luke may be shown with or without his halo, and with or without his symbolic ox. He is usually in a genuflex position, half kneeling, half sitting. The setting may be that of a regular "lowly" artisan's studio, which includes an assistant grinding pigments. The more secular depictions, if one may call them that, of this subject therefore present Saint Luke as a regular artist/artisan. As he was such an important figure in Christianity, being shown in this manner did not lower his image, but instead elevated the status of the art/craft of painting. As for the more mystical images, they put into prominence the concept that artists were blessed and that they had a divine mission. Either connotation helped the status of artists.\textsuperscript{130}

Artists/artisans also helped their status by using their own features for some representations of this saint. Images of Saint Luke as an artist could therefore be connected to a real artist. Such works began in the Netherlands, the first probably being Roger van der Weyden's \textit{Saint Luke Drawing the Virgin} (c.1435-1440, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) (figure 14). This set a trend first in his circle and then amongst artists in both Northern Europe and Italy. Even when it became more common to make autonomous self-portraits, representations "as" Saint-Luke remained popular with some of the most successful artists, including Vasari in his c.1567-73 fresco of \textit{Saint Luke Painting the Virgin} (c.1567-73, Cappella di San Luca, SS. Annunziata, Florence).\textsuperscript{131} At the start of the sixteenth century, we begin to see some important variations. For example, Raphael in c.1511 showed himself in \textit{Saint Luke Painting the Virgin} (Saint Luke Academy) not as Saint Luke, but next to him, perhaps as a witness and/or assistant.

For women, their connection to Saint Luke in visual representations was interesting, revolutionary, and in a way rather confusing. Saint Luke was their patron saint
as much as he was that of their male counterparts, and his general elevation of the image of the artist had also benefited them. As women they could not paint themselves strictly speaking as Saint Luke, however, although they could make some reference to him, for example by showing themselves painting an image of the Madonna and Child. Because of the popularity of this topic, the connection to Saint Luke would be made, though on a different level. Unlike men, women were in these works showing themselves as they were in real life rather than in the guise of someone else.

Before going to sixteenth century female self-portraits which include artistic instruments, one must first, as is often necessary when exploring history, go back a century. In the c.1402 French manuscript of Boccaccio's Concerning Famous Women (Ms Fr. 12420, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), one illumination shows the female artist Thamyris painting a Madonna and Child (figure 4). She is shown in her workshop. There are two tables, one with paints and brushes, and another where a man is grinding pigments for her. She holds her palette in her left hand and a brush in her right. In front of her is an easel holding up her work. The Thamyris illumination somewhat resembles that of Marcia found in the same manuscript. This illustration is odd, however, as neither Boccaccio nor his source, Pliny the Elder, mentions Thamyris making such an image. Thamyris would not even have been able to paint such a Madonna and Child because she lived before Christianity began. It seems that the illuminator decided to substitute for the icon of the virgin goddess Diana of Ephesus (which the Boccaccio text says she painted) that of the Virgin Mary, who at this time has almost goddess-like status through the Cult of the Virgin. This change may have been made in order to encourage female readers, including those interested in painting, to be pious; this virtue was then seen as one of the most important ones for women.

While this image of Thamyris is not known to be a self-portrait, the image is quite interesting for the development of female self-portraiture nonetheless. Its date coincides with the rise in popularity in Western guilds of images of Saint Luke painting the Virgin, preceding even the first self-portrait "as" this saint by van der Weyden. This illumination may have been inspired by the legend of Saint Luke painting Mary, but here the subject is clearly different. Thamyris is not Saint Luke, nor even a saint, but an "everyday" artist,
and the Virgin is not shown appearing to her. The basic scene is the same, however. As another illumination from an early fifteenth century manuscript also shows her painting a 
Madonna and Child, we can hypothesise that there were at least a few other works with similar images of Thamyris (Thamyris, MS Fr. 598, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris). One can even wonder if these illuminations influenced the more "secular" images of Saint Luke and the Virgin, as well as women's self-portraits with artistic material. Literary descriptions may also have helped in this. Christine de Pisan in La Cité des Dames (The City of Ladies, 1404), for example, mentioned that Irene had a statue of her that showed her painting. 

Female self-portraiture showing tools of the trade are therefore a combination of three topics: Saint Luke painting the Virgin (in particular works in which he has the artist's features), Thamyris painting the Virgin, and Marcia painting her self-portrait.

Van Hemessen's *Self-Portrait* of 1548 is possibly the first autonomous self-portrait made in which we can see an artist as him- or herself with artistic materials, and one of the only ones in the first half of the sixteenth century. It also seems to be the first work in which the artist is shown using these tools rather than posing with them. Here, a well but soberly dressed van Hemessen sits at an easel, palette in her left hand and brush in the other. She seems not to have done a preparatory drawing, and is instead painting directly onto her panel. Her activity is not counterbalanced by a worn emblem, as happens in the works of Bandinelli and Titian, two of the few artists to make a self-portrait around this time where they use tools of the trade without masquerading as Saint Luke. Unlike both these artists, van Hemessen is painting rather than using the more prestigious medium of drawing. Van Hemessen's work may therefore also be the first autonomous self-portrait where the artist is painting. So far, all that van Hemessen has done is the face of a woman. Because she is a woman, van Hemessen is not representing herself as Saint Luke, or at least not as Saint Luke proper. The Virgin is not posing for her, and indeed we cannot be certain that it is even a Madonna and Child that she has begun to paint. She also does not include any other elements such as an ox, the Virgin on a cloud, or a halo which, while not used in all images of Saint Luke painting the Virgin, would have permitted in her case an identification of her intent. Because of the popularity of the subject of Saint Luke painting the Virgin, however, and because up to this point all the self-portraits (made by
male artists) showing an artist at work are paintings of Saint Luke, a mid-sixteenth century audience may still have linked van Hemessen to Saint Luke.\textsuperscript{142} Depending on the education of the viewer, she may have also been linked to Thamyris, an association which may have been wanted by van Hemessen herself.

Less ambiguous, or at least confusing in a slightly different way, is Anguissola's c.1556\textit{Self-Portrait at an Easel} (Muzeum Zamek, Lancut) where we see her finishing a Madonna and Child painting placed on her easel (figure 18).\textsuperscript{143} Despite the clarity of the subject of her painting, we know that she, like van Hemessen (and for most of the same reasons) is not Saint Luke. Here, as she does in all of her self-portraits, Anguissola looks at the viewer with a steady and intelligent gaze. Some authors have suggested that she is painting the Virgin, and that Mary would be positioned where the viewer is.\textsuperscript{144} This seems unlikely, for the viewer is positioned slightly too much to the side to realistically be her model. The subject she shows herself working on nonetheless permits some connection between herself, the saint, and this common religious theme for (male) artists. Its inscription once read SOPHONISBA ANGUISSOLA VIRGO CREMONENSIS SE IPSAM PINXIT.\textsuperscript{145} Anguissola may have wanted to play with the idea of a virgin painting the Virgin; she often used the word\textit{virgo} in her signature to designate herself. This was a connection that would not have been available to male artists, and so could be used to her advantage. The work would have been used to demonstrate her prowess in two genres important for her and for female artists in general: portrait painting and religious painting. It also serves to show her as a pious woman and artist. This could have been important if her painterly activities brought comments that she was not behaving properly for a woman of her position. Anguissola may have been influenced by van Hemessen, as we shall later see, as well as by illuminations of Thamyris.\textsuperscript{146}

Anguissola's work is unique in that it is the first female autonomous self-portrait in Italy where we see the artist painting the Virgin, and the first in Western Europe where it is clear that this is the work's subject (unlike van Hemessen's self-portrait). While it is the second of what would soon be a long line of Western female self-portraits at an easel proper, one work precedes it in showing its female author with her artistic instruments. When she was twenty, Anguissola painted a \textit{Self-Portrait} (c.1552, Uffizi Gallery,
Florence), which shows her seated at a table with a blank sheet of paper, a palette, and paint brushes (figure 17). Both of these Anguissola works were made in the 1550s, the decade when Italian male artists finally began to be comfortable enough to make self-portraits where they are shown using artistic materials in real life rather than using the image of Saint Luke as a security blanket.\textsuperscript{147} Some may even have been influenced by Anguissola and van Hemessen. Indeed, the only two self-portraits of this kind by Italian artists that precede Anguissola's c.1552 painting are Bandinelli and Titian's self-portrait. As with van Hemessen, it is significant that she is not drawing or wearing an emblem that counterbalances the "lowly" tools of the trade.\textsuperscript{148}

In the second half of the sixteenth century, autonomous self-portraits showing artistic instruments and works by the artist remained relatively rare. They were, however, more common in Northern Europe than in the Italian city-states.\textsuperscript{149} It seems to have been a theme more favored by women, including by Fontana, as we shall later discuss. An important reason for this preference seems to be the place of female artists in the art world and in society in general. For women, art-making was a more or less questionable activity, especially as a serious hobby or profession.\textsuperscript{150} Many people also doubted women's artistic abilities. Presenting themselves at work with their artistic instruments served to show, and in a way prove, that they were the authors of their work, and helped to construct their image as artists. Tellingly, there seem to be no autonomous self-portraits of women as artisans. Indeed, as with the men, the good clothing that women always wore in their self-portraits, including those where artistic tools are shown, helped to at least partly deviate the audience's attention away from the manual side of their profession. However, these same tools are also important in proving authorship and constructing these women's position as artists. This aspect is not or is rarely present in similar works by men. Also unlike the men, the tools and the nice clothes are both used to show the female artist's position, and so are linked: the first is the reason for success, while the latter is its symbol. This tactic for construction of the female artistic self, as well as female artists' delicate situation, lasted long after the status of the male artist had stabilized in the mid-sixteenth century.
In a way, we can say that for female artists, the Renaissance did not end until about the mid-nineteenth century. Until then, it was important for women to show that they were both perfect women, including in matters of respectability and good taste, as well as perfect artists. Self-portraits working at an easel while wearing rich clothing and other indicators of artistic and (female) social success remained an important subject for women artists long after men were able to show themselves at work in shabby clothes. Unlike the men, eccentricity of any sort was not tolerated: being a female artist was odd enough.¹⁵¹
Chapter Two: The Female Artist as the Perfect Woman in the Late Renaissance and Early Baroque Periods

The Book of the Courtier: Clothing, Education and Behavior

The Influence of The Book of the Courtier

My Lord Gaspar replied: 'I believe nothing more is left to say; yet if you think that my lord Magnifico has not adorned [the court lady] with enough good qualities, the fault lay not with him, but with the one who arranged that there are not more virtues in the world; for the Magnifico gave her all there are.'

My lady Duchess said, laughing: 'You shall now see that my lord Magnifico will find still others.'

-Baldassare Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier (Book III, section 52).

One of the most important books of the sixteenth century, including for female self-portraiture, was Count Baldassare Castiglione's Il libro del cortegiano (The Book of the Courtier, 1528). The text is a dialogue between the male and female members of the court of Urbino, with each of the four sub-books of the work representing one of the nights between March 8 and March 11, 1507. Although the conversations never really took place, or at least not as they are in the book, Castiglione stayed true to the personality and opinions of these people whom he knew, and through them discussed the qualities and roles of a perfect courtier and court lady, as well as several topics of interest of that time, such as platonic love. As in the time of his father Frederico, the Urbino court of Duke Guidobaldo di Montefeltro was a place filled with scholars, writers, musicians, and various other artists, and whose lord was educated and fair. It was considered the court with the best courtiers and court ladies in terms of knowledge, skills, etiquette, and morality. Book three of The Book of the Courtier is devoted to the discussion of the characteristics of the perfect court lady, and it is amazing how advanced its views regarding women are considering the time. It is true that one finds "traditional" criteria such as beauty, gracefulness, piety, and chastity. However, one should not scoff too much at the importance placed on beauty and remember that many today still consider it a criteria for the perfect woman. Also, some of these other elements, such as chastity, are discussed in this book in a significantly new manner. For example, when an unwed woman sleeps with a man after constant pressure from him to do so, the fault is seen here
as being his as well as hers. What is even more important is that women are also considered to be as perfect and intelligent as men. Like men, they should receive a humanist education, and know how to paint, dance, play music, and other such things. Indeed, there are only a few things which women are advised not to do, and not many that is claimed they cannot do. For example, court ladies should not do vigorous activities such as tennis, but it is recognized that they are physically capable of playing this sport. Similarly, it is advised that women do not wield arms, though they should know the theory of fighting. Furthermore, every woman should be able to manage her family's estate, although only queens should rule.

All this knowledge was to help court ladies in what is identified here as their primary task, that of making conversation with the courtiers. Women were therefore not meant to merely look pretty and stay silent, but to be active court members. Indeed, in the beginning of *The Book of the Courtier*, it is said that the court members sat in a circle in which men and women alternated so that the latter would have an equal opportunity to talk. While one could say that the fact that the women are not in *The Book of the Courtier* to participate as much in the debate as was usual does not present them well, it is nonetheless important to remember a few things. For the four nights of the discussion, the women have won a well-envied break from what is portrayed as work (entertaining the court) through Pia's cleverness. The women, particularly Pia (who has been named a sort of referee) and the Duchess, still participate in the debate. Also, the arguments in favor of women are made stronger when being made by men, in particular the highly regarded Giuliano "Magnifico" de'Medici; if they were made by the ladies, they could easily be brushed aside by many readers as a woman's fancy or folly. The arguments are also made stronger by the fact that Count Gaspar Pallavicino, who plays the devil's advocate, still readily concedes more positive characteristics to women than would conservative readers. Also, as this "villain" says, "[...] if I had not gainsaid my lord Magnifico and messer Cesare, all these praises [...] would not have been heard."

Castiglione's text became perhaps the most influential etiquette book in Western Europe. It was used as either a direct source/example, or, at other times, was part of a general movement, if not serving as a catalyst per se, towards change. Such etiquette
books had started to make their appearance in Western Europe in the fifteenth century, with works by Alberti and Platina, but were to be found increasingly in the sixteenth century. These texts were not only read by the aristocracy, but increasingly by the bourgeois, with merchants and various other professionals wanting to be able to have a position amongst the higher class. Parents therefore had a reason to follow the ideals in *The Book of the Courtier*. Castiglione's text, however, not only modified the way people thought about etiquette, but it also changed their views on morals, culture, and even education, including on how these applied to women. It was considered an update of chivalric codes and tales.

It would have been almost impossible in Europe not to have heard of *The Book of the Courtier*. While it was first published in 1528, its influence began before then, as it was passed around for some time in manuscript form. Indeed, until the mid 1520s, Castiglione did not seem to have considered having it printed. Although printed books became numerous in the sixteenth century, manuscripts were still made and distributed as either a more or less completed work an author wanted commented, or a finished product. The first time the book traveled (other than as the copy Castiglione worked on at Urbino and Rome) was in 1518, when he sent it to the humanist Pietro Bembo for some corrections and constructive criticism. It was also sent to Vittoria Colona sometime before 1524. She then apparently had some rather large parts of the text transcribed and distributed. Castiglione then decided to publish his work before someone plagiarized it.

The ideas of the text were also communicated by Castiglione himself, as he traveled and was known by many courts and by some of the most important Western rulers of the time, including Charles V and François I. Most important were the printed editions that appeared across Western Europe: in all, about one hundred editions were published during the sixteenth century. The original Italian text was first published in April 1528 in the cultural and business center that was Venice. The publishers expected the book to be a success, as in addition to the thousand regular copies, there were also thirty printed in a larger format and, most importantly, one printed on vellum. In Italy, and for a while in Europe, Venice was the main publisher of the book, with thirty-three editions alone.
appearing there between 1528 and 1569. The Italian text was also published in Florence, Tusculano, Parma, and Lyon. The first translation of the work was in Spanish (Catalonian) and published in Barcelona in 1534. Subsequent Spanish editions were published in the sixteenth century in Toledo, Salamanca, Medina, Sargossa, and Valladolid, as well as in Antwerp. The Italian edition had already begun to circulate in France before the first French translations appeared in Paris and Lyon in 1537. Similarly, that original version had made its way to England shortly after its first publication, and was already embedded in the English court before an English translation was made.

Its success in England was phenomenal, with people of that country's court sometimes even being compared to some of its characters. Although there was a demand for an English translation, no one felt up to the task until Thomas Hoby in 1561, as a bad translation could have been disastrous for its author's social and political careers. The first Latin translation made in England (London, 1571) was even a more delicate affair; it was commissioned by Thomas Sackville to his secretary Bartholomew Clerk, and was so important that once Clerk had finished translating Book I, Sackville went to Queen Elizabeth to present it to her. A previous Latin translation had been published in Wittenburg in 1561, however. Three subsequent Latin editions where published in Germany during that century (in Wittenburg in 1569, in Strasbourg in 1577, and in Frankfurt in 1584), thus outnumbering the two German-language translations published in 1566 (Munich) and 1593 (Diligen). One should also note that a censored version was made after this book was placed on the Index of Prohibited Books in 1564 (the first year this list was in existence). This did not sway the text's popularity, and taking into consideration people's tendencies regarding forbidden matter, one can speculate that its popularity may even have been augmented by it.

Proof of the popularity of this text lies also in the number of satires which were made of it, as no one bothers to make fun of something which is unknown. Italian courtiers began being portrayed not only as Machiavellian schemers, but also as fops obsessed with etiquette. In England, foolish courtiers were called “Balthasar” or “Castilio”, and their presence in plays destined for wide audiences indicates that even the lower classes would have been able to understand, at least up to a point, the reference.
One should therefore not be surprised that female artists presented themselves in their self-portraits, particularly those made between the late 1540s and 1570s, as the perfect women described in *The Book of the Courtier.* Female artists in the middle of the sixteenth century were a fairly new phenomenon, and so still needed to justify their activities. One tool for this was self-portraiture, through which they could present themselves to their public. By using the ideals defined in *The Book of the Courtier,* in particular that instructing women to paint, they showed that they were on the cutting edge of etiquette rather than being deviants. With this book, female artists developed an image which cried out softly to their patrons: "young, humanistically educated and artistically talented Castiglionian lady". It seems that some not only chose to follow Castiglione's ideals as older teenagers and adults, but foremost that they were raised according to them. This included the Anguissola sisters, whose father, Amilcare, certainly knew of Castiglione's book.

Amilcare was a man of minor nobility who participated in various business enterprises, included the selling of books. As a well-respected patrician of Cremona and one of its ten city rulers, he had connections also to court life. In particular, he often went to Milan – which, one will remember, was for some time the home of Castiglione – for diplomatic business. However, most importantly, he was part of an intellectual circle that would have discussed new ideas such as those presented by Castiglione. One of his friends was Mardo Gerolamo Vida, a humanist prelate and fellow Cremonese, and it seems that he and Amilcare tried a little humanist experiment on Amilcare's children. The eldest, Sofonisba, had after all been born around the same time as *The Book of the Courtier* was first published. The upbringing of the Anguissola girls may have been meant to serve as a good example to the community. There were also economic advantages besides intellectual ones to this plan: Amilcare had six daughters, and it was not until 1551, with the birth of the last child, that there was a male heir. Teaching the girls a profession could help them make money and lower their dowries. This should not be seen as a selfish move by Amilcare, as a higher economic standing was not only good for the family in general, but also for the girls individually as they could live more comfortably and get a better marriage.
It seems also quite probable, if not certain, that Fontana was raised according to Castiglione's ideals. Her father, Prospero, was a social climber who wanted to be placed in the same category as noble and educated men, and so he would have raised her "properly". There is a written indication, and not only visual ones, that Fontana had read *The Book of the Courtier* and used it to justify her artistic activities. In a letter to Alfonso Ciacon, written on May 3 1579, she says:

[That my self-portrait will be placed next to that of Sofonisba Anguissola] makes me think that you judiciously wish that the virtue and worth of Signora Sofonisba will be so much more resplendent, [as well as that of] the other illustrious personages [shown in your art collection] whom I am unworthy to serve, and certainly not equal, but just as in good music sometimes dissonant notes are placed to make the consonant so much sweeter, and if there are some clouds to make Heaven more resplendent, so you must have thought that with the imperfection, and with the darkness of my portrait your most noble muséum would by contrast be illustrated more greatly.  

These words seem to make reference to *The Book of the Courtier*:

[In music, the] répétition of perfect consonances begets satiety and exhibits a too affected harmony; which is avoided by introducing imperfect consonances, and thus a kind of contrast is given, whereby our ears are held more in suspense, and more eagerly await and enjoy the perfect consonances, and sometimes delight in that discord of the second or seventh, as in something unpreameditated.  

Fontana therefore makes reference to Castiglione and adds her own example of the value of contrast.

**The Importance of Clothing**

"[...] I do say that dress is no bad index of the wearer's fancy [...]"

- Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, Book II, section 28

One way in which female artists created their physical appearance in their self-portraits was by using Castiglione's ideals regarding clothing. In *The Book of the Courtier*, it is suggested that clothing should be used to emphasize a woman's beauty, but not in the glamorous richness that one might usually expect. Castiglione states that women should wear clothes "that enhance her grace and are most appropriate to the exercises wherein she purposes to engage at the time", which are not too vain or frivolous, and chosen depending
if her type of beauty (and, one can perhaps also understand, her type of temperament) is cheerful or serious. As with other topics that had already been lengthily discussed regarding the courtier, the instructions for the clothing were relatively short for the court lady, and the reader understood that much of what had already been said for the men would also apply to the women. In a way, this helped with the idea of equality, as the characteristics of the ideal person could more or less fluidly pass from one gender to the other. Indeed, female artists seemed to rely on some of the information given in book two, as they showed themselves in their self-portraits as dressed in sober clothing of black or of a similar dark hue, and which was neither too poor nor too rich. Regarding the suggestion that they dressed according to the majority and for their profession, one could say that these women created a sort of uniform for the female artist. Indeed, simple black dresses and reddish sleeves were worn by van Hemessen and some of the Anguissola sisters until the early 1560s. By the 1570s, when female artists were both becoming more known/common and lighter-colored clothing became popular, the "castiglione uniform" was relaxed, but its the basic idea was kept.

Catharina van Hemessen seems to have been the first woman to put the ideal of The Book of the Courtier into action in female self-portraiture and, perhaps, with the portrait of her sister, in female portraiture as well. In both her Self-Portrait and Young Woman Playing the Virginals (Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne) (figure 15), both made in 1548 and probably meant to be hung together to form a diptych, she and her sister Christina are both dressed in a dark skirt, a black bodice with red sleeves, a white chemise of which we can see the small collar and slightly ruffly cuffs, and a white veil. The only difference in the clothing is that Catharina's veil appears to have more details that in that of her sister, with more folds as well as a fuzzy texture at the back, that her lapels are pointed rather than round, and that her skirt is grey or blue instead of black. There also appears to be a black bow at the top of Catharina's skirt. It is possible that these are exactly the same clothing and that the differences are accidental, especially if Christina's portrait was made first and so when the author had less artistic experience. Even if the dresses are different, the sleeves may be the same; sleeves in the Renaissance were often detachable so that they could be "mixed and matched" with various dresses. The ones here are made of a rich, red material that may be velvet, and have a line of lace.
running under the arm. Clothing could be quite expensive, and it is therefore possible that members of a family would share even sleeves.\(^{195}\) It is also possible that these red sleeves were studio props, as similar ones appear in some of van Hemessen's subsequent portraits, or that they were simply fashionable and so quite common at this time.\(^{196}\) With no accessories and dresses more sober than are seen in van Hemessen's women's portraits (for example, the sitter in *Portrait of a Lady* (1551) has a sort of lace décolleté, a rosary, a ring, gloves, and a miniature dog), the sleeves serve to subtly show without breaking the Castiglionian image that the family is monetarily comfortable.

As the van Hemessens were not of a noble family and artists were still struggling to be considered gentlemen – or in this case, ladies – this message may have been judged to be particularly important. The sleeves also have an esthetic and compositional purpose, as they not only add a splash of color in the largely dark paintings, but also lead the viewer's eyes to the hands of the sitters and the activity that these are doing. Similarly, the pale veil seems to make a visual connection both between the face of the sisters, and between the white panel on the easel and the light colored keyboard. As instructed by Castiglione, the clothing seems to be appropriate for their activity, as it does not hinder their movement. One can imagine that dropping paint on such a dress would not be as total a disaster as it would be were she wearing a white, jewel-encrusted gown. The clothing therefore shows that the two sisters share talent, education, and ideology, as well as family.

Sofonisba Anguissola continued the Castiglionian fashion (and its related message) used by van Hemessen. With her sober black dresses with white lace cuffs and collar in her earlier self-portraits, she was perhaps even influenced by the Flemish artist. Anguissola's sleeves are simpler and darker than those of the van Hemessen sisters, but it is interesting that she stayed in the reds by using maroon. As with their technical skill, Anguissola's self-portraits can be dated in fact in accordance to the clothing which she wore in her works.\(^{197}\) In works from about 1554-1556, her dress is fastened along the front with round, black buttons, and has a small lapel. The shoulders have two small rows of trimming, one maroon and one black.\(^{198}\) After this date and until the early 1560s, her dress, while still Castiglionian, becomes slightly more ornate, perhaps because she was
then older and/or had a greater artistic reputation. The maroon sleeves now have puffy shoulders, and the black dress has a large V-neck and horizontal fasteners along the front. The cuffs are still visible, but the collar is now open, and the straw-string tassels are shown. Two of these (which sometimes clearly number four) are tied into a bow at her neck, and in a significant way, they replace a necklace. Anguissola's hairstyle is also of note, as in almost all of her self-portraits she wears it parted down the middle and pulled back in a coil that encircles her head and/or is drawn into a bun. Although it was a popular style at the time, Anguissola differs in that she does not wear any ornament in her hair but a black ribbon and hairnet until after 1561. Indeed, save for the Portrait of Bernardino Campi Painting a Portrait of Sofonisba Anguissola, these are her only accessories.

That Anguissola's construction of her image was successful is demonstrated by its presence on a commemorative medal of c.1559 (figure 19). Such medals did not have any fixed monetary value, but were made to commemorate achievements. This one was made to mark Anguissola's appointment as one of de Valois's ladies-in-waiting, and it is thought that it was commissioned by the family. On the obverse is the inscription SOPHONISBA ANGVSSOLA AMILICARIS FIL (Sophonisba Anguissola, daughter of Amilcare). At the center of the medal is a bust portrait of Anguissola. As with other medals, the body is in a three-quarter profile, while the face is in profile. Anguissola wears the V-neck dress seen in her self-portraits of this time. While even her chemise is correctly represented, including in its tassels, other elements have been added to her image: her hair is arranged in five coils rather than one, there is a band on her sleeve, and she wears a necklace. These changes may have been made because it was thought that she needed "jazzing up" now that she was going to be a court lady. However, these changes are few and in the form of additions, and her Castiglionian image – the one that she so carefully created and which may have helped her to get her court appointment – was kept. The alterations recall the few which she herself made in her Portrait of Bernardino Campi Painting a Portrait of Sofonisba Anguissola, which was also made at about this time to commemorate her success.
Anguissola began to show herself in her self-portraits with jewelry and more elaborate clothing a few years after her arrival in Spain. However, she kept her preference for black, and her style was still relatively simple given her position, and one can say that her new clothes were in keeping with *The Book of the Courtier*'s instruction for women to dress according to their activity (here, being a lady-in-waiting). Anguissola never abandoned the ideals of this book, and even returned to a more simple style in her later years. Her *Self-Portrait* (c.1610, Gottfreid Keller Collection, Bern) was made when she was about seventy years old (figure 25). She was by then painting less often, but one can see that making self-portraits was still important for her. Her clothing has only a few accents, mainly a green section to the bodice, and the black buttons on her shoulders and once again along the front of her dress. The white cuffs have no lace here. The collar is a medium-sized ruff, perhaps to show her continuing connection to the Spanish court. Her hair is still coiffed in the same way, and as with the black ribbon of her youth, her only accessory is a yellowish veil. It is almost as if she wanted to return to the image she had constructed for herself in her youth. Indeed, *The Book of the Courtier* was still widely read at the time that this painting was made. To show a parallel with her younger image may have been important, or perhaps even a joke, since this painting was to be sent to the new king of Spain, Philip III.

Lucia Anguissola (born c.1540 in Cremona, died c.1565 in Cremona) also used a Castiglionian image for her c.1557 *Self-Portrait* (Civico Museo d'Arte Antica, Castello Sforzesco, Milan) (figure 20). Until she moved to Spain, Sofonisba Anguissola served as art teacher to Lucia, and perhaps also to a few other siblings, as Minerva, Europa, and Anna Maria painted as well. Here, Lucia is dressed almost exactly as was Sofonisba in her self-portraits of this date. The similarities between the two sisters brings to mind the van Hemessen diptych, although here it is Lucia herself rather than her sister that chose her image. This image is different from the one given to her and her other sisters by Sofonisba in her portraits of her family. The sober, black-clad Lucia of the self-portrait contrasts with her appearance in such works as *The Chess Game* (1555, Muzeum Narodowe, Poznan), where Lucia and her sisters are shown wearing jewelry and rich dresses of yellow, red, and blue (figure 21). Sofonisba may have wanted in these works to show prospective patrons that she could also paint richer fabrics and jewels.
Interestingly, a similar change seems to have been made by yet another sister; *Self-Portrait* of c.1561 (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan) is usually identified as being a self-portrait by Sofonisba (figure 22). While we can see some major family resemblance with Sofonisba, the model in this work is younger, even "baby-faced", when compared to Sofonisba in her self-portraits of this time, including *Bernardino Campi Painting a Portrait of Sofonisba Anguissola* of c.1559-1560. As the deformation of the eye farthest from the viewer was already much lessened in Sofonisba's work of the mid-1550s and completely gone by the late 1550s, it seems odd that she would make such an error here. A younger sister, however, might still have had difficulty in correcting the deformation created by a convex mirror. With a very lacy chemise, a bodice that included a white pattern and fur trimming, and jewels in her hair, she is dressed more richly than her sisters were so far in their own self-portraits. However, what is interesting is that this dress looks much like the one worn by Minerva in *Portrait of Amilcare, Minerva and Asdrubale Anguissola* (c.1558, Nivaagaards Malerisamling, Niva, Denmark), but with the color switched from blue to a dark brown (figure 23). While the sitter here does not much resemble Minerva as seen in Sofonisba's portrait of her of around 1546 (*The Artist's Sister Minerva Anguissola*, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee), it is possible that it is instead Europa or Anna Maria (figure 24).

Marietta "Tintoretta" Robusti's (born c.1552 or 1560 in Venice, died 1590 in Venice) clothing in her *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard* (before 1570, Uffizi Gallery, Florence) (figure 35) shows what could be considered a variation of the Castiglionian dress: unlike the van Hemessen or Anguissola sisters, she is wearing white rather than black. While the dress is not as simple as that of Anguissola in her earlier self-portraits, it is not as rich as those worn later by her or by Fontana. Robusti's only jewelry is the single string of pearls at her neck. Also, so quite like Anguissola that one wonders if the resemblance was wanted, her hairstyle includes a chignon and a black headband. As Robusti was not of an aristocratic family, following the ideals set in *The Book of the Courtier* was to her advantage, giving her, as it probably did also van Hemessen and then Fontana, a way to climb the social ladder.
Fontana went even further. She had the advantage of beginning her career when a number of renowned women had already done some major ground-breaking in the field of the fine arts. Indeed, Fontana was able even to compete on the open market, being the first female artist to do so.\textsuperscript{219} She therefore did not have to justify her activities as much, including the use of references such as Castiglione. In her work, we see her in rich clothing, and she seems perhaps to have concentrated more on outdoing Anguissola's court style than matching the Cremonese artist's earlier clothing. However, \textit{The Book of the Courtier} says that a woman must be dressed in a way that most befits her. She may have thought that the bright reds, whites, and other colors in which she dressed herself better suited and represented her than black. Also, she is properly dressed for the occasion in some of her work, particularly her \textit{Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with Maidservant} (figure 34). As was usual in a wedding portrait, Fontana wears here her "Sunday best". Her gown is of red brocade, thereby following the traditional color of a Bolognese wedding dress.\textsuperscript{220} There is some resemblance with the other female artists in her small lace ruff that recalls Anguissola's V-neck dress and chemise, and in her lace cuffs. Also, her hair is pulled up, having been braided first in a peak on either side of her head, and then with ribbons at the back; there is no jewelry in her hair. Her main jewelry seems to be as much to show her love as her riches, as the two necklaces\textsuperscript{221} of coral, pearl, and gold include a small coral love knot, perhaps as part of the fastener, to symbolize love and betrothal.\textsuperscript{222} It is important to note that the activities in which Fontana shows herself partaking, notably painting, writing, and music making, are chosen in accordance with \textit{The Book of the Courtier}.\textsuperscript{223}

\textbf{Education and Self-Portraits as Scholarly Women}

Castiglione greatly helped to make a humanist education, including the reading and writing of Latin, fashionable for women. Having received such an education, some female artists chose to show off their learned position in their self-portraits. One way to show education was by using a Latin signature.\textsuperscript{224} Female artists of the sixteenth century tended not only to use Latin for their inscription, but frequently there were also more complex than was usual.\textsuperscript{225} In some cases, particularly with van Hemessen and Anguissola in the late 1540s and early 1550s (and then again in the 1570s with Fontana) the long inscriptions are made very obvious, and are an important part of the composition. With
these long, obvious signatures, one can make parallels to those used by Dürer in his self-portraits when he was trying to establish his socio-economical status. Signatures were also practical to show off one's knowledge of various things, as Fontana did when she made reference to Apelles (as shall be seen) in her *Self-Portrait in the Studiolo* (figure 28). One could state that in the fine arts the most useful inscriptions were the ones in self-portraits, as the viewer could associate the information given about the artist – and the quality of the information – to a face.

Another popular way for women to show off their education was to display not their ability to write, but to read, with the sitter holding a book. Portraits showing a woman holding a book had been popular before these female self-portraits appeared, but they instead held religious texts. Although they did serve to indicate that the female sitter was literate, these books' primary role was to indicate her piety. The books shown in self-portraits by the Anguissola sisters, for example, can be identified as secular works as the sitters do not bear a crucifix or any other religious item. It is here clear that it is more important for these women to show themselves in their self-portraits as serious humanist students than as pious women. They also may not have wanted to be associated with the "old style" of female portraiture with a book.

The first of these book-themed self-portraits is a chalk drawing by Sofonisba Anguissola, her *Self-Portrait* of c.1548 (figure 26). This is one of the earliest extant works by this artist. While it was suggested that this work was made before she started more professional training with Campi, however, the good proportions and some of the details, particularly the facial expression, seems to make this unlikely. As in other similar works by both Sofonisba and Lucia, the book is held in the left hand. With her right hand, she points to herself as if saying "Yes, I am the author of this work, and yes, I am well-read." She looks at the viewer, although it is more out of the corner of her eye than in subsequent works. In this work, we already see the three-quarter pose facing our left that Anguissola will prefer in most of her self-portraits. She used this theme again in her *Self-Portrait with a Book* of 1554 (figure 27). This work may be the first signed and dated Italian self-portrait. It also marks a landmark in that it is the first painted self-portrait showing a book. In this painting, we see a sober Anguissola in her early twenties,
holding up a book. On the left-hand page are some squiggles, but on the other page, one can clearly read: SOPHONII/BA / ANGUS/OLA / VIRGO / SE IPFAM / FECIT / 1554 (Sophonisba Anguissola, maiden, painted herself in 1554). The words are positioned so that her thumb does not hide any letters, though this forced her to squish the "se" and "ipsam" together. The presence of this Latin inscription in the book may itself have been meant to imply that she could both read and write in this language. Anguissola did not paint herself again with a book until her Self-Portrait of c.1610.

As already stated, it seems that Anguissola wanted to go back to her image created during her Cremona days and show that she still held the ideals of her youth. With her seated in a chair, something rare in her self-portraits, as she holds her book, the composition in this work also resembles that of Lucia's Self-Portrait of c.1557, as we shall see. As she is not a young student, she does not picture herself with an open book, but with one that is almost closed, her finger marking the page. This seems to mean that she is not learning new material but rather, at this time of life, reflecting upon it. This pose makes her look like the personification of Reflection described in Ripa's Iconologia (1603), which was published around this time. In this self-portrait, the inscription is not in the book but on a page held in her right hand. It states: ALLA MAG[ESTA]D CATHOLICA / BESA LA M(ANO) / ANGUISSOLA (To his catholic majesty, I kiss your hand... Anguissola). This letter to the king of Spain was both to thank him and, more indirectly, to show her public that she still maintained close ties with that important court. One can say that this letter, more than any riches, serves to show that she was and still is a successful court lady. Interestingly, the signature here is not in her usual Latin, but in Spanish. As she had already established her knowledge of Latin by this time, she may have chosen Spanish here to show instead her close ties to the Spanish court and her polyglot status. This self-portrait serves moreover to show that not only was she still alive, but that she was still lucid and able to paint well.

For her part, Lucia showed herself with a book in her Self-Portrait of c.1575. Therefore, while her clothing resembles that of Sofonisba as seen in her late 1550s and early 1560s self-portraits in terms of clothing, her activity resembles those of earlier works. Lucia holds an open book, yet unlike her sister, she has set it on her lap in a more
or less loosely open fashion so that we can see part of the surface of many of the pages. The writing on these is unreadable. The signature is on the lower left side of the painting: MCLVII LUCIA ANGUISOLA VIRGO AMILICARIS FILIA SE IPSA PINXIT. Lucia points to herself with her right hand, as Sofonisba did in her c.1548 Self-Portrait. Pointing to the self was a common pose in Renaissance self-portraits by both men and women, and helped bring the viewer's attention to the sitter. This may be to attract the viewer's attention to the fact that she is a proper Castiglionian lady, and show that she is like her sister. Indeed, it is possible that this work was meant to be sent out as an advertisement for her to perspective patrons, and that she may have wanted to play on this resemblance.

Some women, such as Robusti and Fontana, as we shall further see, showed themselves with music books. A double literacy could therefore be shown, as they could be understood to be able to read both the lyrics and the music. There were also other ways for artists to show that they were educated. Anguissola showed herself in her miniature medal Self-Portrait of c.1556 holding a monogram (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) (figure 31). With its intertwined letters forming a riddle which has not yet been solved, this monogram not only replaces the book as a symbol for éducation, but indeed goes beyond it, showing that she was not only literate, but quite clever as well. Fontana showed herself holding a piece of paper as if reading it in the c.1575 Self-Portrait drawing, and may be writing in her Self-Portrait in the Studiolo.

Self-Portraits at the Easel

The Book of the Courtier was useful to female artists not only because it stated that a proper woman should know how to paint, but because it warned moreover that no work should be shown unless it was good. This encouraged families to have their daughters more properly trained in painting than simply given a few basics, and hiring a painting instructor would therefore be more than justifiable. For women already from an artistic family, it provided them with a way to climb the social ladder. For those not from artistic families, it provided them with a justification for learning what had not so long ago been regarded solely as a craft. Indeed, in defense of the high status of art, the book mentions that in ancient Greece and Rome, young men of good families learned the fine arts while
slaves were forbidden to do so. That sculpture is not directly recommended for women in The Book of the Courtier is not very grave, as in the book's paragon debate, painting is the winner. Women are therefore instructed to learn what is here presented as the better media.

That women more readily showed themselves working on their art than did men seems to be linked to The Book of the Courtier and to female artists' use of the text as a way to promote and justify their artistic activity. For van Hemessen, as well as for subsequent women, showing herself painting while wearing Castiglionian clothing would not only prove that she really was an artist, but also present her highly regarded justification to be an artist. Working at her easel while wearing her sober dress, van Hemessen's image is far from the one created by both Dürer and Raphael in their own self-portraits. Van Hemessen also establishes her position as an artist through her gaze, assuring the viewer of her professionalism and, in a way, of her power as an artist. As mentioned, the subject of her painting, and so the identity of the viewer, is not known for certain. She may be painting the Virgin Mary, but she may also be painting her sister or even herself. One wonders if the woman's head is situated too much to the left on the panel for it to be a Virgin Mary, but the placement does correspond to that of Christina's head in van Hemessen's portrait of her sister. It would also match van Hemessen's own head if we take into account that she would see her head at the upper left of the mirror instead of the upper right when looking at her reflection to make her self-portrait. If the subject is her or her sister, then there is a sort of loop in that we see a Castiglionian woman (in dress and activity) painting a Castiglionian woman (in dress and activity).

Anguissola also shows herself as a Castiglionian lady in clothes and painterly occupation in her Self-Portrait of c.1552. Here, her right hand is resting on an as yet unused piece of paper, while the other holds two brushes. Next to her left hand is a palette holding some pale colored paints and three more brushes. As she is using a table rather than an easel and is wearing dark clothing, this work recalls the images of scholars or scholarly-inclined aristocrats in their study which Fontana would later paint. As in van Hemessen's works, the pale letters of the inscription here are large and float beside Anguissola, stating: SOPHONISBA / [A]NGVSCIOLA CREM / PICTRIX / [ÆT]A SVE
ANN[EJ / XX. It is significant that in this early work, Anguissola felt it necessary to state that she was a painter through her signature as well as visually. This both shows her pride in her activity, and is a way for her to establish her artistic reputation/position. Anguissola would show herself more actively painting in *Self-Portrait* of c.1556, and once again, she also makes reference to her painting in the signature of the work. With her easel, large palette, mahlstick, and large, almost completed painting, Anguissola's artistic production – and therefore her image as an artist – looks more intense and serious than in the c.1552 work. This seems to be her last self-portrait where she shows herself with artistic materials. It is possible that after this time she felt that her paintings themselves were enough to prove that she was an artist, and that she wished to show other aspects of herself in the subject.

In early 1577, Fontana married Gian Paolo Zappi. His family was prominent in Imola, a city situated about twenty miles from Bologna. His father, Severo, was a conservator, local magistrate, and senator of Imola, as well as its ambassador to the *Presidenza di Romanga.* While Gian Paolo was socially higher than Fontana, economically it seems that she was the one with a better or at least more stable standing, as she had a profession. There were therefore advantages brought to the marriage by both parties. Fontana had a very peculiar wedding contract for the time. In it, it was agreed that Gian Paolo would come and live with her at her parent's home, and that the money the couple would make would go to Prospero, who in return would take care of their needs. At Prospero's death they would be allowed to live in whatever city they wished, but had to continue to take care of Fontana's mother if she was still alive. The contract was convenient for Prospero, as he had no son, and so this would guarantee that he and his wife would be taken care of when he would no longer be able to work. It may have been signed by the Zappis because they did not expect that the already seventy-year-old artist was to live another two decades. It is generally agreed that the *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maidservant* was one of two self-portraits given to Severo by Fontana when he visited her family on February 13 1577 in order to meet and consider her as a bride for his son. This attribution has been made because of the work's signature, which states that it was made in 1577 when she was still unmarried, because of its
contents, and because of its easy-to-carry travel size. Indeed, this self-portrait and its companion were to be brought to Imola to show to the Zappis.

In early Modern Europe, portraits of women, and sometimes of men, were often made to be given to prospective or future in-laws if they were little- or not known to the family. In these works, they would be shown in all their splendor, and prize possessions such as jewelry and toy dogs would be displayed. The portraits would circulate in the prospective or future groom's family so that they could assess the woman's appearance, riches and/or social position. If the choice was already made, the portrait could satisfy the family's curiosity. *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maid servant* is the first self-portrait in which we see Fontana with an easel. It is in the background, however, and instead of working at it or even being near it, Fontana is sitting at the keyboard in the foreground. Despite its distance to the viewer, it is an essential element in the painting; unlike regular wedding portraits, Fontana shows that her artistic profession (and also her musical abilities, as we shall see) are part of her riches. In its back room, which may be a studiolo, the easel is placed next to a big wooden chest. Known as a cassone or forziero, this would have contained her wedding trousseau. The easel is placed at an angle parallel to it, indicating that her painterly talents and their results were part of her dowry. We therefore see that her art was considered as having value.

Quite interestingly, the two following self-portraits in which she presents herself as an artist, *Self Portrait (at an Easel)* (figure 32) and *Self-Portrait in the Studiolo*, were both made in 1579. Like Anguissola's c.1552 painting, Fontana is seated at a desk with blank pages in front of her in *Self-Portrait in the Studiolo*. With a pen in her hand and the only other tool beside her an ink pot, the viewer is uncertain if she is about to draw or paint, or do both. As mentioned, writing was better regarded than the visual arts, but drawing was seen as the most intellectual of the fine arts media. Either way, this painting shows her in the process of thinking and waiting for inspiration. With her opulent clothing, there is no mistaking her for an artisan. The second work of that year, *Self Portrait (at an Easel)*, shows Fontana holding in her right hand a palette whose paint has already started to be used (we can see a red dollop of paint slightly spread around), and five brushes in her left. Instead of being seated at an easel, she is standing next to or in front of it: we only
see part of it to our right. Here, Fontana wears a bejeweled dress of lace, brocade, and velvet, and, as usual in her self-portraits, is wearing a ruff. Most of her jewelry is made with pearls: a string for the bracelet around each wrist, a string for her belt, three strings for one necklace and a one for a second one worn mostly under her clothes and visible only at her neck, as well as various pearls in her hair. Unlike van Hemessen and Anguissola, it is difficult to imagine Fontana at work in the expensive garment she is wearing, much more so than in her other two works of which we have just spoken. Indeed, she resembles a noblewoman more than a Castiglionian lady. By the time this self-portrait was made, however, even Anguissola was showing herself with richer, albeit sober clothing. Indeed, this work, especially because of the three-looped necklace, reminds one of self-portraits by artists showing the gold chain(s) they had been awarded, in particular that of Anguissola. We can say that Fontana's work commemorates her own success, and that while she had to find a substitute for a gold chain, she does, like Anguissola, show herself in the riches that prove that her art has made her successful.

Self-Portraits at the Keyboard

It is significant that there are almost as many self-portraits showing women playing music as there are showing them with artistic materials. While both activities are mentioned in *The Book of the Courtier*, music already had a history of being an acceptable practice for women. Self-portraits with artistic materials were made to advertise their status as artists and, in a way, self-portraits with music were made to advertise in a more comfortable way their status as women. Self-portraits with an instrument, as with self-portraits with a book, could also convey that the artist had many (Castiglionian) talents: one could see by the subject that she could play, and one knew through the painting itself that she could paint. The usual choice of a keyboard instrument for a self-portrait comes from *The Book of the Courtier*. In it, women were instructed not to play violent instruments such as drums, fifes, and trumpets. String instruments, especially keyboard instruments, were recommended instead. Singing was also praiseworthy, especially when accompanied by the keyboard. It was suggested that one should play only in front of a few people. Interestingly, there is a sense of intimacy in many self-portraits at the keyboard regardless of the point of view, probably because the viewer feels that the sitter is playing for him or her alone.
Because it was meant to be shown alongside her self-portrait, and also because it resembles self-portraits that would follow it, it is important to speak of van Hemessen's portrait of Christina, *Young Woman Playing the Virginals*. With the two sisters similarly dressed and in similar poses in front of their instrument and easel, the viewer may have been meant to understand that both women had been brought up properly and that either could do both of these activities. In this way, the sisters are interchangeable, while at the same time forming two faces of the same perfect lady. One of the main differences between the two sitters, other than what they are shown doing, is that Christina does not look at the viewer. Perhaps this is an attempt to capture her personality, an important thing in Renaissance portraiture, and show her as being shy. She may also be reading a music sheet here unseen by the viewer, or be so absorbed in the music that she does not see the world around her, thus showing her talent and devotion to her art.

The keyboard instrument that Christina plays is usually identified as a virginal. However, many of the designs of spinets, virginals, clavichords, and other such instruments were not even yet fixed in the sixteenth century, and names were used interchangeably. The generic term "keyboard instrument" or simply "keyboard" will therefore be used here. Regardless of whether or not this instrument is really a virginal, that it could be referred to as such has the connotation of indicating that Christina is unmarried. On the inner edge of the keyboard is an inscription, of which can only be read now HABET ERGO MINUS. As the instrument very much resembles the one shown in Cornelis de Zeeuws's *Portrait of the Family of Pierre de Moucheron* (1563, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam), we can conclude from its inscription, located in the same place, that that on the van Hemessen instrument originally said OMNIA DAT DOMINUS / NON HABET ERGO MINUS. This is therefore the signature of the keyboard's maker rather than that of the artist, as Cheney, Faxon and Russo claim. We can also see the instrument's printed dolphin design. The attention to detail serves to show van Hemessen's skill in painting, but it also may be that the keyboard replaces jewelry as a sort of ornament. It is a discrete but important show of wealth; the family could not only afford to give the two sisters a good education, but could also buy such an instrument.
There are two known keyboard paintings by Sofonisba Anguissola: *Self-Portrait at a Spinet* (c.1555-1556, Museo di Capodimonte, Naples), and *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maidservant* (c.1561, Earl Spencer Collection, Northampton, Althrop) (figures 36 and 37).\(^{259}\) Despite its title, the identity of the instrument in *Self-Portrait with a Spinet* is uncertain, and the instrument in the *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maidservant* has been referred to by some as a spinet or clavichord.\(^{260}\) However, as already mentioned, the names designating such instruments were used interchangeably. *Self-Portrait with a Spinet* was made at about the same time as her *Self-Portrait at an Easel*. Rather than showing herself at an easel in one work and one of her sisters at a keyboard in the other, Anguissola instead gives herself both the role of musician and artist in separate self-portraits. With her *Self-Portrait with a Book*, also made around this time, we can see that Anguissola used her self-portraits to show that she was a multi-talented lady. The *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maidservant* was probably made during Anguissola's early years at the Spanish court. Here, the inscription on the keyboard is her signature, not that of the instrument's maker. It is partially illegible now, and the most complete record of it comes from a 1766 source, stating that it read: Sophonisba Anguisiolva virgo s ipsum pinxit iussu Ami [...] patris [...].\(^{261}\)

The woman sitting next to her makes this work quite intriguing. Having a maidservant in such a work is a compositional invention by Anguissola, and even making a double portraits was at this time rare.\(^{252}\) This is the same woman, presumably a maidservant, that Anguissola showed with her three sisters in *The Chess Game*. She may have included her here if she had brought this well-loved servant with her to Spain and had sent this painting as a sort of postcard to her family.\(^{263}\) Showing herself with a servant, as well as an instrument which implied education, showed her as well-off. Depending on the intended recipient of this work, especially if it was a person of questionable morals or who would question the morals of others, it is also possible that the servant, gazing at the viewer, was included to serve as a chaperone; even in paint, there are perhaps times when a woman should not be alone. After all, good portraits where often spoken of as if they contained the living person.\(^{264}\) A chaperone may particularly have been thought needed because the making of music, although an appropriate pastime for women, was said to arouse feelings of love.\(^{265}\)
As with her artistic talent, Fontana's abilities in music are presented in Self-Portrait at a Keyboard with a Maidservant as part of her dowry. The keyboard at which she sits is situated just below the wooden chest, and is set at a similar angle. It also resembles its shape, with the piece of wall above the chest even bringing to mind the open instrument. With her attention presently on music rather than painting, Fontana seems to be stating that she is mentally and financially able to stop painting in order to partake in another – or a better – ladylike activity, one that will entertain her husband. Also, she may have wanted to make a reference to positive effects of music on love, and so to her ability to bring this feeling into their marriage. A coral love knot has been placed not only on the keyboard but also on her necklace. As this one is situated just over her throat, this may allude to her abilities in singing.

The instrument she is playing may have been read as a cembaldo or virginal, two instruments linked to chastity and therefore appropriate in this wedding portrait. As only the hands moved for the cembaldo, creating less "sexual" movement and demonstrating more skill, this instrument in particular would show virtue and chastity. It was also an instrument often found in upper class homes, and so would demonstrate her economic position, if not her social one. As with Anguissola, this position is also demonstrated by the presence of a maidservant, and it is possible that Fontana was inspired by the Cremonese artist to include her. Here however, she is standing, bringing Fontana an undecipherable music book. Her lowered eyes lead the viewer's gaze to Fontana's hands on the instrument. This book may be another indicator of Fontana's musical education, showing that she has been taught to read music.

Robusti's own Self-Portrait at the Keyboard also shows her as a Castiglionian lady if not fully in dress, then in activity. Robusti was said to have been a fantastic musician and to have had a Neapolitan music tutor by the name of Giulio Zacchino, and so showing herself with an instrument may have been particularly important to her. Once again, it is possible that the instrument was specifically meant to be a cembaldo. As with the other female artists, Robusti gave her own unique twist to the subject. She is not sitting at the keyboard and playing it, but is instead standing in front of it. The instrument is placed at the back of the picture plane rather than along the side. Robusti's back is turned to the instrument and her right arm is resting on it, the fingers almost pointing to the keys. The other hand is holding a music book, its details so precise that not only has the song
displayed on the page been identified, but the edition of the book as well. As in Fontana's work, the book may be seen as indicating her education, both generally as well as, more specifically, in music. It may have been because she wanted to show the pages of the book in such detail that she is shown standing up; if she were seated at the keyboard reading the music sheet, our view of the page would have been hindered. The music piece is Philippe Verdelot's *Madonna, per voi ardo* (Lady, For You I Burn), and it is set on page twenty-three of the 1533 edition of *First Book of Madrigals* (1533, Venice). This madrigal in four voices is a love song. Both the composer and the madrigal itself were very well known, and so Robusti may have chosen this work to show that she was aware of fashion. It has even been suggested by Jacobs that this painting, with the title of the madrigal and the love symbolism of the keyboard, is meant to have sexual connotations, so that Robusti is here shown as the object of (sexual) love: she is the lady for whom the lover burns. Jacobs, however, does not seem to take into consideration the fact that the song was generally so popular and may have been chosen for this reason, and instead concentrates more on the lyrics and their possible connotations.

Also, Robusti is not actually playing the keyboard, and so the connotations of the power of music to arouse feeling of love seems to be lessened. It is possible that this was part of a private joke between herself and the viewer. The position of the instrument also permits us to see its keys. The distribution of the black and white keys is unusual, particularly to our left. Jacobs even claims that this depiction of the keyboard is a mistake, proving that this is not a self-portrait by Robusti, for as a great musician she would have known their proper order. One has to remember, however, that keyboard instruments were not yet standardized at this point, and that the keys could be set in various orders. It was also common practice to disassemble instruments and then rebuild them, sometimes combining a few together in the process. One wonders why, if the music sheet is so detailed, an artist (whether Robusti or someone else) would have made such a blunder with the keys; after all, keyboards were fairly common in both life and art, and are not particularly difficult to depict. Rather, it seems that Robusti either painted her keyboard as it was, perhaps being interested in its particularities (perhaps she had it specially made), or purposely shuffled the order of the keys in the painting. If the title of the piece of music
which is clearly presented to the viewer is a sort of message or inside joke, then the keyboard may certainly be one as well.

**Justifications: Precedents and Teachers**

**Precedents**

*The New Antiquity*

The Renaissance considered itself basically as being "Antiquity, Part II: Return of the Classical Age and Beyond." As of Petrarch and continuing until the nineteenth century, it was considered that society had progressively evolved during Antiquity, only to de-evolve and return almost to its starting point during the Middle Ages. The Renaissance therefore saw itself as having to try (and was indeed perceived as succeeding) to continue and surpass classical times. It was not to start where the Middle Ages ended, but instead where the Classical Age had left off. Vasari, whose *Lives* of the mid-sixteenth century is the first modern art history work, identified three stages of evolution in Renaissance art. The first period started at the beginning of the fourteenth century with Cimabue and Giotto. This was when artists began to leave the "evil" ways of the Middle Ages and returned to the Classical ideals. Donatello and Masaccio began the second period in the early fifteenth century. By the end of that century, the third period was underway, and Vasari considered that it was still continuing at the time of his writing. It was with this last period that art not only matched that of Antiquity, but surpassed it with artists such as da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael. During the Renaissance, contemporary artists as well as humanist scholars and other such people were seen as standing on the shoulders of the giants that were their Classical predecessors. As they were continuing the artistic lineage, it was important for them to always refer to these giants. Classical precedents were a way to justify contemporary activities and ideas, and also served as a sort of marker indicating where one had to begin trying to surpass the past. One can therefore say that art is like law in that precedents can often play a major role.

**Apelles**

One of the most important references to Antiquity for artists was Apelles. He was considered the Classical era's most successful artist, being under the patronage of Alexander the Great. His talent and his charisma were said to have been so immense, and
the respect Alexander had for him so high, that the ruler would visit his studio and once
even stooped to pick up his fallen paint brush. Alexander was also said to have given
Apelles his favorite concubine as a reward for his great work. Renaissance artists dreamed
of being like Apelles, and in a way he became their collective role model. One thing that
helped them was that at this time many rulers dreamed of being the new Alexander the
Great. As they also knew the stories regarding Apelles, many of them seemed to decide
that one criteria for being a most glorious ruler would be to have a great artist: If I am
patron to a new Apelles, I must be a new Alexander. This logical conclusion meant that
rulers now searched for the best amongst artists, brought them to court, wanted to
personally know them, valued them, and greatly rewarded them. Humanists were
interested also in identifying a Renaissance Apelles as a way to prove that the Classical
age had returned. The first time a Renaissance artist was compared to Apelles was in Italy,
when Petrarch identified Simone Martini as resembling this great artist. As Petrarch was
such an important figure for humanism and the Renaissance in general, that he was
claiming that Apelles had returned, so to speak, would have been a very important
statement for artists. Another important humanist figure made the second of these
comparisons, with Boccaccio speaking in such a favorable way of Giotto. Subsequent
artists, scholars, and others tried to identify the "Apelles" artists of the day. By the mid-
sixteenth century, comparing an artist to Apelles, even if they were in reality not
extraordinarily talented, became a regular form of compliment.279

Even female artists could be compared to Apelles. The source of this was
Plutarch's *Milierum Virtutis*. Even if he did not designate a female Apelles, he still asked
in its introduction if women were capable of painting works that would be equal to those
of men, and if any could be as good as Apelles or Zeuxis. He did not clearly answer the
question, however.280 Of course, some Renaissance authors disagreed, but there were both
men and women who through literature and the fine arts answered his question in the
affirmative. For example, Irene di Spilimbergo, one of Titian's apprentices, was compared
to Apelles in her eulogy.281 Some painters would even designate themselves as Apelles.282
One of the most important self-comparisons to Apelles made by a woman was perhaps
that of Fontana. In some of the Bolognese painter's works, she used the word *facibat* (or
an abbreviated version of it) in her signature. Pliny the Elder had written that some of the
greatest artists in Antiquity, including Apelles himself, had signed their works with this form of the imperfect tense of the verb "to do." This was to symbolize that they considered their works to be never truly finished, as they could always improve them.283

Fontana was one of the rare Renaissance artists of either sex to resurrect the practice.284 Works in which she used this word in her signature include Portrait of Senator Orsini (c.1579, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux) and Self-Portrait (at the Easel). However, the most important work in which she used facibat, may be her Self-Portrait in the Studiolo. As this self-portrait was to be placed in a collection of famous people, Fontana is therefore showing herself at her best. The signature, "(L)avinia Fontana/ (De) Tapii Facieb(at) (M)DLXXVII", demonstrates that Fontana saw it as essential to compare herself to Apelles in the construction and presentation of her identity. Significantly, the signature had been placed on the section of her desk just under the paper upon which she is about to either draw or write. The concept of facibat is therefore visually linked to the work that she does.

Iaia, Timarete and Other Female Artists of the Golden Age

When speaking of contemporary Renaissance women in relation to classical artists, most people seem to have been more comfortable to place them within a female artistic lineage rather than involve them in comparisons with male artists such as Apelles and Zeuxis.285 While Apelles was the ultimate classical artist, comparisons to women of Antiquity were in a way as good or even better for contemporary female artists because it was a recognition that there had been talented women at that time. It therefore gave them that most important of justifications, the classical precedent. Interestingly, Renaissance female artists were used as proof that the Golden Age of art had returned. People thought that there was now, as there had been in the ancient days, such an abundance of art, pictured more or less as floating in the air, that it even infiltrated some women.286 A female artist could therefore be used as proof of the quantity and quality of art that could be found in her city. Indeed, this view continued until at least Baroque times.287

The most significant source concerning female artists of Antiquity was Pliny the Elder. In Book 35 of his Naturalis Historiae (Natural History, first century CE) he names not only over two hundred male painters, but also six female painters: Timarete, Irene,
Calypso, Aristate, Iaia, and Olympias. They cover two sections, about half of which is devoted to Iaia. Pliny cites at least one work for each of them, save for Olympia, who has none attributed to her. Olympia is still cited as noteworthy, however, for she is said to have had a student. The works by the other five are either portraits or religious paintings, with Iaia being also noted for making a self-portrait with a mirror. Iaia was said to have used the expensive support of ivory. None of these six women were mentioned again until Boccaccio's Concerning Famous Women in 1307. In this work, Boccaccio, one of the first humanists and followers of Petrarch, spoke of one hundred and four women to be admired for their virtue. While a few of the women, notably rulers, were of early Christian times, most were from Antiquity. Amongst these, he discusses three of the female artists found in Pliny the Elder's work: Timarete, here called Thamyris; Iaia of Cyzicus, renamed Marcia of Kyzikos; and Irene. Boccaccio elaborated on Pliny the Elder's text, making some accidental or willful changes in the process. The result, regardless of the mistakes, was a work that would prove essential for many women, in particular female artists of the sixteenth century.

After Boccaccio, more and more writers began to speak of these classical women. One of the earlier ones was Christine de Pisan, a well-respected writer on morals, education, and politics, and who in her many works defended and promoted women from all fields and centuries. Only two years after Concerning Famous Women, she spoke of Timarete, Irene, and Marcia in The City of Ladies. She praised the three for surpassing all of their contemporaries. This included Irene, who exceeded her most admired teacher. De Pisan even identified Marcia and Timarete as geniuses.

An element used by a few female artists that may have been a way to connect themselves to female artists of Antiquity was the use of the word "virgo" in reference to the self in the signature of some of the paintings, including self-portraits. Pliny had mentioned that Iaia had remained a virgin all her life, and this was repeated and elaborated on by later authors. Boccaccio, for example, had theorized that it was because of this status that Marcia did not paint (naked) men, only women. "Virgo" meant both "virgin" and "unmarried (woman)." Indeed, at this time, both would have been considered synonymous, as women were not to have any sexual relationships before being wed. A
more suitable translation may therefore be "maidenly." The use of this word in a signature may be puzzling unless we theorize that, at least in some cases, the artist wanted to make a link between herself and the legendary Marcia. It would be a good way to justify her artistic activity. It would also be a way to show that they were proper women, with maidenly modesty. Anguissola, for example, used the word virgo in the signature of many of the works made before her first wedding, including The Artist's Sister in the Garb of a Nun (1551, Southampton City Art Gallery, Southampton), Self-Portrait with Book, The Chess Game, and the c.1556 amulet Self-Portrait. The designation of virgo may also have been used as a way to indicate to any prospective suitors that they were free. The use of this word in Fontana's signature for her wedding portrait Self-Portrait at a Keyboard with Maidservant, for example, seems to have been for both of these reasons.

Besides connotations of modesty, a reference to Marcia, and indeed the other classical female artists, could encourage and justify artistic activity by Renaissance women by reason of the success they were said to have received. Pliny had stated that the cost of Marcia's work had surpassed that of the best of her (male) contemporaries, Sopolis and Dionysis. Also she was said to have been the fastest artist of the time. Interestingly, no woman was compared to her on this basis until Carlo Cesare Malvasia wrote about Sirani in 1678 in his Felsina pittrice: Vite de' pittori bolognesi.295

Contemporary Female Precedents

More contemporary female precedents were also important. They provided female artists with role models that could show them how to succeed in the present time, and so their example would have been more useful than those supplied by Marcia or Thamyris. For instance, Anguissola's success at the court of Philip II provided a tangible example of a goal that could be copied and attained. These precedents gave women and their families motivation to study art. Prospective patrons would also be better encouraged to invest in the younger generation of female artists if the previous one was known to have been successful. Members of artistic and intellectual circles would make comparisons between younger and older female artists. The artists themselves could make favorable reference to their predecessors in their visual work and in their writings. These precedents could even be artists that were only a decade or so older. Female artists would know of each other's
works by seeing them firsthand, by seeing print copies, or by having a description through oral or written sources. Indeed, after the sixteenth century, women had better resources for knowing the more recent works made by women than those made in Classical times, as the latter were only known through written descriptions.

Post-Antiquity female artists only really began to be mentioned in texts as of the mid-sixteenth century. A very important book for providing modern-day examples of female artists was Vasari's widely read Lives. Amongst others, he mentioned Properzia de’Rossi (the only woman to not only be mentioned in both editions, but also to have her own chapter), Plautila Nelli, Diana Mantuana, Barbara Longhi, Susanna Horenbout, Levina Teerlinc, Catharina van Hemessen, and the Anguissola sisters. Vasari was one of the first writers to mention so many contemporary female artists in such a positive way, thereby greatly helping the cause of the female artist. For example, Vasari showed both her education and the high esteem in which she was held because of her talents in part by publishing both her eloquent letter to Pope Pius IV of September 1561, as well as the pontiff’s praise-filled reply of October of that same year. By the later half of the sixteenth century, women could read books in praise of female artists of the present day and of the past generation(s), who themselves were often linked to their classical predecessors. Female artistic lineage was now therefore acknowledged.

Some female artists seem to have made reference to their predecessors in their visual work. Anguissola seems to have been influenced by van Hemessen. When Mary abdicated as Governess of the Netherlands in 1556 and, with Charles V (who had abdicated in 1555) and their sister Eleanor, left Brussels for Spain, both van Hemessen and her husband were made part of the retinue. They stayed in Spain at least until 1558, when Mary died. Anguissola surely would have heard of van Hemessen once she was at Philip II's court, as van Hemessen had been a lady-in-waiting there for a few years, and may even still have been residing in Spain when Anguissola arrived. As Philip II was technically Anguissola's king, and because she was of a noble family with both political connections and artistic/intellectual interests, she may have heard of van Hemessen as soon as the Flemish artist had arrived in Spain, if not before. Anguissola also may have decided to copy van Hemessen as a way to get a court appointment. If so, then her strategy
worked. Anguissola may have been invited to the Spanish court as a replacement to van Hemessen if the latter left or was planning to leave soon after Mary's death. As van Hemessen had been part of Mary's entourage, Philip II may have decided that he wanted a female court painter of his own. It is not known whether van Hemessen was still at court when Anguissola arrived; indeed, there is little information on the couple after Mary's death.299

One work in which we see van Hemessen's influence on Anguissola is in the Italian artist's c.1556 *Self-Portrait at an Easel*. In this and van Hemessen's 1548 *Self-Portrait*, both women wear the same basic Castiglionian clothing; even the shoulders on both dresses are slightly puffy, and the sleeves are red or reddish. The only major difference is the presence of the veil in van Hemessen's work. Not only is the activity similar in these two works, but so is the pose. Each woman holds a mahlstick in their lowered left hand, and their raised right hand, which holds a paint brush, is resting on it. Both also have a palette, although Anguissola's is on her easel instead of in her hand. These hold similar paint dollops of reds, whites, and blacks.300 The two artists are on the right hand side of the picture plane, with their easel set on the left one so that we can see their work. Van Hemessen is slightly more open to the viewer, but her easel is at a sharper angel than that in Anguissola's self-portrait. A big difference between the two images is the painting each artist presents herself working on: while the Flemish painter is only beginning her work, the Italian one is just finishing, and we are certain of her subject. It is possible that Anguissola had interpreted van Hemessen's painting as a Madonna and Child, or that someone had told her that this was so. Although van Hemessen looks calmly at the viewer, Anguissola's gaze is more direct and confident. This is perhaps because Anguissola had a better technique and so more skill in showing expressions. Interestingly, Anguissola here uses black for her background, as did van Hemessen, rather than her usual green.

Anguissola *Self-Portrait at a Spinet*, made at about the same time as the easel work, seems to have been influenced by van Hemessen's portrait of Christina. If she knew of the Flemish artist's self-portrait, she may have also known of this second work, especially since they seem to have been meant as a pair. Indeed, with *Self-Portrait at an*
Easel, Anguissola seems to have been making her own diptych, though she faces the same way in both works. These two pairs of paintings were painted about eight years apart, when both artists were in their early twenties: van Hemessen was twenty and Anguissola was about twenty-four. Interestingly, these two Anguissola self-portraits seem to have been painted at about the same time that van Hemessen arrived at the Spanish court, further supporting the theory that van Hemessen influenced her. Anguissola's *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maidservant* was made during the first few years Anguissola was in Spain, when she may have gained additional information regarding her predecessor and her work. This second keyboard self-portrait resembles the van Hemessen portrait more because of her pose at the instrument and the angle at the keyboard. Interestingly, almost two thirds of the background is black or brown.

In turn, Anguissola influenced many younger female artists. One of these was Irene di Spilimbergo, who was said to have been inspired to learn to draw and paint after she saw one of Anguissola's self-portraits. Di Spilimbergo therefore became one of Titian's pupils, an artist to which Anguissola was often favorably compared. Like Anguissola (and perhaps even more) she was also highly educated in music and literature. If the work she saw showed Anguissola partaking in an artistic or scholarly activity, she may have especially perceived a connection between herself and the Cremonese artist.

Fontana as well seems to have been influenced by Anguissola in some of her works. One of these is her *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maidservant*, which is not unlike Anguissola's same-themed work. Both maidservants are dressed similarly and situated to our left, hovering over the artist. Other than the activity, there is some resemblance between Anguissola and Fontana in regards to their open V-neck dress and lacy collar/ruff, as well as the hairstyle. The two women face a different direction, but the angle of the keyboard and the amount of the instrument that we see is similar. Fontana does face the same direction as Christina, however, and indeed the large white signature on the black background recalls van Hemessen's works. Because Fontana had so many good connections and was well educated, it is possible that she had seen Anguissola's works or at least had heard or read a description of them. For example, Fontana knew Carlo Sigonio, who knew Flubio Orsini, a antiquarian who had collected some of
Anguissola's paintings. This included one of her self-portraits at a keyboard.\textsuperscript{302} She certainly knew of Anguissola, as we know through her correspondence with Ciacon, and, as we shall see, the knowledge that her self-portrait was to be displayed next to Anguissola's must have influenced her self-representation. One may wonder if she knew of van Hemessen as well.\textsuperscript{303}

\textit{What's in a Name?}

The origin of their names would have been important inspiration for some female artists. Some names could provide them with a form of precedent that would feed into the idea of a female genealogy, whether artistic or otherwise. Names could also demonstrate social status, and connect the bearer to various important people and concepts. They could therefore influence a female artist's self-image. Also, one has to remember that a name, as part of the signature, is a visual part of the painting, and in a self-portrait, name and face are connected. Lavinia Fontana was of the artisan class, but her father was upwardly mobile in society by the time she was born. To signify his higher socio-economic position and in a way transfer it to his daughter, he did not give her a Catholic name as was traditional for the working classes, but one of classical Roman origin; these were by then common in the higher class. This could also serve to show that he was well-educated in Antiquity. The name "Lavinia" itself seems to have been chosen for his youngest child because it was the name of a daughter of his then patron, Perino del Vaga, and because it was also the name of Titian's youngest daughter.\textsuperscript{304} Like her brother Asdrubale, Sofonisba Anguissola was named according to her father's family's tradition of using names from members of the Carthaginian dynasty.\textsuperscript{305} Interestingly, Anguissola chose in most of her work to use the Roman spelling, "Sophonisba." This was possibly out of a desire to link herself to this great and powerful queen from Roman times who was so well spoken of by authors such as Boccaccio.\textsuperscript{306}

\textbf{Teachers: The Anguissola Experience}

\textit{Bernardino Campi and Sofonisba Anguissola}

For both male and female artists, their teachers were another important form of predecessors, and some will deem it important to acknowledge them in their work. It was also important, as with other types of predecessors, to exceed them. In 1546, the two
eldest Anguissola children, Sofonisba (then about fourteen years old) and Elena (about twelve), began to study art with Bernardino Campi, an important Cremonese painter. At this time, Amilcare Anguissola was one of the superintendents hiring artists for frescoes in the Cremonese church of San Sigismondo. It seems that it was then that he met Campi, and not only chose the twenty-four-year-old artist to be part of the church project, but also to teach his daughters. Campi taught them the basics of drawing and painting. When they had progressed enough to continue their learning, both sisters moved into his house. It was indeed common practice for apprentices to live with their master, and while it was never officially called so because of the Anguissolas' noble rank (it was still not totally acceptable for nobility, including noblewomen, to do manual, artisan activities), an apprenticeship it still essentially was. Campi's wife Anna would have acted as chaperone for the girls, and as was common for apprentices, the two Anguissolas became an extended part of their teacher's family. A letter from the Spanish court to Campi from Sofonisba in 1561 indicates that she had remained close to him and his family. Campi was their teacher until 1549, when he was invited by Milan's governor, Ferrant Gonzaga (Isabella d'Este's son) to be part of his court.

Sofonisba Anguissola honored her first teacher by painting both of them in *Bernardino Campi Painting a Portrait of Sofonisba Anguissola* of 1559-1560. This work seems to have been made on her way to the Spanish court in 1559, quite possibly when she may have stopped in Milan and seen him. Her old teacher was probably quite happy to hear that Anguissola was being made a lady-in-waiting to the future queen of Spain. This prestigious appointment would also reflect well on him. Anguissola may have painted this work as a way to commemorate both the event of being made a lady-in-waiting and the place her teacher had ultimately had in this appointment. It was, after all, Campi who had taught her the rudimentaries of the fine arts and had started her on her artistic career. She perhaps appreciated that he had accepted to teach her and her sister when such a practice may still have been questionable. As previously mentioned, double portraits were still quite rare. Even more importantly, this is the first and possibly only time where an artist shows himself or herself being painted by another artist. One type of double portrait was father-and-son paintings such as Luca Cambiaso's *Portrait of the Artist Painting a Portrait of his Father* (1575-80, present location unknown), and
Anguissola's work may be a variation of this. Many artists learned from their father, creating the idea of an artistic lineage. As Anguissola learned from Campi, he was in a way her artistic father. As she spent some important formative years in his house and, as already stated, was essentially a member of his family, he was also a father-figure.

It is wrong to say, as some have, that the Anguissola sitting for her portrait is where the viewer is located. The viewer is situated too much to Campi's side, and indeed is almost behind him; no artist would position his model where he or she would have to turn their neck so far. Anguissola would instead be to his upper right. Conceptually, there are therefore three Anguissolas in this work: Anguissola the model, positioned out of the picture plane and to our right, Anguissola the artist, situated in the place of the viewer, and Anguissola the work of art, situated on the surface of the canvas. In this work, Anguissola shows herself in a dress resembling that which she wears in other works of the late 1550s and early 1560s. The only difference is that the collar of her chemise is slightly larger, recalling that of her c.1552 Self-Portrait. It also resembles what she wears on her c.1558 commemorative coin, and so the two works may indicate that, since she was going to the Spanish court, she had decided to change her chemise for a slightly fancier one. It is also possible that the commemorative coin, probably made before the double portrait, had the larger collar because of a mistake or a willing exaggeration for stylistic reasons. If Anguissola had wanted to make reference to her coin in this work as a way to show her pride in her new position, it is possible that she copied its more elaborate version of her chemise. In the double portrait, Anguissola wears the black headband she shows herself wearing in various works since c.1552, and her hair is set in its usual parted-down-the-middle-and-up-in-a-chignon style. There are two significant changes in her wardrobe, though these are still relatively low-key and so indicate her new socio-economic place without breaking her well-known sober, scholarly image, which would have been particularly important if it was even partly responsible for her court appointment. The first of these changes is the small, teardrop-shaped silver earring visible on her left ear. This is the first time that we see her with jewelry. The second is the gloves she holds in her left hand (the only one visible). As mentioned before, gloves were an important indicator that the sitter of a portrait was a noble. For women, they could also bring the viewer's attention
to their elegant hands. Interestingly, the gloves are of a dark color, as if Anguissola was trying to keep her image despite the luxury item.

Campi is painting Anguissola's portrait, the canvas placed on an easel. His right hand, resting on a malstick and presumably holding a brush (it is difficult to see), is at once painting her and gesturing to her. That this hand is also resting over her chest may symbolize his paternal affection for her. Anguissola's own hand is situated just below his. It is in a similar yet upside-down position, perhaps to show a connection between them, especially since hands are so important for artists. She is dressed slightly more richly than Campi, especially with her gloves. Campi is dressed all in black, and we see the small collar and cuffs of his white chemise. This reflects the clothes that Anguissola wears in this work, but brings to mind even more the dresses she wore in her self-portraits of c.1548 (made when she was still his pupil) and of 1554. She presents him, as she has and is still presenting herself, as an intellectual. The clothing shows a connection between them in regards to ideals and education. He is a Castiglionian gentleman. She has followed in his footsteps and, like him, has been appointed (although unofficially) as court painter. Indeed, Anguissola seems to have wanted to present in this work two aspects of the court painter. On the one hand, there is the male court painter, shown here using a malstick and painting at an easel. On the other, we have Anguissola, the lady-in-waiting and an unofficial female court painter. While she shows Campi's right/working hand, her own right hand is hidden, and it is her "passive" left one that we see, holding her gloves.

Attention to her hands may have been wanted not because they were particularly elegant, but because she was an artist. That she is shown as the model rather than as the artist may be a comment on her appointment as a lady-in-waiting rather than as an actual court artist. She also plays here with the idea of the usual male artist/female model dichotomy, as both the male and female models for this work are also artists.

That Campi is painting her may be a reference that, as his former pupil, she is his creation. This double portrait shows her recognition and gratefulness for this. As a metaphor for this, he is literally creating her here through paint. This relation was recognized early in her career. For example, in April 28, 1554, in a letter to Campi, Francesco Salvati said that Anguissola was Campi's creation, and that his intellect could
be recognized in her work.\textsuperscript{320} We therefore see the importance of intellect for these artists, and the idea of intelligence and education, and not only of technical skill, being passed on from master to pupil. By painting him for the double-portrait, Anguissola is in turn creating him. This may be meant in part to refer to the fact that her appointment to the court of Spain reflected well on him, and so helped in the creation of his reputation. There is therefore a double creation, both literally in that they are creating each other through paint, and symbolically as they are helping each other in creating their artistic reputations. However, in this work, there is also the idea of surpassing one's teacher. Anguissola has a stiff pose in the portrait that Campi is painting. He, on the other hand, has a dynamic position, looking over his shoulder.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the sitter in a portrait tended to be less stiff and have a more natural pose. The model could even be shown in mid-action.\textsuperscript{321} Progressively, and going towards the Baroque period, poses tended to become more dynamic. Campi is also painted in a more realistic way than is Anguissola, indicating that she is the better artist; her portrait of him is more lifelike and less stiff, one could even say more in accordance with contemporary developments, than is his portrait of her. The difference that she shows between the depiction of the two of them may also be a comment on the relatively stiffer poses still often given to women at this point. Furthermore, the illusion that we are looking at someone painting a portrait is accentuated because Anguissola looks more "painted" and less lifelike. The desire to create this illusion seems to have trumped the general rule of trying to make people seem as realistic as possible. Anguissola has created an invention here, which in the Renaissance was a very praiseworthy thing to do, especially if one was a female artist. There is no known portrait by Campi of her.\textsuperscript{322} Interestingly, this seems to be the only portrait ever made of him.\textsuperscript{323}

\textit{Sofonisba and Lucia Anguissola}

In her \textit{Self-Portrait} of c.1557, made when she was about twenty years old, Lucia seems to make both specific reference to her big sister and a general comment on the ideals of her family. Like Sofonisba, her hair is parted in the middle and coiled into a bun, and she seems to be wearing no jewelry. Lucia's black V-neck dress and tasseled chemise
seem to be the same ones that her sister wears in her self-portraits of this time, and one wonders if they are her own or if she borrowed them. There seems to be a slight difference only in the sleeves; they are similar in design and color (maroon) as those worn by Sofonisba, but here they are also striped. Like her sister, she uses a dark background, although there is not that green tint often found in Sofonisba's works. Another slight yet important difference is the chair. While Sofonisba is seated in many of her self-portraits, we rarely see the chair as much as in Lucia's work. Her three-quarter pose is also facing our right rather than Sofonisba's usual left. Like Sofonisba in her c.1548 Self-Portrait drawing, Lucia is not only holding a book but also pointing to herself. The message conveyed by this gesture seems to be "I am great like my sister, like my teacher, but I am also myself." These resemblances show not only a connection to Sofonisba as a teacher, but also to her as a sister. Lucia may have hoped that by showing herself like Sofonisba, including in a Castiglionian dress and pursuing an educated activity, she would profit from her sister's reputation and success. A viewer familiar with Sofonisba's self-portraits may have gotten the impression that it was the whole Anguissola family and not just its eldest daughter that were intellectual artists. The little changes Lucia has made, however, show that she is still independent from her sister and an artist in her own right.324

The Importance of Mirrors in Female Self-Portraiture

Technical Advances in Renaissance Mirrors

An important factor in the evolution of self-portraiture was the technical developments in mirror making.325 At the beginning of the Renaissance, mirrors were still round, convex objects made of glass that provided a distorted and unclear image. That artists needed to fix their reflection for their self-portraits explains some of the odd features, in particular a distortion in the eye farthest to the viewer, that can be seen in some works, especially in those by the young or untalented. These mirrors also made it difficult to paint a self-portrait where the artist is looking away from the viewer, as more than one mirror is needed for such a pose. Small mirrors made of highly polished metal were also still used, and while the image they provided was not as distorted as that of convex mirrors, it was also less clear. Flat glass mirrors began to appear around the fifteenth century. These were made with a tin-amalgam process by which a thin layer of tinfoil and mercury was applied onto glass. Unlike convex mirrors, they could be made
bigger and their shape could vary. Because these new mirrors gave a relatively clear and undistorted reflection, they made the study and reproduction of the self much easier for artists. The quality was not as good as that of present-day mirrors, however, and one has to remember that fire was the only means of artificial lighting. Venice and Nuremberg were the two cities specializing in the making of flat mirrors, and it seems significant that Dürer's self-portraits of 1493, 1498 and 1500, which are so important for the development of self-portraiture, were made in either of these centers. Flat glass mirrors eventually replaced the metal and convex glass ones, but for a while all three were used.

The poem in Antonis Mor van Dashort's *Self-Portrait at the Easel*, for example, states that this painting was made with the help of a mirror of polished metal. The lopsided eyes in some of the Anguissola sisters self-portraits indicates that they still used convex mirrors. This distortion can be seen in Sofonisba's *Self-Portrait with a Book* of 1554, as well as the aforementioned *Self-Portrait* of c.1561 which is officially attributed to her.\(^{326}\) The use of "old technology" may have been because of the cost or difficulty of getting a flat mirror for the many years when they were made only in Venice and Nuremberg. Convex mirrors could also be used for visual effects. Although we do not see the surface of the flat mirror, a contrast is made between the two types of mirrors used by a woman for her toilette in Titian's *Woman with Two Mirrors* of c.1512-17 (Musée du Louvre, Paris), for example. Francesco Parmigianino used a convex mirror to create his debut piece, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (1524, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), which "wowed" the Papal court (figure 33).\(^{327}\) To create it, Parmigianino had a carpenter make a wooden sphere on a lathe and then saw a section off to get a panel with the same dimensions as a convex mirror. He then painted his portrait showing the distortions seen in such a mirror, a feat made difficult by the convex surface of the panel. This was the first time anyone had done such a thing. He apparently had had the idea when he saw his reflection in a barber's mirror, and wished to replicate the exact reflection and form.\(^{328}\) Parmigianino's fascination with this type of reflection may indicate that the higher classes by then used mostly flat mirrors, while the working class did not. It is therefore interesting that the Anguissolas still used convex mirrors in the mid-sixteenth century; they were of an aristocratic family in which many of its members painted, and so should have had the money and the motivation to get a flat mirror.
Good and Bad Connotations of Mirrors for Female Artists

Marcia was very important for the self-identity of female artists and provided a strong, positive link between them, self-portraiture and mirrors. Interestingly, the earliest extant image in which we see an artist of either gender using a mirror to make any type of self-portrait is the illumination of Marcia in the c.1402 French manuscript of Boccaccio's Concerning Famous Women. Here, we see her working on a large, bust-length autonomous self-portrait. In her left hand is a small, oval mirror. Because of its oval rather than round shape, and because the reflection is not deformed, it seems to be made of metal. In her right hand, Marcia holds a paintbrush with which she is putting the finishing touches on her work. While Marcia herself is shown in profile, the painting, and perhaps the mirror, show her in a three-quarter pose. The work is shown as being so perfect that it appears itself to be a mirror. Indeed, if one looks at the illumination quickly, one may think that the painting is the mirror, while the object in her hand with the less defined image is a miniature. The life-like aspect of the self-portrait may have been due to the difficulty of showing a painting as something less real than the reflection and the scene itself. It may, however, and especially when coupled with the text, have given the reader the sense that this female artist was an exceptionally good painter. Subsequent manuscript illustrations of Concerning Famous Women usually showed her in a similar way.

Female artists were linked to mirrors as women and artists in other positive ways. During the Renaissance, the importance of the mirror as a tool for the artist was recognized and elevated. Good paintings were to be like mirrors in technical quality. While Alberti recommended that artists look at their paintings through a mirror to better see mistakes made, da Vinci went further by claiming that the mirror was the main teacher of a painter as it served as a bridge between them and nature. People could eventually become their own mirror when their mind would become as clear as the reflective surface. Also, during the Renaissance, artists and philosophers explored the idea of the mirror as a tool for the study of mind/soul as well as of the physical self. It was believed that one could search for one's identity through the making of self-portraits and the mirror-gazing necessary for their creation. This idea appears to have been linked to the concept that the state of the body mirrored that of the soul. Mirrors also became important as symbols of the artist, especially in Northern Europe. For example, it became common in
Flemish works to place a mirror on the far wall of the workshop in works showing Saint Luke painting the Virgin. Mirrors could also connect female artists to many virtues. The unblemished mirror was considered a symbol of both virginity and purity in general, and specifically of the Virgin Mary. Similarly, the female personification Prudentia was shown with a mirror, and she was linked not only to prudence, but also to virginity, wisdom, mediation and self-discovery.

However, there was also some less positive symbolism. As of the sixteenth century, for example, women could be connected to lust, pride, and vanity though images showing a woman looking at herself in the mirror – usually at her toilette – while a (male) viewer looked voyeuristically on. The visual and conceptual link between women and mirrors was therefore strong, and could be either negative or positive, depending on the intent: a woman looking at herself for spiritual self-knowledge was positive, while one looking at herself out of an obsession over the physical body was negative. For example, as de Pisan assured her readers that Marcia's reason for looking at her features was to study herself in order to make a self-portrait so that people would remember her, her example would have been seen as a positive one. Mirrors could also be linked to redemption, and one can find both portraits of men and women penitents holding a mirror, as well as religious works depicting Mary Magdalene with such an object about her. These negative images, which for women seem to have been stronger than the positive ones, appear to be the reason why female artists did not show themselves with mirrors in their self-portraits. That visual culture could connect them in any way to sexuality and sin was in no way beneficial to them. Female artists would also not necessarily want to be linked to images of redemption, as it meant that they had done something bad about which to be penitent. Female artists had to present themselves as being perfect, and such an association to vanity or even penitence may not have impressed potential patrons. Therefore, while it was not uncommon for male artists to include a mirror in their self-portrait, including images of themselves "as" Saint Luke, female artists usually did not visually connect themselves to mirrors. Their link to mirrors was still relatively strong and important however. A compromise seems therefore to have been reached in which mirrors would be mentioned instead verbally in the inscription or through a more or less indirect visual reference.
Anguissola's Medallion Self-Portrait

In her Self-Portrait of c.1556, Anguissola worked hard to plan a self-portrait in which all the good connotations of mirrors for women are made while none of the bad ones are implied. In this oval miniature set as a pendant, Anguissola shows herself holding a large disk. Around its edge is inscribed: SOPHONISBA ANGVSSOLA VIRG(O) IPSIVS MANV EX (S)PECVLO DEPICTAM CREMONÆ (Sophonisba Anguissola, maiden, painted herself by her own hand from a mirror in Cremona).

Anguissola often identified herself as a maiden in her works, but this reference to the mirror is rare, if not unique. Because these two items are coupled, we can assume that she wanted to link herself to Marcia and show that her work came from a long line of female self-portraits. Interestingly, there is more space between the words virgo and ipsivs, and between ex and speculo than between other words in the inscription. Even with this, however, her hands are still partially covering some of the letters: the left hand is almost covering the "O" of virgo and the right is hiding most of the "S" of speculo. One wonders why she did not move the letters even more, especially since the space around the left hand is bigger than that given to the right one. The reason why she may have chosen to partially hide two words that are so important in this work may be to visually link and draw our attention to them. They are certainly not concealed so much that they are unreadable. This may also have been done to symbolize modesty: the idea of a partially covered maiden and a partially covered mirror contrasts with the images of naked or scantily dressed women gazing unashamedly at themselves in large mirrors. At the center of the disk is a monogram. Monograms were starting to become a common form of riddle at this time. In these, letters of a name, whether its initials or in full, were made to overlap and entangle as to create an esthetic puzzle. During the second half of the sixteenth century, and especially in England and France, many books on monograms were written. Women would embroider them, as for example the needlework piece made in c.1570 by Mary Queen of Scots (Victoria and Albert Museum, London) in which the letters of the monogram, surrounded by thistles and a crown and placed within an octogram, can be made to spell out MARY STVART.

Anguissola's monogram does recall such embroidered works by reason of the flowers situated around her letters, although they, as well as the monogram and
inscription, are meant to be made of metal, possibly bronze. The greener center bears a closer visual resemblance to tapestries. Anguissola's monogram has never been definitively solved, and even the actual letters, and the language to which they belong, are under constant question. The possible letters include: A, C, E, I, K, L, M, R, Y, and U or V. The possible presence of the "K" and "Y" suggest that the monogram is not in Italian, as these letters did not begin to appear in Anguissola's native language until recent times. As the self-portrait was meant to be worn, it is also possible that the inscription was meant to be read upside down or, with the reference to the mirror, seen through a reflection. Letters seen when the monogram is upside down include: A, C, D, I, L, V and Y. Those that appear in a reflection are: A, L, M and V. In both of these cases, we find ourselves with leftover lines. Interpretation of the meaning of the monogram seen "right way around" leads to the same problem, however. The disk that Anguissola holds is odd not only because of what it bears, but also because of its presence in itself. Such a disk held by a sitter was quite unusual in portraits and self-portraits at this time. Because it is made of bronze, one can perhaps link it to metal mirrors. Its round shape also recalls in particular that of convex mirrors. It could also have been meant to represent a shield, which along with the mirror is one of Prudentia's attributes. One could therefore suggest that this disk is a cautious and indirect visual reminder of mirrors and of their significance for female artists.

Fontana's Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maidservant

Another reference to a mirror in a signature can be found in Fontana's Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maidservant. This work was important not only because of its commemorative aspect, but also because it was to be used as a document during negotiations for her wedding. As with other wedding portraits, it took the form of a contract, stating that "my affairs will go as it stands above", to quote the inscription on Dürer's own wedding self-portrait of 1493, Self-Portrait with Eryngium. The work was to serve as a sort of mirror to reality, one could say. This type of document and the use of mirrors to certify truth can be seen in van Eyck's Arnolfini Double Portrait. There is a twist in Fontana's work, as she is at once subject, artist, and witness. Also, the mirror is not shown here but mentioned in the inscription: LAVINIA VIRGO PROSPERI FONTANAEE FILIA / EX SPECULO IMAGINEM / ORIS SUI EXPRESSIT ANNO /
MDLXXVII (Lavinia, maiden daughter of Prospero Fontana, depicted herself from a mirror in the year 1577). The signature is in large letters, as if she wanted to be certain that her words would be seen. This document shows some basic yet important elements that would have been taken into consideration during the wedding negotiation.

As with other female wedding portraits, an important aspect is her looks and riches. Interestingly, she has not shown herself as matching the ideals of female beauty as found in art, but as she more or less truly appeared. This was to her advantage, as Severo and his family believed in the sixteenth century Italian saying that the ideal bride was neither too ugly nor too beautiful: an ugly wife would be too unpleasant to look at, while a beautiful one would be too vain and therefore prone to flirting and disloyalty.\(^{347}\) That she resembled herself in her self-portrait would also have helped support the validity of her painting as a document that showed the truth. For her wealth, she shows both her talents in music and painting, and indeed her education in general, which were to be part of her dowry. The work itself served to prove that her painting talents were real, and the inscription assured the viewer that she truly made it herself. She also shows her wealth through her clothing and the presence of a maidservant. The maidservant serves as a chaperone, and, with the symbolism of the cembaldo/virginal, visually helps to identify Fontana as a virtuous maiden. Indeed, another important part of her signature is her self-identification as an unmarried woman and, importantly for a bride, as a virgin. The reference to her virginity and to mirrors also made reference to the maiden artist Marcia.\(^{348}\) Being associated to this well-known artist would have helped Fontana to justify her painterly activity by placing her in a long, respected tradition of female artists, and would almost serve as a promise that her art would, as it did for Marcia, bring fame and fortune.

*The Tondo*

The reference to mirrors can also be made through the shape of the work. Tondo formats had a particular significance when used for self-portraits, as they showed what the artist saw in the mirror when making the work. An illusion is therefore created. For women, this visual representation of a mirror was somewhat safer, as it did not directly show them gazing in a mirror. The first autonomous self-portrait in a tondo was Parmigianino's self-portrait of 1524-25, with the round format being used before him.
mostly for religious paintings.\textsuperscript{349} He seems to be the only artist that showed the distortion of the mirror, however, and one can imagine that most people thought not to benefit by showing themselves deformed. Amongst female self-portraits in tondo format, we find Anguissola's \textit{Self-Portrait} of 1558 (Institut Néerlandais, Paris). Like the c.1556 medallion \textit{Self-Portrait}, it is a miniature, and indeed, both works bear a great resemblance.\textsuperscript{350} In it Anguissola wears her V-neck dress of the time. There is a slight difference with the maroon sleeves, however; the double edging at the shoulders, one black and one maroon, resembles those worn in self-portraits of the mid 1550s. One may think that Anguissola was still using her old sleeves with a new dress, perhaps even not yet having obtained those with the large shoulders.\textsuperscript{351}

\textit{Peeters and Her Still Lifes}

Like Fontana, Clara Peeters used references to mirrors in some of her work to, in part, give them a document-like aspect.\textsuperscript{352} Not much about Clara Peeters (born 1594(?), Antwerp(?)) – died after 1657, Antwerp(?)) is known, and much of what is suspected cannot be proven. The only certain records of her are her paintings. Happily, her works are often signed and dated, as was common with Netherlandish artists at this time: her earliest painting is from 1607, and the latest is from 1657. It is possible that she was the Clara Peeters who was the second daughter of Jan Peeters, and so would have been born in 1594 in Antwerp. Because of her style of painting, her genre, and the objects in her still lifes (including a particular knife), it does seem quite possible that she was from Antwerp, or at least practiced her art there.\textsuperscript{353} Her name cannot be found in any of the surviving records of the Guild of Saint Luke in Antwerp, either as a pupil or master, and none of the many Peeters that are recorded there seem to be related to her. Like the Anguissolas and Judith Leyster, she may therefore not have been from an artistic family.\textsuperscript{354} There seems to be no mention of her in any written works during her life-time. However, Peeters was certainly a pioneer of still lifes, and she seems to have had much influence on the development of the genre not only in Antwerp but throughout Western Europe. She was well known, and seems to have had rich patrons. The four panels made as a set in 1611 that are now at the Museo del Prado, Madrid, for example, help to show her success; their relatively large size and number indicate that they would have been commissioned by someone who was wealthy.
The suggested birth date of 1594 means that Peeters would have been about fourteen years old when she would have completed her first known work. Because it is very good both technically and conceptually, it is possible that she was born at an earlier date. The images we see of her in her work show a young woman, however, and it is possible that she was simply a genius. That she was such a leader in the genre of still life in itself shows that she was quite intelligent and imaginative, and so it is possible that she also had mastery of technique from an early age. However, she probably gained this technical ability with the help not only of a teacher but, if she was so young, of a very good teacher. It has been suggested that she was the pupil of Osias Beert, partly by reason of stylistic, thematic and compositional similarities, but also because they shared an interest in reflections. We know through guild records that he had at least one pupil in 1596, and it is possible that he would have subsequently taken at least another one. Peeters may have been taken on as an apprentice proper, or "simply" as a student, much as the Anguissola sisters had been by Campi. Peeters was also at the right place at the right time for her genre of painting, as Antwerp had been the artistic capital of the Netherlands for some time, and so contained patrons, ideas, and talent.

Like other female artists before her, Peeters never showed herself gazing into a mirror. Her references are visual rather than textual, and in some cases recall self-portraits in a tondo. In many works, Peeters shows herself reflected on glass or metal objects in her still lifes. For example, her self-image can be found in two of the four panels of 1611: in Still Life with Fish, Peeters is reflected on the stoneware jug, while in Still Life with Flowers, a Goblet, Dried Fruit and Pretzels (figure 38), we see her reflected both on several of the golden goblet's knobs and at a few places on the pewter jug. She was only about seventeen when she made these panels, and their quality is amazing for her age. Peeters's reflection could also be found in other still lifes made at this time, including Still Life of Fruit and Flowers (after 1608-09, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) and the 1612 Still Life with a Vase of Flowers, Goblets and Shells (Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle) (figure 39). In some, such as Still Life with Flowers, a Goblet, Dried Fruit and Pretzels and Still Life with a Vase of Flowers, Goblets and Shells, we see that Peeters is sitting at her easel and, in the later one, also holding paintbrushes and a palette. Other elements around her are also reflected, including the window or skylight.
These small self-portraits served as a second, visual signature. As they could only be seen upon close examination of the work, they showed her technical achievement. We see her skill particularly in the self-portraits containing more than one reflection, as one of the difficulties to paint such a work would be in not moving, so that the reflections would line up correctly. In the 1612 self-portrait, for example, we see her reflected completely in at least eight knobs on the goblet, and partially in many of the others. Other than providing a visual signature and description of herself, as well as showing her artistic genius, these reflections may also have been meant to symbolize mortality. If so, then they would have fitted perfectly within the context of the vanitas still lifes. Vanitas were to convey the idea of the transience of life, and so while they were all in all secular paintings, they did have religious overtones. Costly objects would be shown to remind the viewer that these would become irrelevant upon their death. Other elements, elements that can be seen in some of Peeters still lifes, would refer to death, including blooms that are beginning to fade. Like these, Peeters's ghostly images would be connected to the inevitability of death. They also seem to have been connected to the concept that self-knowledge obtained through observation of the self in a mirror brings acceptance of mortality.\(^{357}\)

Although this ingenious way of including a self-portrait in a still life became common as the first half of the seventeenth century progressed, there is only one artist that precedes Peeters in doing this.\(^ {358}\) This was the unknown artist of the Still Life of 1538 (Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo).\(^ {359}\) Peeters may quite possibly have been responsible for the interest in the seventeenth century in self-portraits in this genre, especially since they are present in so many of her works.\(^ {360}\) Artists had included their reflection in works of other genres, however. Fellow Flemish artist van Eyck had painted a small reflection of himself in the armor of Saint-George in Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele (1434-36, Het Groeninge Museum, Bruges) in the early fifteenth century.\(^ {361}\) As we have seen, this same artist also showed himself in the convex mirror shown in the Arnolfini Double Portrait. Because of its inclusion in Vasari's Lives, it is probable that she was influenced by Parmigianino's Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror. Peeters's slightly warped image in the golden goblets' knobs, which look like convex mirrors, and other rounded surfaces bring to mind Parmigianino's own distorted self-image. The reflected skylight in Peeters's still lifes recall the one seen in Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror and, to a point,
the window in the *Arnolfini Double Portrait*. Another possible influence may have been Beert, whether he was her teacher or if she simply knew of him in Antwerp. While there are no reflections of himself in his works, he was very interested in the reflection of light on surfaces, especially the translucent properties of things such as berries, oysters and, perhaps most importantly for Peeters's work, glass. It is also possible that Peeters came up with the idea of showing her reflection on her own; she was, after all, painting in minute detail the objects in front of her, and so would have seen her own reflection in them. She may also have been inspired by her own name, as "Clara" derives from the Latin "claritas" ("clarity"), a word connected to mirrors.  

Peeters did show herself in the presence of a mirror in one work, *Self-Portrait with a Still Life* (1610-1620, Philips International Auctioneers and Valueurs, London) (figure 40). It is hung on the wall behind her and the table on which objects are strewn, placed slightly off center. Peeters does not gaze at it, however, and even has her back turned to it. This mirror is a round, convex one, which here seems odd: while it may have been understandable that sixteenth century artists still used such mirrors, it is strange that in the early seventeenth, Peeters shows herself next to this "old technology." The choice of mirror, however, might be explained by several factors. It may have been seen as an antiquity that could be placed in her collection of peculiar objects. Because of its shape and function, it could also have been seen as making a reference to an eye, and therefore to the sense of sight that is so important for an artist. Indeed, Peeters's eyes are not far from the mirror, and her right hand, holding a pencil, is situated just under it. The mirror's observational function and round, convex form are not unlike those of the magnifying glass which she holds in her other hand. As an artistic tool, the mirror shows her artistic/intellectual studying, including that of the self needed for this self-portrait, and helps to indicate that this room may be her studio. Indeed, we see not only the reflection of Peeters's back and of the table, but also that of a skylight; it looks like the skylight reflected in her still lifes, further hinting that here she is indeed in her studio. Also, the distortion of the image in a convex mirror reminds the viewer of the slightly skewed self-portraits found in some of Peeters's still lifes, especially those on rounded objects such as the knobs of the goblet placed here on the table.
New Interests in Female Self-Portraiture

Portrait Collections of Famous People

During the Renaissance and continuing in Baroque times, more and more people began gathering their own art collections. Some would specialize in a specific genre or theme. These collections were usually private, and their high cost meant that they were mainly owned by nobles and others who had enough money to afford them. Having an art collection became a mark of distinction, education, and good taste. Rulers in particular would hire a specialist to help them find both existing works and artists from which to commission new ones. The idea of the art connoisseur was still rather new, having emerged only sometime in the fifteenth century. One kind of collection that became popular was that which contained portraits of famous and virtuous people of the past and present. In a way, such collections were the visual equivalent of Boccaccio's Concerning Famous Women or Vasari's Lives, as they grouped together various important people which the audience was supposed to emulate. Such collections were not new, and of course had ancient precedents: Pliny, for example, had stated that Marcus Varrius had a collection of seven hundred images of illustrious men.

It was Paolo Giovio, however, who was the cause of great interest in this sort of collection during the second half of the sixteenth century, when many people wanted to emulate his collection in both theme and size. This humanist cleric had begun his collection of portraits of famous people in the 1520s, and by 1543 he had gathered so many works that he had to build a villa to house them. A major boost to this collecting fad happened in 1575, when engraved copies of many of the works in his collection were published. Giovio's collection included portraits of rulers, clerics, soldiers, philosophers, and other people from Antiquity to the present day. What is interesting is that it is in the sixteenth century that we can see that the changing status of some groups meant that many of these collections came to include not only portraits of rulers, nobles, clergy members and such, but also, amongst others, scholars and artists. Collections of self-portraits in particular demonstrate this change, and those who collected this genre included various members of the de'Medici family, and Charles I of England. Some were interested in collecting female self-portraits. Indeed, what was collected in many cases was the author of the portraits as well as their sitter.
Female Artists as Collectable Beauties

Beautiful women were considered to be marvels of nature, but beautiful paintings of beautiful women were seen as marvels of art made by (male) artists. This view is related to the legend of Zeuxis, one of the great artists from Antiquity. To paint a perfect Helen of Troy, Zeuxis was said to have gathered various models, choosing from them the one with the most perfect ears, another with a perfect nose, and so forth, and then assembled the various body parts for his work. By creating an image of the perfect woman, Zeuxis was seen as accomplishing what nature could not.366 Because of the usual division in art by which women were seen as models at least partly created by male artists, female self-portraits were seen as intriguing, even exotic. In these works, the woman was both sitter and artist, and so created herself.

Anibale Caro in his December 23, 1558 letter to the Anguissolas said that a female self-portrait was two marvels, the first being the image of a beautiful woman, and the second being the woman artist.367 Self-portraits by women also seem to have been perceived as grouping three marvels: a beautiful painting of a beautiful woman by a beautiful female artist. In these images, the separation between maker, model, and work tend to collapse. One has to ask if all three components of the painting were seen as equal, or if, for example, the model aspect was more important than the artist aspect when viewing the sitter.368 A famous painting of a famous person by a famous person gathered three collectables in one and could make a work more valuable. This added value was not always a monetary one, but was still one that serious collectors wanted.369 Female self-portraits also had rarity of value, as even if women tended to produce more of these works, they were still relatively few in real numbers. Autonomous female self-portraiture had only been in existence since the late 1540s, and autonomous self-portraiture in general was also still relatively new.

Many women were aware of the collectability of their self-portraits and so used them for self-promotion. Indeed, they not only catered to the market, but helped create it. They would send them as gifts to prospective patrons, including art collectors and various high-ranking individuals, and used any advantage that they might have.370 Indeed, it is important to remember that one of the main roles of self-portraiture since its possible
beginning with van Eyck is self-promotion. Of the thirteen or so self-portraits known or suspected to be by Sofonisba Anguissola, for example, about seven were made during the 1550s, probably for self-promotion. Anguissola's visible young age and female sex, coupled with the respectable, intellectual image she created for herself in her works, showed in her self-portraits that she was both a proper lady and a female genius. Her self-portraits and work in general quickly became very collectable, and by 1555 she began to have an international reputation. Some people began to contact her specifically to commission her self-portrait. Before she was invited to Spain by Philip II, her work had been sent to or requested by members of the d'Este, Farnese, de'Medici, and Borghese families, as well as to Pope Julius III and to the Archdeacon of Piacenza Cathedral. Scholars who collected her work included Ciacon, as well as Orsini, who had one of her self-portraits at a keyboard; The Chess Game; and the two sketches she had sent to Michelangelo, Old Woman and Young Girl Studying the Alphabet (c. 1545, Uffizi Gallery, Florence) and Asdrubale Bitten by a Crayfish (before 1559, Museo di Capodimonte, Naples).

Fontana, Scholars, and the Self-Portrait in the Studiolo

Fontana is one who certainly made a name for herself by catering to the portrait collection market. Around 1575, when Fontana was only beginning her career, the industry for portraits of scholars began in full. This seems to have been motivated not only by art collections, but also because in an era when photographs of the author were not included on the book cover, people were interested in the appearance of the intellectuals whose works they read. Even scholars were interested in each other's physiognomy, mannerisms, and expressions. Some would send each other their portraits, while others included a physical description of themselves in their text. Once again, this interest seems to have been connected to the belief that the body is the mirror of the soul. Amongst other places, portraiture became quite important at the University of Bologna, which in the sixteenth century was not only one of the oldest Western universities, but also, with over eighty professors, one of the largest in Italy. Scholars had been depicted there for centuries, though never in such an intense way. These previous works, however, provided iconography for portraits of the sixteenth century. The image of the scholar consulting a book, for example, came from Bolognese tombs of intellectuals dating as far back as the
thirteenth century. This university was an important source of both collectors and collectees, and a hotbed for the topic.

From about 1578 to 1587, Fontana became the portrait painter of choice for and of Bolognese intellectuals. While only about ten of these paintings are still extant, many more were made. While the market was less profitable than that of the Bolognese noblewomen which she would later cater to, scholars and others interested in these portraits were usually from rich families, and because of their wide-spread connections, they were good for gaining an international reputation. At least on some levels, she was also able to enter intellectual circles, and she became life-long friends with important figures such as the naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi and the poet Giulio Cesare Croce. One of the reasons she found herself in this position may have been through her father, who himself counted some scholars amongst his friends and patrons. Fontana's technical skills were also praised, in particular her ability to depict fabrics, for most scholars wanted their garments, including academic robes, to be carefully shown. Intellectuals were also interested in posing for a female artist and owning a work by one because of the novelty value and the connections to classical female artists. For example, when Carlo Sigonio wrote to his fellow humanist Fluvio Orsini on November 1579, he asked him not to tell anyone that the portrait of himself that he was sending to him was by Fontana, as he would be perceived as vain. Sigonio wrote again the following month to make sure that the work had arrived, his concern only so great because of its artist.

Another intellectual who was interested in Fontana's work was Alfonso Ciacon, a Spanish prelate and antiquitarian who was gathering a collection of portraits of famous people. When he wrote to her on October 17, 1578, Fontana had already made three portraits of scholars for him, those of Sigonio, Alessandro Aquilino, and Bocca di Ferror, and he now wanted more. These works were also to be copied in print form. Ciacon also wanted Fontana's self-portrait. His reason for asking her for such a work was probably more because of her skill as a female painter than because of what artistic reputation she then had. After all, he says that he would "give you glory which you still do not have." He also hinted that he was doing her a favor, one that was in part payment for
the works she had painted for him. Fontana accepted the offer, and sometime after a letter to him written on May 3, 1579, she sent him her Self-Portrait in the Studiolo.

What is very striking in this work is that she presented herself much in the same manner as that of the intellectuals she painted. In clothing, her self-portrait much resembles the Portrait of Senator Orsini which was possibly made that same year (figure 29). While Bolognese nobles' and scholars' clothes could be made from expensive cloth, they were usually not of the bright reds and blues seen here. Likewise, Fontana wears a grayish violet dress which is richly embroidered, and wide slashed sleeves of white, purple, blue, and red. Her lacy ruff is larger than that of the 1577 wedding portrait. She has jewelry in her hair, which is pulled up in a way resembling her previous self-portraits. Once again, there is a coral knot, here attaching a large gold cross to her pearl necklace. This crucifix shows her as a pious Christian woman, which was important in post-Tridentine Bologna. As the print copies were going to be paid for by Archduke Ferdinand, a Dominican who was following the post-Tridentine reforms, she may have seen it as additionally important to show herself with a cross. Like her scholars, Fontana is seated at a desk with some paper-related object in front of her. Instead of a book or a letter, however, she has blank pages, and is ready to draw or write. However, it is clear that she is taking part in that most highly regarded process of thinking. As usual, the desk has more than one object. Here, there are also two Roman statuettes, each of a different sex and showing two opposite positions. One is a crouching woman, probably Venus, while the other is a standing man, possibly Mercury or Apollo. On the wall behind her is a shelf with various body parts from antique statues. The first vertical row of compartments contains busts, while the second holds a hand, a torso, and a foot. The other compartments seem to be empty. This collection demonstrates her humanist/artistic interest in Antiquity and probably belongs to her father. Malvasia says that Prospero let his apprentice Alessandro Tiarini access his "secret room", meaning his studiolo. As Fontana learned painting from her father and stayed in his house until his death, she would probably have had access to it. Since this self-portrait was sent to an antiquarian, she may have felt it especially important to show herself with these objects.
These statuettes and statue fragments show also how Fontana learned anatomy in a proper way for women: instead of drawing from nude models, she drew from casts.\textsuperscript{398} While this was not as advanced a way of learning than that of working from a living person, it was still a step up from copying nudes from paintings. By being next to nude statues and statuettes, she measures herself and her work against that of male artists.\textsuperscript{399} With the nude male body being seen as the most perfect form and being so important in art at this time,\textsuperscript{400} it seems significant that the figure closest to her and in front of her is the nude Mercury or Apollo. In their portraits and self-portraits, artists with such a collection would sometimes be shown next to it. In particular, this work recalls the engraved Portrait of Bandinelli by Niccolò della Casa of c.1540-45 (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.) (figure 30). Unlike Fontana, however, these artists are usually situated in their workshop or even an unidentified space rather than a studiolo. Her interest in and knowledge of Antiquity is shown moreover through her signature, in which she used not only the word \textit{faciat}, but also an ancient way of writing the number nine in Roman numerals, "VIII" instead of "IX."\textsuperscript{401} The signature is placed on the side of the desk, just under the pages, the words helping conceptually to demonstrate the activity that she will be doing and the quality that her work will have.\textsuperscript{402}

Fontana seems to have been well learned, and some have even suggested that she was one of the most educated women of her time.\textsuperscript{403} She was an excellent artist, seems to have played music, showed an interest in Antiquity, and was well-read. Her writing was also very good, as Severo Zappi himself had remarked to his wife in 1577.\textsuperscript{404} It is possible that Fontana may have gone to the University of Bologna, especially since that institution had a long history of accepting women. Whether she attended or not cannot be certain, however, as there are no existing records listing students at this time.\textsuperscript{405} It has been suggested that she received a doctorate only one year after this self-image showing her as a scholar was made.\textsuperscript{406} This self-portrait may therefore have been made in this context, and could explain even further the construction of her image as a scholar.

The image Fontana constructed for herself in this work may also have been influenced by the knowledge that it was to be placed next to a self-portrait by Anguissola. It is unknown which of Anguissola's paintings was in Ciacon's collection. As Fontana had
friends, including Fluvio, who knew Ciacon and so may have had access to his collection, it is possible that she knew or suspected the identity of this work. If she thought that Anguissola was shown richly dressed at her easel, it is possible that Fontana chose to show herself at work as a scholar-artist as a way to outdo her. Indeed, it is interesting that the other 1579 self-portrait by Fontana shows her in such a way.\textsuperscript{407}

This work is a miniature on copper. In his letter, Ciacon specified the size he wants for Fontana's self-portrait... more or less. He asked for "a little portrait of yourself of the size of one of those three [already sent, as] to make a life-size portrait." If we use the Portrait of Carlo Sigonio (1579, Museo Civico, Modena) as an example, we can determine that the size wanted was roughly a meter by a meter.\textsuperscript{408} We can therefore guess that the words "a little portrait" was meant as an expression along the lines of "a little something", and was a polite way to ask for her self-portrait. Fontana, however, seemed to decide to take somewhat humorously to the extreme the mention of "a little something".\textsuperscript{409}

The resulting miniature, with its many details, is a great technical achievement. Fontana's skill is further made apparent by her use of a tondo, a difficult format to paint upon.\textsuperscript{410} She also decided to use copper, a material which increased the value of her work, in part because of its rarity.\textsuperscript{411} Fontana may have chosen this support because of its longevity; unlike wood, the paint can be applied in thin layers, which reduces craquelure, and it does not warp.

There is indeed a reference in Ciacon's letter saying that her self-portrait in his collection would keep her memory for years to come, and she may have wanted to make sure that this was indeed so. Copper was also preferable to panels because less preparation was needed, and because the surface was both smooth and tended to have a jewel-like finish. As of the sixteenth century, copper was used as a support in Italy for both religious works and portraits. Painting on copper was a noteworthy practice, and in the last quarter of that century, its popularity reached new peaks. This was particularly true in Bologna, were copper paintings were popular gifts for newly novicated nuns and brides; the shiny, mystical appearance of such works was seen as encouraging piety. As Fontana was one of the first Bolognese painters to paint on copper, this may have played as well into her choice of support for her self-portrait. She used copper mostly for her religious works,
another genre that had contributed to her success. She may also have decided to use copper in reference in the letter to the copper plates that would be used to make the engraved version of her self-portrait.

Collectable Oddities

Female Artists as Freaks

People with various physical and mental deformities have constituted a subject that has been of interest since at least Antiquity. In the Middle Ages, they were mostly seen as bad omens and the result of a sinful society. During the Renaissance, and continuing in the Baroque period, these people came to be seen in a less harsh way. Dwarves, hunchbacks, clubfeet, and others were invited to courts, where they served, amongst other things, as a status symbol for the ruler. There was also an interest in portraits of "freaks". In these, they were portrayed either in real life or as part of the popular theme of "the world turned upside down", in which they were portrayed as the norm. In a way, the "world turned upside down" was the flipside of the age of the marvelous as things were shown as unusual or even fabulous, but here with more negative connotations.

Interestingly, this situation parallels on some points that of female artists, who themselves were considered a type of "freak." During Antiquity, philosophers such as Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle developed a binary system in which every element in the world was divided into pairs of opposites. One side was associated with a positive polarity, and included items such as man, right, single, straight, light, and good. The other side grouped elements of a negative polarity such as woman, left, plural, curved, darkness, and evil. This system continued during the Middle Ages, and it was not until the Renaissance that anyone truly questioned it. Plutarch was an exception, however, as he had pointed out in his *Mulierum Virtutis* that women who could in some ways act like men would constitute a discrepancy in the binary system. He identified them as exceptions and as errors of nature, albeit positive ones. In 1580, Jacopo Zabarella further added to this idea by saying in his *Tabulae Logicae* that the binary system had a third/intermediary category. Two years later, Torquato Tasso continued the idea in his *Discorso della virtu femminile e donesca* (*Treatise on Feminine and Womanly Virtue*, 1582). Like Zabarella, he stated that some elements, including "manly" women, fitted in between the two poles.
Like Plutarch, he saw these as discrepancies, although as natural exceptions rather than mistakes of nature; "manly" women and other elements in the gray area were therefore "freaks" that were meant to exist.

A "manly" woman was called by Tasso a womanly woman (donna donescà), as opposed to the regular, feminine woman (donna femminile). By this time, there were so many recognized and respected womanly women, including female artists, that their existence was difficult to ignore. Like other writers, however, Tasso did not totally destroy the binary system, but instead chose to add to it. While there was no difference made between gender and sex at this time, this idea still concentrates more on biological differences than on behavioral ones. Authors therefore compared women with "manly" characteristics to hermaphrodites, as did Paolo Pino in his Dialogo di pittura of 1541. Even if this comparison may have been well-meaning, such comments could still be uncomfortable for women because hermaphrodites were generally seen as questionable; it could lead people to not consider them as "real" women, something which was essential at the time in order to be acceptable. Others, in particular Castiglione, identified womanly women as the real women; instead of placing them in a third or intermediate category, they changed the definition of what was "woman" as to make them the norm. The "manly" practice of painting was, for example, made essential for the ideal lady. Womanly women were woman-like in all that was important, such as in matters of virtue, mannerisms, and appearance. They were man-like in some specific, key ways that were mostly linked to intelligence and talent. They were therefore perfect women with a few, additional male characteristics. In the perceived hierarchy of the world, where men were perceived as ranking above women, these characteristics enabled womanly women to go up a step and be positioned more with the men. As they did not act like deviants and were marvels of nature, their promotion came without breaking the god-given order of things.

Men that acted in any way like women, however, were in no way praiseworthy, as their shameful behavior brought them down a rank. Instead, particularly admirable men were those who went above their station to be godly. Womanly women were usually seen as being quite praiseworthy. Even Plutarch, who had claimed that they were mistakes, did not say that they were evil. Instead, he claimed that they were the virtuous women.
Subsequent authors also agreed that womanly women had gone beyond being "mere" women. Carlo Ridolfi, for example, when speaking of Robusti, said that womanliness was the true ornament of femininity.\textsuperscript{418}

The virtuosa was one kind of womanly woman. By the start of the seventeenth century, however, only ten women had been identified as virtuosas.\textsuperscript{419} The term, meaning a talented woman in the fine arts, seems to have appeared around the middle of the sixteenth century in Italy. Its definition was slightly less fixed than that of the virtuoso, although there were some basic criteria. Like their male counterparts, virtuosas were seen as having their superb artistic talents both because of training and because it was given to them by God/nature. Virtuosas were usually praised for their beauty, which in a way counterbalanced their "manly" artistic abilities and reassured their public that they were "normal."\textsuperscript{420} As it was believed that the state of the mind shaped the body, that female artists were usually presented as beautiful helped to show that they were not evil abnormalities but a marvel of nature. This proved to be especially important for female self-portraiture, as we shall see. It is also important to remember that at this time, complimenting a woman on her looks was quite common and was even a way to be polite.\textsuperscript{421} It is also important to note that male artists could also be complimented on their beauty. For example, in his Lives, Vasari praised Parmigianino for having a face and aspect full of grace, and said that his angelic appearance made his Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror look divine.\textsuperscript{422}

Beautiful female artists were therefore, in a way, on the other end of the "freak" spectrum. Like people with physical deformities, female artists such as Anguissola and Teerlinc were collected at court. One has to remember however, that male artists, though not "freakish" in body/mind like female artists, were also chosen for their rarity of talent and other qualities judged peculiar. Indeed, one could debate that, in a way, there was not much difference between the hunchbacks and dwarves found at court and the "odd" scholars, musicians, and poets that had also been gathered there. All of these were there to amuse the ruler and heighten the level of prestige of his or her court.
The idea of women artists as marvelous freaks continued in the seventeenth century. Judith Leytser and Maria de Grebber, as female artists, were still identified as rare creatures in the 1628 history of Haarlem by Samuel van Ampzing, *Beschrijvinge ende Lof der stad Haerlem in Holland* (Description and Praise of the City of Haarlem in Holland). These two were again wrongly mentioned as the only two female painters in that city in 1648 by Theodorus Schrevelius in *Harlemias, Ofte, om beter te seggen, De eerste stichtinghe der Stadt Haerlem* (*Harlemias, or, That Is to Say, the First Foundation of the Town of Haarlem*). This pairing resembles the grouping together of classical female artists made by most authors. As in the Renaissance, Baroque female artists were used as proof of the overabundant talent of the city. As they were by then more numerous, female artists began to be seen as less rare and hence more as competition. Another "freak" at this time was Clara Peeters, who presented herself as a strange and wondrous thing.

*Uncommon Objects, Wunderkammers, and Peeters's Still Lifes*

Related to the fascination in rare and odd people was the interest in rare and odd objects. Collections of unusual objects were popular in the Netherlands, particularly the one known as a *Wunderkammer* ("room of wonders"). The marvelous, rare, and expensive objects in a *Wunderkammer* included local items such as jewelry and well-made gilded goblets, as well as foreign goods such as the fine porcelain and exotic shells that would have been brought to Western Europe by the Dutch West Indies Company. Many of these same items came to be found in still life painting, including those by Peeters.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, autonomous still lifes were only just beginning to appear in Western Europe. Like self-portraiture, still life became its own genre in the Renaissance after being part of other types of work, in this case religious paintings in particular. Peeters was the first artist to specialize only in still lifes. By the time she had completed her first work, only about a dozen independent still lifes had been produced. About five of these were food related, and the others were flower pieces showing a single vase of flowers on a table. While Peeters did do a few flower pieces during her career, most of her works were breakfast or banquet pieces which, like fish and game pieces, she pioneered. Because flower pieces were fairly new, the few that Peeters painted did help in the overall development of this theme. Amongst other things, she
brought the point of view of the viewer lower than was at first the norm. Peeters was far from the only female artist that made innovations or at least headway in this genre. While most still life artists at this time were men, painting such works was still seen as a proper activity for women. This acceptability may have been at least in part because still lifes did not require a knowledge of human anatomy as did portrait, religious and history paintings, and that these works could be completed alone in a room rather than in a crowded workshop. Still life painting was also seen as a lower genre. Furthermore, still lifes often involved costly objects, ranging from jewelry to rare blooms as props, and so these paintings presented the artist and her family as being well-off. In a way, this recalls Fontana's Self-Portrait in the Studiolo; as with her classical sculptures, still life objects could be part of an admirable collection.

The emergence of still lifes as an autonomous genre seems to have been inspired in part by collections of rare objects. In a way, they were smaller and cheaper Wunderkammers, and this connection seems to have been wanted. Paradoxically, because still lifes were well crafted, expensive, and still rare in the early seventeenth century, they came to be included in collections such as Wunderkammers. Indeed, as a genre, still lifes were already worth more than landscape paintings. Part of the high cost was to cover expenses related to their production. Of all, the flower pieces were the most expensive, perhaps because one had to cut expensive flowers and the blooms lasted only long enough to create the painting. As for expensive objects, they could be reused, but one still needed to purchase them, and being able to "rotate the stock" would probably have been ideal. Peeters indeed used the same objects in many of her works, with some often serving as trademarks. As these objects included the gilt goblets that bore her reflection, a knife bearing her name and, in even her earliest work, a P-shaped pastry, they could also be self referential. In some of her still lifes, including her masterpiece, the Still Life with a Vase of Flowers, Goblets and Shells of 1612, Peeters combined both expensive and inexpensive items. The shells, for example, are in themselves common objects, but as they are from Asia and the Caribbean, they are exotic. Also, in the vase are not only expensive flowers such as the tulips and checkered fritillary which were often found in Wunderkammers, but also common wildflowers. The other objects here are
costly, and include two finely made golden goblets, a German stoneware cream vase, a Chinese celadon bowl, gold coins, and a golden chain.\textsuperscript{441}

As in still lifes by other artists, and indeed as in other still lifes by Peeters, the collectable objects are positioned here as to be shown in the best possible way. Natural objects are also placed next to man-made ones to show both the creative skills of God and of humans: the blooms in the vase are compared to the flower pattern on it, and the thinness of the Chinese celadon bowl is similar to that of the shells.\textsuperscript{442} There is also the idea that the cultivated flowers bring together in the same object – the vase – the idea of natural and man-made. The painting, itself artificial, was a sort of record for both types of objects. Peeters's works therefore showed collectable items, and her works themselves were collectable not only because of the objects shown, but also because of the rarity of the genre, because of the new topos she explored, because of the technical skill, and because it was painted by a young female genius. The inclusion of her self-portrait in this and other works, including \textit{Still Life with Flowers, a Goblet, Dried Fruit and Pretzels} of 1611, is also important. These unique reflections showed skill and invention, and would have made her work even more collectable. As with other female self-portraits, there is here the idea of having a beautiful work, of (or at least, with) a beautiful woman, and by a beautiful artist. By showing herself amongst collectable objects, especially reflected on expensive ones, she indicates that she too is rare and collectable. For example, in the 1611 and 1612 works, she is reflected on the goblet (the one to our right in the later work), which is the most marvelous object shown. That her reflection is on it makes a connection between its value and her own; she too is a rare thing, a marvel. Her ghostly image makes some parallels, moreover, to the idea of the transience of life, since, like the flowers, her beauty will fade and she will one day die. Peeters also shows a similarity between herself and the objects she displays in that she encompasses man-made and natural creations: an artist's talent, as we have seen, was considered a rare and precious thing that was the result of both a natural, God-given talent, as well as a "man-made" training.\textsuperscript{443}

These ideas regarding her self-image are carried even further in \textit{Self-Portrait with Still Life} of the early 1610s.\textsuperscript{444} The objects of the still life laid out on the table to our right are some of the richer items that are commonly seen up to this time in her works,
including a salver, a gold goblet, silver and gold coins, a vase of flowers, the knife bearing her name, a black dish containing colorful foods (perhaps sweets), two dice, and jewelry, such as two rings and what appears to be two bracelets. To our left, dividing the picture plane almost perfectly in two is Peeters. She holds a magnifying glass and a pen, making it clear that she is the artist responsible for the still lifes in which all these trademark objects can be seen. Peeters shows herself as being something valuable, not unlike one of these objects found in her works. It is almost as if she is one of her rare and expensive objects: her red dress continues the red table cloth, and she is on the same plane as most of the objects. Her head is set at about the same height as the gilded goblet which reflected her image in Still Life with Flowers, a Goblet, Dried Fruit and Pretzels, and therefore recalls her technical success. That her self-image was incorporated on such an object in a way conceptually made her part of the object. Another aspect that links her to her objects is her jewelry, as the jewels on her bracelet and headband are shaped and colored like the flowers in the vase next to her. Interestingly, the jewelry she wears consists of gems and pearls, while those laying on the table are of gold. Her lace collar also contains a delicate floral pattern. Once again there is the idea of her natural and man-made talent, as well as that of her natural and, through the expensive clothing and jewelry, man-made beauty. Connected to this, there is the idea of the transience of life and of the fading of beauty.

Peeters does not look at us, nor at the still life. In a way, this makes her an object for our gaze, and one has to wonder if this was made consciously or not, as it links her to the objects displayed on the table for our viewing pleasure. The objects and clothing that indicate her financial success help represent her own value, and this may be a tongue in cheek way of making a statement regarding the way women were then perceived: as costly objects of beauty for display. In another way, however, she still affirms the fact that she is the artist, and she has a gaze; she even holds a pen as well as a magnifying glass, two objects related to her profession. The magnifying glass gives us the idea that her still lifes are almost scientific studies. We do not see any paper, but it may be hidden by her arms. This work recalls Renaissance ones where the artist did not wish to "debase" himself or herself by presenting themselves overtly with the tools needed for art making. In particular, and as already mentioned, she recalls Fontana's Self-Portrait in the Studiolo. An illusion is created by the lack of paper: it looks as if her skill in making life-like images is
so good that she has managed to drawn the objects on the table out of thin air. That she is not looking at us also shows her skill as it is very difficult to paint a self-portrait while looking away from the viewer, and to accomplish this one needs at least a few mirrors.

For women, the still life resembled self-portraiture in many ways. In both, there was the idea of display, of uniqueness, and of beauty. With the activity of art making seen by some as questionable for women, these were amongst the more acceptable genres for female artists. These women brought inventions and new ideas when still lifes and self-portraits were each only beginning to be developed. One should therefore not be surprised that some women, such as Peeters, decided to combine the two genres in one work. Yet the presence of this artist's multiple self-portraits in her still lifes, as well as her decision to make an autonomous self-portrait showing her at work, demonstrate how important self-portraiture was for female artists. Just as some objects in her still lifes, such as the knife, made reference to Peeters, the presence of her physical image in her paintings linked her to her work. They were a signature that could not be denied.

Interestingly, while her image helped promote her works by showing that these were made by a young genius as wondrous as they, the objects in her paintings helped justify her artistic activity; as with paintings by the Anguissola sisters, Fontana, Robusti and other female artists that we have seen, objects placed next to the image of Peeters in her works were used to prove that she was both a perfect woman and a perfect artist. These items show her wealth, her taste and, as in the case of the pen and magnifying glass, her education as well as her artistic and scientific interests. The small details and inventions also show her desire to prove herself as perfect on both these aspects.

We can see that for female artists, self-portraiture as a tool for self-promotion and for the negotiation between the idea of "artist" and that of "woman" was so valuable that it was used in other genres. While many of these artists tended to employ certain themes and objects in their self-portraits, these works could still be extremely diverse. They were flexible enough that they could be changed and utilized according to an artist's particular needs. Self-portraiture could therefore not only be used to show their own particular interests, position, family, teachers and friends, but could be adapted to fit within their
artistic specialty.
Conclusion

As we have seen, female self-portraiture occupied an important place in women's art. This is not only because of the number of self-portraits produced by female artists, but also because of the essential role these works played in the self-fashioning and, later, self-discovery of these artists. During medieval times, we see that women tended to leave their image in the manuscripts in which they worked. These non-autonomous self-portraits could be quite complex, and show that the artists wanted to communicate an important message about themselves to the viewer. This tendency by women to create ingenious self-portraits continued with autonomous self-portraiture during the sixteenth century. These works made their appearance during favorable changes in the art world: portraits were being made of women while they were alive, and showed them in a three-quarter pose; male autonomous self-portraiture had become popular during the start of the century; and women were becoming professional artists. Artists were also now differentiated from artisans. While female artists benefited from the rise of the artist, they were excluded from the art canon that was created. They did not try to contest the canon, and instead decided to work within, or with it. Self-portraiture helped them to negotiate the two elements of "woman" and "artist" that were "officially" perceived as opposites, by visually uniting them in the same work. Through the Renaissance activity of self-fashioning, they showed themselves in their self-portraits as both perfect women and perfect artists. They used references to sources that supported their artistic activity, such as tales of female artists from Antiquity, as well as the most important etiquette book in sixteenth-century Western Europe, Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*.

Despite their exclusion from the canon and their customary disappearance from art history until recent times, it is important to remember that female artists did not work in a small, lonely bubble. They managed to create important bodies of work and were involved in important innovations, whether as the inventor proper or as one of a number of artists interested in a new idea. These breakthroughs included new themes in self-portraiture. Some of these were adopted by their male counterparts (such as the self-portrait at the easel as oneself), while others remained, at least for some time, exclusive to women's art (such as the self-portrait with a familiar). Many female artists achieved incredible success, including being made court artist. This success was often demonstrated in their self-
portraits, and was used to show that they were perfect women and artists. For example, jewelry and rich clothes demonstrated that they had both a good sense of fashion and were successful enough in their profession to afford to buy or be given such riches. Whatever the period, female artists found allies, both men and women that were ready to help them as patrons, teachers, and friends. Recognition for this help could shape the construction of the self, as women decided to physically present themselves with these people (as in Anguissola's *Bernardino Campi Painting a Portrait of Sofonisba Anguissola*), or with written or visual references to them (such as in Anguissola's *Self-Portrait at Three-quarter Length*).

Female artists' relation to each other played an important place in the construction of their image and, indeed, of their identity. For women of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, it was important that they place themselves within a group of female artists consisting of both precedents and contemporaries which could help justify their own artistic activities. If they could not be part of the canon itself, they could at least be placed within a female artistic lineage, a group that seems to have been seen in some ways as an exception to the canon or functioning parallel to it.

Contemporaries could offer teaching and friendship, as well as stimulating healthy competition. This helped women, including Fontana and Lucia Anguissola, push self-portraiture further. Some female artists also placed themselves within the art world in general, making references to male artists. This can be found in Fontana's reference to Apelles in her signature, and Anguissola's image *Bernardino Campi Painting a Portrait of Sofonisba Anguissola*. Others in the earlier period studied here, tended to concentrate more on the idea that they and their work were rare. This perceived status meant that they were often seen as mostly harmless by their male counterparts. They also often catered to those interested in collections of rare and/or precious things. In some cases, female artists showed themselves in the same work as being both part of a group and unique. Peeters, for example, showed that she was an exceptional person worthy of a *Wunderkammer*, while also making references to the tradition of mirrors in female self-portraiture.
The mirror is one element that is often found in female self-portraiture. Like certain other objects or themes, these were used by women to help situate them in the female artistic lineage. The mirror was associated with female self-portraiture since Pliny the Elder's discussion of Iaia. Artists such as Anguissola, Fontana, and Peeters, for example, used verbal and visual references to the mirror in their self-portraits. They could be used in a show of ingenuity. Mirrors also connected female artists with truth, virginity, and reflection on the self. The references to sexuality and vanity that could be seen in some images of women by male artists were avoided in female self-portraiture as to not lead to any questioning of the artist's virtue.

Another element that is continuously seen in female self-portraiture is artistic materials. The subject of the self-portrait at the easel first appeared with van Hemessen, but the idea of showing a woman at work started with images of Iaia/Marcia and Timarete/Thamyris long before the Flemish artist's painting. The subject was also connected to The Book of the Courtier. One could even say that the image of the female artist at work was connected to a wider theme, that of knowledge. According to Castiglione, women were to be clever and educated. Female artists therefore also presented themselves in their self-portraits with books, letters, riddles, artifacts (such as statuettes), and musical instruments (particularly those with keyboards). Knowledge of languages, including Latin, was demonstrated through the artist's signature. Clothing could identify them as scholars.

In addition to Castiglione's work, many other written and oral sources were important in the construction of the self in female self-portraiture. This included the many authors, including Pliny the Elder, Boccaccio, and de Pisan, who wrote about female artists of Antiquity. Inspiration was drawn from the legend of Saint Luke drawing the Virgin.

One could say that the muse is an element that these works have in common in that female artists stayed away from creating images where they would be shown as inspired by an external force. In self-portraits at the easel, artists such as van Hemessen and Anguissola did not present themselves as Saint Luke being instructed/inspired by the
Virgin, even if they linked themselves to this legend. Likewise, women do not show themselves as being inspired by a muse. Slightly after the period studied in our second chapter, we begin to see female self-portraits where the artists are presented as muses, allegories, and various other personifications. In these, however, they do not seem to be inspiring anyone but themselves, thus demonstrating that female artists were their own creative force.

To conclude, one can say that a self-portrait is a small world in which its author can usually be found both conceptually and visually at its center. In it, the artist shows, explores and constructs his or her reality, both for the public or for his or herself. It is dynamic, and provides us with an insight into the artist's life and mind.
Images

Figure 1. Claricia of Augsburg, Self-Portrait on the Letter Q, c.1200, illumination in Saint Memin Psalter, W 26, folio 64, ink and tempera on vellum, 21.5 x 14.6 cm, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore.

Figure 2. Abbess Hilda, Abbess Hilda Offering the Gospel to St Walburga, 1020, presentation page in Abbess Hilda, Hilda Gospels, MS 1640, folio 6r, ink and colors on vellum, 29 x 14.2 cm, Hessische Landes- und Hochschul-Bibliothek, Darmstadt.

Figure 3. Artist unknown, Marcia, c.1402, illumination in Boccaccio, De cleres et nobles femmes, MS Fr. 12420, folio 101v, ink and tempera on vellum, N/A, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Figure 4. Artist unknown, Thamyris, c.1402, illumination in Boccaccio, De cleres et nobles femmes, MS Fr. 12420, folio 86r, ink and tempera on vellum, N/A, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
Figure 5. Jan van Eyck, *Man in a Red Turban*, 1433, oil on panel, 26 x 19.1 cm, The National Gallery, London.

Figure 6. Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait*, 1500, oil on panel, 67 x 49 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

Figure 7. Attributed to Raphael, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1505-06, oil on panel, 37 x 40.5 cm, Royal Collection, Hampton Court.
Figure 8. Jacopo Pontormo, *Portrait of Alessandro de' Medici*, 1534, oil on canvas, 97 x 79 cm, Museum of Art, Philadelphia.

Figure 9. Engraved copy after Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait at Three-Quarter Length*, 1560s, N/A, formerly in the Leuchtenberg Collection.

Figure 10. Sofonisba Anguissola, *Bernardino Campi Painting a Portrait of Sofonisba Anguissola*, 1559-1560, oil on canvas, 111 x 109.5 cm, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Sienna.

Figure 11. Titian, *Self-Portrait*, early 1550s, oil on canvas, 96 x 75 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin.
Figure 12. Cola Petrucciolo, *Self-Portrait*, c.1400, fresco, Choir of S. Domenico, Perugia.

Figure 13. Baccio Bandinelli, *Self-Portrait*, early 1530s, oil on panel, 142.5 x 113.5 cm, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.

Figure 14. Roger van der Weyden, *Saint Luke Drawing the Virgin*, c.1435-1440, tempera on panel, 102.5 x 108.5 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
Figure 15. Catharina van Hemessen, *Young Woman Playing the Virginals*, 1548, oil on panel, 32.2 x 25.7 cm, Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne.

Figure 16. Catharina van Hemessen, *Self-Portrait*, 1548, oil on panel, 31.1 x 23.5 cm, Offentliche Kunstsammlung, Basel.

Figure 17. Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait*, c.1552, oil on canvas, 88.5 x 69 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Figure 18. Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait at an Easel*, c.1556, oil on canvas, 66 x 57 cm, Muzeum Zamek, Lancut.
Figure 19. Artist unknown, copy of *Medal of Sofonisba Anguissola*, after 1559, lead cast, diameter 8.7 cm, British Museum, London.

Figure 20. Lucia Anguissola, *Self-Portrait*, c.1557, N/A, Civico Museo d'Arte Antica, Castello Sforza, Milan.

Figure 21. Sofonisba Anguissola, *The Chess Game*, 1555, oil on canvas, 69 x 91 cm, Muzeum Nardowe, Poznan.
Figure 22. Attributed to Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1561, oil on canvas, 33.5 x 9 cm, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

Figure 23. Sofonisba Anguissola, *Portrait of Amilcare, Minerva and Asdrubale Anguissola*, c. 1558, oil on canvas, 157 x 122 cm, Nivaagaards Malerisamling, Niva, Denmark.

Figure 24. Sofonisba Anguissola, *The Artist’s Sister Minerva Anguissola*, c. 1564, oil on canvas, 85.1 x 66 cm, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee.
Figure 25. Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait*, c.1610, oil on canvas, 94 x 75 cm, Gottfried Keller Collection, Bern.

Figure 26. Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait*, c.1548, chalk on paper, 35.1 x 69 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Figure 27. Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait with a Book*, 1554, oil on canvas, 17 x 12 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.
Figure 28. Lavinia Fontana, *Self-Portrait in the Studiolo*, 1579, oil on copper, diameter 15.7 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Figure 29. Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Senator Orsini*, c.1579, oil on canvas, 119 x 110 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux.

Figure 30. Niccolò della Casa, *Portrait of Bandinelli*, c.1540-45, engraving, 29.2 x 21.8 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.
Figure 31. Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait*, c.1556, varnished watercolor on parchment, 6.4 x 8.3 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 32. Lavinia Fontana, *Self-Portrait (at an Easel)*, 1579, N/A, 91 x 66 cm. Pitti Palace, Florence.

Figure 33. Francesco Parmigianino, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, 1524, oil on panel, diameter 24.4 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.
Figure 34. Lavinia Fontana, *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maidervant*, 1577, oil on canvas, 27 x 24 cm, Saint Luke Academy, Rome.

Figure 35. Marietta "Tintoretta" Robusti, *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard*, before 1570, oil on canvas, N/A, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Figure 36. Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maidervant*, c.1561, oil on canvas, 83 x 65 cm, Earl Spencer Collection, Northampton, Althrop.

Figure 37. Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait at a Spinett*, c.1555-1556, oil on canvas, N/A, Museo di Capodimonte, Naples.
Figure 38. Clara Peeters, *Still Life with Flowers, a Goblet, Dried Fruit and Pretzels*, 1611, oil on panel, 50 x 72 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

Figure 39. Clara Peeters, *Still Life with a Vase of Flowers, Goblets and Shells*, 1612, oil on panel, 59.5 x 49 cm, Karlsruhe, Staatsliche Kunsthalle.

Figure 40. Clara Peeters, *Self-Portrait with a Still Life*, 1610-1620, oil on panel, 37.5 x 50.2 cm, Philips International Auctioneers and Valuers, London.
Endnotes

Introduction


Chapter One

7 Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 17. While some women went to religious institutions to receive an education, I am uncertain that the authors are right in stating that they were specifically art students.
8 On Guda, see Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 21-22.
10 On Abbess Herrade, see Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 17 and 19-21.
11 Saint Walburga is the patron saint of crops and peasants, explaining the outdoors setting. On Abbess Hitda, see Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 18.
12 Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 32.
13 On de Vigri, see Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 32-33.
14 Unless otherwise stated, for this paragraph see Ames-Lewis, 212-215 and 241, and Woods-Marsdeen, 43-50.
15 Harris and Nochlin, 112.
16 Unless otherwise stated, for this section see Ames-Lewis, 141-152, and Woods-Marsdeen, 19-22.
17 See also Ames-Lewis, 61. There is some indication that Cennini did wish to elevate the status of the artist; much as da Vinci later would, he states that painting is a gentleman's job because one can do it while wearing velvets. It is possible that this was meant metaphorically, however (Ames-Lewis, 71-72).
18 This was written before Alberti began his architectural career although, as he stated in the book, he had already begun to paint and considered himself a painter.
19 The Quadrivium consisted of four disciplines considered since the Middle Ages to be necessary for the understanding of the world: geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and music (then called harmonics). One wonders if the presence of music in this group explains the choice of female artists in the sixteenth century to make self-portraits at the keyboard.
20 Alberti mentioned that when an artist sees his work admired, he feels like a god (Francese Borzello, A World of Our Own: Women as Artists Since The Renaissance (Watson-Guptill Publications: New York, 2000), 18).
21 Woods-Marsdeen, 15-16.
22 Alberti, as quoted in Borzello, 18.
23 Cennini, as quoted in Borzello, 18.
24 Sculpture only began to be better defended as of the early sixteenth century by people such as Benedetto Varchi. Before this, painting usually had the upper hand.
25 This ignores the physical work and ensuing fatigue involved in painting, as well as the possibility of messes on floors and clothing.
Some also saw a possibility of self-fashioning through literature. This included, interestingly, Michelangelo, who used the verb "fabbricar" to mean a literary form of shaping of oneself.

Woods-Marsdean, 234.

The identification of van Eyck as one of two men shown in this mirror is suspected but not certain. The signature, placed above the mirror and stating that van Eyck was there, leads to the assumption that this work served as a wedding or betrothal contract, and that the artist is therefore showing himself and the other man as witnesses. Edwin Hall, *The Arnolfini Betrothal: Medieval Marriage and the Enigma of van Eyck's Double Portrait* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1994), 8-9.

Woods-Marsdeen, 111.

This depends if the work truly shows the Laura which inspired Petrarch. On this work, see Ames-Lewis, 212.

Paola Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 50-51. Hairstyles may even have been developed specifically for profile portraits (Tinagli, 50).

Campbell, 81-82, and Tinagli, 77. Three-quarter works seemed strange to some Italians even at the start of the new century. For example, a man in Pessaro was surprised by the three-quarter Flemish and Italian portraits of women that he saw while making an inventory in 1500 (Campbell, 81).

Tinagli, 77 and 84.

Tinagli, 49 and 84.

When last names only are given in this work, they will refer to a female artist rather than to a male artist who may be more commonly known under that same name. "Fontana", for example, will refer to Lavinia, not to her father Prospero. In the case of "Anguissola", it will refer to Sofonisba rather than to her sisters.

Ilya Sandra Perlingieri, *Sofonisba Anguissola: The First Great Woman Artist of the Renaissance* (Rizzoli: New York, 1992), 30. This may have been the case with Elena Anguissola, the second Anguissola child, who entered a convent in the early 1550s after studying art with Bernardino Campi (Perlingieri, 60).

Harris and Nochlin, 23.


Another expensive suggestion was that artists were to travel to study art. On this training and its availability for women, see Harris and Nochlin, 21.

One example of a female artist who learned from plaster casts is Fontana (Murphy, *A Painter and Her Patrons*, 73–74).

Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 44. Variations of her name, including in her signature, include "Catherina" and "Caterina" for her given name, and "de Hemessen" for her family name. She was the daughter of the Antwerp painter Jan van Hemessen. Ten signed and dated works by her are known, all made between 1548 and 1552. Her hand may perhaps also be seen in some of her father's works (Lola B. Gellman, "Hemesen, Catharina (Catherina, Caterina) van (de)," in *Dictionary of Female Artists*, vol. 1, ed. Delia Gaze (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997), 661–664, and Harris and Nochlin, 105).

Harris and Nochlin, 27. At least twelve works by Anguissola are known (Parker and Pollock, 86).

These are *Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maid servant* (1577, Saint Luke Academy, Rome), *Self-Portrait* (c. 1577, private collection, Seattle), the copper miniature *Self-Portrait in the Studiolo* (1579, Uffizi Gallery, Florence), *Self-Portrait (at an Easel)* (1579, Pitti Palace, Florence), *Self-Portrait* (1585, Uffizi Gallery, Florence). There was also an earlier copper self-portrait (1571) and a self-portrait of 1575, although these are now lost. Two drawings were also made, *Self-Portrait at the Age of Nineteen* of 1571, and *Self-Portrait* of c. 1575 (both Pierpont Morgan Library, New York). On the Seattle work and the 1571 drawing, see Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 57–58. On the two lost works, see Woods-Marsdeen, 263 (Chapter 22, note 8). Please note that their text, Cheney, Faxon and Russo have misidentified the 1575 drawing (image IV.10) as another *Self-Portrait at the Age of Nineteen* made in 1571. This mistake is not present in the caption for this image (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 57).


Alessandro Allori is, with his *Self-Portrait* of 1554-1555 (Uffizi Gallery, Florence), the first Italian man to make an autonomous self-portrait showing the sitter with a brush and palette (Woods-Marsdeen, 230). However, Woods-Marsdeen wrongly states that he is the first Italian of either gender to make a self-portrait with these instruments, as Anguissola's *Self-Portrait* of c. 1552 very probably precedes it. The other artists shall be studied later.


Woods-Marsdeen, 105.

This was a work meant for private use, and was given by Alessandro to Taddea, the lady whom he is shown drawing (Woods-Marsdeen, 225).

While portrait painters may not have been well regarded by theoreticians, they had the trust of their patrons and were some of the best paid artists of the time. This trust was particularly needed because jewels, clothes, and other valuables would be left with the artist so that these could be painted in detail in the portrait. Patrons also needed to be confident in the artist's good reputation when they or members of their family, especially women and children, would pose in their company for hours. See Campbell, 150–151.

Anguissola's native Cremona was part of the duchy of Milan, which was under Spanish rule since 1535. In 1540, Philip II had become Duke of Milan. He may have heard of and even met Anguissola during his visit to Cremona in 1549 during a tour of his territory. On his visit, see Perlingieri, 48.

Campbell, 151, and Maria Kusche, "Sofonisba Anguissola: Her Life and Work," in *Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Painter*, eds. Sylvia Ferino-Pagden and Maria Kusche (Washington, D.C.: The National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1995), 56. It is also possible that she was anticipating that the new order could take some time before arriving. By February 1561, Anguissola began to teach her to paint. The young queen was very enthusiastic, and she seems to have had some talent (Campbell, 151). Indeed, Anguissola complained in a letter to Campi that she had little time to do her own work. For a translated copy of this letter, see Perlingieri, 126.
would not have started such a massive work without a prospective buyer. It is possible that the original commission. It was bought by Philip II for the gargantuan sum of 1000 ducats, and arrived in 1593. We do not know the reason for the gap between the year of execution and the year of purchase, but it seems that she was also well-regarded because of her art. One of the valuable tasks given to her as a lady-in-waiting was to accompany Anne of Cleeves to England and entertain her during the voyage (Mainz, 37, 40 and 42). That van Hemessen, a portraitist, was invited to a humanist court and was so well regarded by Mary, Queen of Hungary and Governess of the Netherlands, began with a mention of her (Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 20).

Van Hemessen, identified as Klein Catheline, was honored by being made lady-in-waiting to Mary. The palace, Mary's primary place of residence, is from a court ordinance of November 20, 1555; it indicates that van Hemessen was to accompany Anne of Cleeves to England and entertain her during the voyage (Mainz, 37, 40 and 42). 

Towards the end of 1555, van Hemessen and her husband Chrétien de Morien were invited to the court of Mary, Queen of Hungary and Governess of the Netherlands. The first record of the couple at the Brussels palace, Mary's primary place of residence, is from a court ordinance of November 20, 1555; it indicates that van Hemessen, identified as Klein Catheline, was honored by being made lady-in-waiting to Mary. The husband and wife seem to have been much valued by the queen, and both were individually given a good, life-long pension. There are no records of van Hemessen painting during her stay at court, yet this may have been because it moved frequently during this time, or that, like Anguissola, her other duties made it difficult to paint. That van Hemessen, a portraitist, was invited to a humanist court and was so well regarded by Mary seems to indicate that she may have made some art there, or was at least recognized for her past work. Van Hemessen's last known painting was two years before her wedding, which seems to discredit the theory proposed by some, including Harris and Nochlin, that she abandoned art because of marriage. It is possible that she continued to paint (Gellman, 663-664; Harris and Nochlin, 105 and; Mainz, 39-40). While it is true that some women decided to stop painting or simply found no time for it after being wedded, it seems rather rash to automatically assume that later works by a woman do not exist because she got married. It is also important to remember that some women may have been forced to stop painting (temporarily or otherwise) for health reasons, such as arthritis, failing eyesight, and other conditions that things such as bad heating, poor lighting, and toxic paint may have brought on.

Fontana did not become a court painter until she moved to Rome in 1604 and served Pope Paul V at the Vatican court. She had occasionally made works for various rulers before this however. In 1589, she painted Holy Family with Sleeping Christ Child and Infant Saint John the Baptist (Escorial, Madrid), her first public commission. It was bought by Philip II for the gargantuan sum of 1000 ducats, and arrived in 1593. We do not know the reason for the gap between the year of execution and the year of purchase, but it seems that she would not have started such a massive work without a prospective buyer. It is possible that the original buyer fell through. It is also important to note that Fontana came to be the portraitist of choice for female nobility in Bologna, and while that city-state did not have a court, Fontana could be seen as the closest thing...

81 Kello (born 1571 – died 1624) was born in France and learned to paint from her mother, Marie Priscott. Kello was in England by 1596. There, she principally worked as an illuminator of religious manuscripts and of emblems for Queen Elizabeth I and other high nobility in Great Britain. In some of these, Kello included self-portraits, including one in 1615 (Self-Portrait, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh) where she shows herself as a successful English court lady (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 36-37).

82 Killigrew (born c.1660 – died 1685) was officially a lady-in-waiting to Mary of Moden, the wife of James II, but also painted and wrote poetry. One of the two paintings by her still extant is a portrait of James II (Royal Collection, England), showing how highly her skills were esteemed. Her other work is a full-length self-portrait. She died of smallpox (Mainz, 37 and 39).

83 Robusti had been invited to several courts, including that of Emperor Maximilian, King Philip II, and Archduke Ferdinand (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 64, and Catherine Harding, "Robusti, Marietta," in Dictionary of Women Artists, vol. 2, ed. Delia Gaze (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997), 1184). Tintoretto declined on her behalf, but it is a mistake to present him as a "big old meany" for this, as some such as Cheney, Faxon and Russo have done (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 64). He replied to rulers that he could not let Robusti leave because he needed her in his workshop (Harding, 1184), and if this is true, then it is possible that Robusti herself did not want to leave her father in need. Also, although such an invitation was a great honor, Robusti may not have been interested by the prospect of leaving and not being able to see her home and family for years. That her father was said to have dressed her as a boy when she was young so that she could follow him wherever he went (Harding, 1184), seems to indicate that there was a strong bond between them. Tintoretto may also have been a "father hen" who was reluctant to have his daughter travel far away to court and all its possible threats. They may even have been afraid that her childhood cross-dressing might prove embarrassing and even dangerous at court, especially from those who were quite religious.

84 Interestingly, it seems that Teerlinc may have been asked to come in order to replace illuminator Susanna Horenbout as the female artist of the English court. Teerlinc was one of the four official English court painters, and was well paid. Teerlinc stayed at court until her death, and was therefore a court painter to Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 35, and Catherine King, "Teerlinc, Levina," in Dictionary of Women Artists, vol. 2, ed. Delia Gaze (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997), 1358-1359).


86 Woods-Marsden, 192. I do not agree with the author that Anguissola can be considered a dilettante, even if this is how she was perhaps perceived by some of her contemporaries.

87 Kusche, 61.

88 Female artists tended to remain more in the private sphere of the household (Mainz, 37).

89 Harris and Nochlin, 29. Some court artists, such as Titian, did not reside in court (Perlingieri, 136). Either because of their title of lady-in-waiting and/or because of the advantages of staying at court, most female artists employed by the court seem to have resided there.

90 Mainz, 41, and Woods-Marsden, 159. Female artists tended also to be less involved in political affairs (Mainz, 37).

91 King, "Teerlinc, Levina," 1359.

92 For example, it is suggested that Anguissola designed some dresses for de Valois (Perlingieri, 121).

93 Mainz, 40.

94 Mainz, 41.

95 The Spanish ladies-in-waiting were given 75 ducats per year. On Anguissola's salary, see Kusche, 60.

96 That she was given such a high salary at the beginning of her first year at court seems to indicate that she was already well known before arriving there. On her salary, see Harris and Nochlin, 102, and King, "Teerlinc, Levina," 1359.

97 Perlingieri, 138.

98 Ibid.

99 Mainz, 41.
Perlingieri, 120. The source of this money was the Cremonese wine tax. The previous receiver of this tax had been Isabelle d'Este, but upon her death it had been paid once more to the government of Milan, and so was controlled by the Spanish throne (Perlingieri, 120).

King, "Teerlinc, Levina," 1359.

Ames-Lewis, 70-71. It was not only artists at court that were able to wear richer, courtier-like clothing. The equivalent was true for some north European artists in the fifteenth century who were named town painters and so allowed to wear the clothes of a town official (Ames-Lewis, 71).

Ames-Lewis, 70.

Mainz, 41.

Some of these gifts were the result of de Valois's will; the queen had died in October 1568. On Anguissola's trousseau, see Kusche, 68 and 72-73.

Kusche, 67.

On the renewed practice of giving gold chains, see Woods-Marsdein 160 and 162.

The important link to Antiquity would also have been quite important to the ruler.

In Portrait of Zuccari (1604, Uffizi Gallery, Florence) by Fede Galizia, we see at least six of these gold chains around Frederico Zuccari's neck. This is said to be one of the most extravagant displays by an artist at this time. On Zuccari, see Woods-Marsdein, 173.

On Bellini and his influence on Titian, see Woods-Marsdein, 162.

Woods-Marsdein, 213.

Ibid.

There is one work which slightly resembles this one. In the Self-Portrait in the Musée Condé (Chantilly), Anguissola shows herself at bust length with a similar ruff and bejeweled necklace, although apparently with a less elaborate dress. The Chantilly work seems to have been made before 1564, and may therefore precede the gold chain self-portrait. It may be the first self-portrait in which Anguissola shows herself with a Spanish ruff.

Woods-Marsdein, 211.

Woods-Marsdein, 210-212. It is possible that the necklace, as well as the dress, were the "valuable dress... a jewel encrusted necklace, pearls and other royal presents" valued at 900 scudi that were listed as gifts from de Valois. Some of the other jewels may have been given to her by various patrons (Woods-Marsdein, 196 and 210-212).

In her Self-Portrait of c.1600 (N/A), Anguissola is wearing not only a crucifix, but a long necklace that may perhaps be the gold chain. The placement of the chain's first "knob" on our right seems to be at about the same place as that in the gold chain self-portrait. The second "knob" is closer, however, and the chain looks almost black. It is the crucifix rather then the chain that she holds with her right hand. Details of the garment are made difficult because of their dark color, but it is of note that she is once again wearing a large ruff.

In all of her self-portraits, Anguissola wears black. While it is true that this color was popular at the Spanish court, de Valois had also brought with her from France a tendency towards more colorful clothing (Perlingieri, 134), and it is interesting that Anguissola chose to keep wearing dark dresses.

Woods-Marsdein, 212.

Woods-Marsdein, 160.

Ibid. Titian also wears his trademark black skull cap. No one knows why he wore this: it may have been to hide a bald spot and/or to keep out the chill, or as a way to visually be identified in his self-portraits (Woods-Marsdein, 159).

Woods-Marsdein, 213.

Titian's more simple, black clothing in his later self-portrait may perhaps also have been influenced by those found in a self-portrait attributed to Baccio Bandinelli, Pope Clement VII's court painter. In this Self-Portrait (early 1530s, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston), similar clothing makes the shell-shaped emblem of the Order of Santiago hung around his neck stand out. With this imperial Spanish knighthood, Bandinelli became the first artist to be named to a major chivalric order. He had already been made a papal knight of Saint Peter by Clement VII in 1529-30 (Woods-Marsdein, 139-140).

On Petrucciol, see Ames-Lewis, 213.

That written signatures were finally beginning to be included in paintings and other fine arts works in the Renaissance also shows, with the development of self-portraiture, that artists/ artisans were becoming more
important and individualist. As of the late Middle Ages in particular, however, manuscripts could have a colophon. Also, as we have seen, some artists placed their name next to their self-portraits in these books. It is important to note that a self-portrait can give more information on its author than a signature itself, even when this includes a short inscription.

The drawing symbolically shows Hercules triumphing over Carcus. The subject helps to show him as being familiar with Antiquity. On Bandinelli, see Woods-Marsdeen, 140-143.


The Cult of the Virgin was based on the popularity of the Virgin as a compassionate intermediary between humans and God.

There were also some less relevant crafts such as candle makers, barbers, and meat and cheese sellers. On the groups in this guild, see Woods-Marsdeen, 20.

The evolution of the image of Saint Luke went from that of a pious artisan in the fifteenth century to that of a humanist scholar or doctor in the mid-sixteenth century. This later depiction by artists was also beneficial to them.

Vasari’s work was completed by Allori.

This seems to indicate that at this time, and perhaps also in subsequent centuries, women did receive help from male servants, assistants or apprentices.

On Pliny the Elder as Boccaccio’s source for ancient female artists, see Giovanni Boccaccio, Concerning Famous Women, trans. Guido A. Guarino (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1963), 122 (note 2), 131 (note 1) and 144 (note 1).

Boccaccio, Chapter LIV. Pliny had mentioned that Timarete had made a painting of the Goddess Artemis, which was kept at Ephesus (Pliny, Book 35, section 147).

Christine de Pisan, La cité des dames (Paris: Éditions Stock, 1986), Chapter I, section XLI.

Woods-Marsdeen, 204. Woods-Marsden does not mention, however, that Bandinelli’s Self-Portrait of the 1530s would precede van Hemessen’s work if this painting is truly by Bandinelli.

Cheney, Faxon and Russo wrongly identify her as drawing (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 44).

The image of Titan drawing while wearing his chain is now only known through a woodcut by Giovanni Britto, Titian Sketching (1500, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam). We cannot see the page Titian is working on, and it is possible instead that he is writing (Woods-Marsden, 232).

For a similar discussion about Anguissola and her Self-Portrait at an Easel of c.1556, see Woods-Marsdeen, 206.

As we shall discuss later, she may be painting herself or her sister. This ambiguity regarding the topic may have been wanted.

One wonders if presenting herself “as” Saint Luke would have been seen as blasphemous, as it would have connotations of cross-dressing.

Woods-Marsdeen, 204.

This work exists in three versions, with the one in Lancut judged to be technically the best (Woods-Marsdeen, 263 (Chapter 33, note 11)).

Woods-Marsdeen, 204.

Ibid.

Woods-Marsdeen suggests that this self-portrait was made following the example of images of a “Christianized” Thamyris (Woods-Marsdeen, 204). One can assume that this is also applicable for the van Hemessen work.

Woods-Marsdeen, 204.

As we shall see, however, both van Hemessen and Anguissola are making a statement on their high education by wearing clothing that follow Castiglione’s ideals as stated in The Book of the Courtier.

Woods-Marsdeen, 225, 230 and 232. There are only five Italian artists, including Titian and Allori, who showed themselves as themselves with tools of the trade (Woods Marsdeen, 225).

Indeed, these views can still be found in certain people today.

The expensive clothing worn in many of self-portraits at an easel, including those in works by Judith Leyster, Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun, and Adélaïde Labille-Guillard, were probably not used in reality as painting clothes. After all, sitting on a paint-filled pallet, as Vigée-Lebrun admitted once doing, and other such accidents could happen. (Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun, Memoirs of Madame Vigée Lebrun, trans. Lionel Strachey (New York: George Braziller, Inc., Publishers, 1989), 18-19.
Chapter Two


Castiglione, Dedicatory Letter, section 1. Originally, this was to be a work which compared the merits of women to those of men. The change of subject was possibly the result of the recent death and departure of many Urbino court members, as well as the decline of the court's quality, by the time the text was begun in 1508 (Arthur F. Kinney, *Continental Humanist Poetics Studies in Erasmus, Castiglione, Marguerite de Navarre, Rabelais, and Cervantes* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 91 and 97).

The Urbino court ladies seem to have been a particularly important influence for Castiglione and his views regarding women in his book. Several of them were known for their wit and intelligence, in particular Elisabetta Gonzaga, the Duchess of Urbino, who was a good musician, particularly in playing the lute and singing, and who knew Latin. It was also she who looked after the court after her husband, disabled by gout, retired early for bed (Castiglione, Book I, sections 3 and 4 and Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 208.) Other celebrated Urbino women included Emilia Pia, as well as two of Isabella d'Este's daughters, Margarita and Eleanor Gonzaga (who would become the next Duchess of Urbino). Castiglione seems also to have been influenced by Beatrice d'Este, who had been the Duchess of Milan when he had resided there in his youth. Castiglione also knew Isabella d'Este from his time at Mantua, and kept corresponding with her after his departure. The Mantua court had become one of the great courts of the Renaissance, with Isabella herself as one of its stars, being admired not only for her patronage of arts and letters, but also for her abilities in politics, music, Greek and Latin, as well as for her beauty, wit, and knowledge (Castiglione, 309 and 405 (note 397), and Margaret L. King, "La femme de la Renaissance," in *L'homme de la Renaissance*, ed. Eugenio Garin (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2002), 327-328). Castiglione was probably also inspired by his mother. He seems to have been close to her, and it was she who looked after the family's affairs when he could not (José Guidi, "De l'amour courtois à l'amour sacré: la condition de la femme dans l'œuvre de B. Castiglione," in *Images de la femme dans la littérature Italienne de la Renaissance: préjugés misogynes et aspirations nouvelles*, ed. André Rochon (Paris: Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1980), 11-13).

Castiglione, Book III, sections 42 and 50.

Castiglione, Book III, sections 11-18.

Castiglione, Book III, section 9.

Castiglione, Book III, sections 5, 7, 9 and 10.

Castiglione, Book III, sections 4-6.

Castiglione, Book I, section 6.

Castiglione, Book I, sections 6 and 7.

Giuliano de'Medici the Younger was a son of Lorenzo de'Medici and the brother of Cardinal Giovanni, the future Pope Leo X.

Castiglione, Book III, section 51. Some feminist art historians unfortunately do not recognize the positive views of Castiglione towards women. Perlingieri, for example, says that "According to Castiglione, women were 'imperfect' and 'nature seeks perfection in all her creatures, and would, if she could, produce nothing but men" (Perlingieri, 32 and 35). This reference to Gaspare in Book III, section 11, is taken out of context, as she ignores the long ensuing debate which proves that women are as perfect as men.


Burke, 98, and Kristeller, 49.

Kristeller, 50. *The Book of the Courtier* was also widely read by people trying to learn Italian culture and language. Castiglione was seen as an expert on Italian, and the Accademia della Crusca recommended his text as a guide to a language not yet regulated (Charlton, 224-225, and Joseph Anthony Mazzeo, *Renaissance and Revolution: The Remaking of European Thought* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), 132).

Mazzeo, 133, and 138-139.

On Castiglione's sources, see Kinney, 87-134. Castiglione seems to have been inspired also by Ovid, especially his *Ars Amatoria* (*The Art of Love*). As with *The Book of the Courtier*, the third book discusses the perfect woman. Amongst other things, women are advised to know music (including singing), poetry (including the works of Sappho), dancing, and games. They should be literate, including for the reading and writing of love letters. Proper dress is also discussed. While Castiglione did not speak of relationships in
such a sexual manner as did Ovid, the third book of *The Book of the Courtier* does speak of love. Interestingly, by the Middle Ages, women were not to read *The Art of Love* because of its sexual content. Indeed, it was recommended that women not be literate so that they could not read such works. On Ovid's work being prohibited to women, see Harris and Nochlin, 22.

169 The text was begun in April 1508. By May 1509, the first three books of the work were written, but because of work and illness, the fourth volume was not begun until September 1513 nor completed until 1516 (Castiglione, 316–317 (note 4)).


171 Castiglione, 317 (note 7) and 321 (note 13). Interestingly, Colona was a friend of Michelangelo as of 1536, and one wonders if she may have communicated Castiglione's ideals about the perfect lady to the great artist; Michelangelo was willing to help Anguissola during the 1550s with her art (Kusche, 40 and 46-47).

172 Castiglione was sent in 1524 by Pope Clément VIII to the court of Charles V to attempt to stop the fighting between these two rulers. Charles V placed upon him many honors, and it is said that, with the Bible and Machiavelli's *Prince*, *The Book of the Courtier* was one of the three books the Emperor kept on his bedside table (Mazzeo, 131). On Castiglione's last years, see Castiglione, 310-311.

173 Fourteen éditions were published in the seventeenth century, eleven in the eighteenth century, and fifteen in the nineteenth century. For publishing information in this section, unless otherwise stated, see Castiglione, 311-313 and 427-432.

174 Unlike with other languages, this translation by Boscan was so revered that it was the only one used until at least 1873.

175 The book was sufficiently popular by 1538 that in Lyon, Mellin de Saint-Gelais and Estienne Dolet tried to make money and a reputation by claiming that their French edition had corrected many mistakes made by Jaques Colin, a courtier at the court of Francois I who had made the first French translation. Their project was a sham, for their corrections were few (Arthur Agustus Tilly, *The Literature of the French Renaissance*, vol. 1 (New York: Hafner Publications, 1959), 48). Most of the fifteen French editions that were published in the sixteenth century appeared between the 1540s and 1580s.

176 Charlton, 83. Castiglione had also gone to England in 1506-1507 to receive the Order of the Garter on behalf of the Duke of Urbino (Castiglione, 310).


178 Wiggins, 8-9. Further English editions were published in the sixteenth century in 1577 and 1588, both in London.

179 Wiggins, 6.

180 A Polish edition was also printed in 1566, although this version had all of the female characters removed because it was believed that women participating in such complicated conversations was too far-fetched (John Hale, *La civilisation de l'Europe à la Renaissance* ([Paris]: Perrin, 1998), 279).

181 This was apparently because of a few jokes about the clergy and a few more references to Fate than to God (Mazzeo, 132 and 137, and W. A. Coupe et al., *The Continental Renaissance 1500-1600* (Hassocks, [England]: Harvester Press and, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1978), 71.

182 Burke, 120, and Hale, 507.

183 In 1533, Amilcare and his father-in-law went into business with a Cremonese bookseller. It is interesting, when taking into account the future artistic careers of some of his daughters, that the bookshop carried art supplies in addition to selling and printing books (Perlingieri, 25).

184 Cremona was part of the Duchy of Milan, which was at this time under the Spanish crown. On Amilcare, see Kusche, 32.

185 Kusche, 27.


187 It is usually estimated that Sofonisba Anguissola was born around 1532. In 1624, van Dyck wrote in his *Italian Sketchbook* (British Museum, London) that she had told him that she was then ninety-six. This would make her date of birth 1528. (On the possibility of this age being exaggerated, see Harris and Nochlin, 106.) Anguissola would therefore be twenty-five in her *Self-Portrait with a Book* (Kunsthistorisches Museum,
Vienna), which is dated 1554, yet she seems slightly younger there than in this work. It is possible that van Dyck or Anguissola made a mistake, or that it was a sort of joke from her; 1528 was after all the date of the first printed edition of The Book of the Courtier. Since the book seems to have been so important to her and her art, she may have decided to modify her birth date to match this event.

Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 18. It is also relevant to note that Fontana's maternal relatives ran the leading publishing house in Bologna and had contact with various scholars (Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 16). One should not think Fontana's absence from Vasari's second edition of his Lives as odd, nor as an indication that she initially was not to be trained as a professional artist, as Murphy does (Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 15-16): Fontana was only eleven years old when Vasari's trip to Bologna and help to Prospero mentioned in his book happened (Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects, vol. II, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere (New York and Toronto: Everyman's Library, 1996), 774-775), and she was only sixteen years old when this text was published.

For a translated copy of this letter, see Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 220.

Castiglione, Book I, section 28.

Castiglione, Book III, section 8.

On the description of the perfect courtier's clothing, see Castiglione, Book II, sections 26-28.

One work that may precede hers is the Anguissola's Self-Portrait of c.1548 (Gabinetto dei Disegni, Uffizi Gallery, Florence), although this is a drawing, not a painting.

The attribution of Christina as the sitter in Young Woman Playing the Virginals is not certain but generally accepted because of her age and resemblance to Catharina. It has also been suggested, for example by Cheney, Faxon and Russo, that this work is another self-portrait by Catharina, but the signatures make this impossible. In the Self-Portrait, the inscription states that the artist painted this portrait of herself in 1548, when she was twenty (EGO CATERINA DE HEMESSEN ME PINX 1548 ETATIS SVAE 20). In the Young Woman Playing the Virginals, it states that the artist painted this portrait in 1548, when the sitter was twenty-two (CATERINA DE HEMESSEN PINGEBAT 1548 ETATIS SVAE 22). Cheney, Faxon and Russo make the mistake of reading the age as that of the artist when the work was made, rather than that of the sitter. These authors similarly identify the Portrait of a Woman (Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussells) as a self-portrait, although this 1549 work's inscription identifies the sitter as being thirty years old (van Hemessen would have been twenty-one). Also, as she was not married until 1554 (Harris and Nochlin, 105), the Portrait of a Man of 1549 (Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussells) is not, as they claim, that of her husband (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 44-45).

The design could vary, and so the black, puffy shoulders may have been part of the dress, or of the sleeves if the latter were indeed detachable.

For example, see van Hemessen's A Lady with a Rosary (c.1550) and Portrait of a Lady (1551), both at the National Gallery in London.

When more than one date has been suggested for a work, I have taken into account the clothing shown in it when deciding which to use.

The dress in the c.1548 Self-Portrait is somewhat similar to this. As it is a drawing with no color and lack of details, a proper analysis is made difficult.

As for van Hemessen, I do not know if Anguissola's dresses have removable sleeves, and if the shoulders were part of the dress itself or not.

One can also see a small part of a tassel in the 1554 Self-Portrait.

The dress in the Self-Portrait of c.1552 also has a V-neck dress with open collar, but the straw-strings are not shown. This, as well as a more wooden quality to the image than in the 1554 work, and a signature stating that she was twenty years old when she painted this, help corroborate the estimated date of c.1552.

Because of the three-quarter pose, the exact hairstyle is difficult to identify.

Perlengieri, 45.

The medal used for study here is a lead cast which was made from the original, whose maker is unknown. This copy is now housed at the British Museum in London. It has no reverse and measures 8.7 cm in diameter. It is generally agreed that the original medal was made around 1559, just before Anguissola left for Spain. Many thanks to Philip Attwood at the Department of Coins and Medals of the British Museum for information concerning this medal.

Perlengieri, 113-114.

Perlengieri suggests that the artist who made the coin was Leone Leoni, one of the great medal-makers of the time, and who was at Milan at this time (Perlengieri, 114).
The design in her sleeve may have been made for compositional reasons, as without it there would be a big empty space close to the bottom center of the medal.

Cheney, Faxon and Russo mention a medal of Anguissola made in 1560 by Jacopo de Trezzo, which is now housed in the British Museum (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 61 and 63). The British Museum has informed me that they have never had this medal, and that if it indeed exists, that its suggested date and artists are likely incorrect (Philip Attwood, British Museum).

Interestingly, Castiglione also stated that "[...] I would have our Courrier's dress display that sobriety which the Spanish nation greatly affect [...]" (Castiglione, Book II, section 27.)

Perlingieri, 194. There is also a work that is said to be a self-portrait by Anguissola of c.1620 (Nivagaards Art Museum, Niva, Denmark). The date and attribution seem odd, however, for the woman in this work appears much younger than that in the c.1610 painting. For example, she has much less wrinkles and no jowls. Indeed, Anguissola resembles more in her c.1610 work the sketch made of her by Anthony Van Dyck in his Italian Sketchbook when he visited her in 1624 then does the sitter in the c.1620 work. While it could be claimed that the differences and general lack of details in the c.1620 painting would be due to Anguissola's failing eyesight (Perlingieri, 199), there are still some details that disprove this theory. Indeed, the sitter's eyes, her subtle expression, her ring, and her transparent veil (particularly the part around the shoulder) show much detail if not technical accomplishment. Also, although she did do so in a few of her works, it is important to note that the sitter here faces right rather than left. The suggestion that it is an Anguissola because of the shape of the hands (Perlingieri, 199) does not seem strong enough to attribute this work to her. The painting may therefore very possibly be by another artist even if the sitter is Anguissola. On the possibility that it is by Van Dyck, see Perlingieri, 199.

Perlingieri, 194. King Philip III was born before Anguissola left Spain, and when his father, Philip II died, he continued to take care of Anguissola (Perlingieri, 193-194).

It is not known why Lucia died, but it may have been from one of the numerous diseases (such as typhus, tuberculosis, pleurisy, typhoid, malaria, smallpox and the various forms of the plague) which helped limit life expectancy at thirty (Perlingieri, 95).

The work is signed but undated (Perlingieri, 98-99).


There is a Castiglionian element in The Chess Game, as The Book of the Courrier claimed that chess was a very pleasant, ingenious, and difficult game, although the reader is advised not to play it because of this last characteristic (Castiglione, Book II, section 31). By showing Lucia and Minerva playing it with Europa watching, Anguissola presents her sisters (and by extension her and her whole family) as being very intelligent. The choice of subject may have been further influenced by the "girl power" aspect of the game: as with the queen being the strongest piece, it was known as the Amazonian game (Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, "Plate 6, in Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Painter, eds. Sylvia Ferino-Pagden and Maria Kusche (Washington, D.C.: The National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1995), 31).

I support the earlier birth date, as this would make her eighteen in her Self-Portrait rather than ten.

This work is usually dated c.1580. As a print copy of it (Ritratti di Donne Pittrici, Milan, Castello Sforzesco) was made in 1570 (Maria Teresa Cantaro, Lavinia Fontana Bolognese: pittora singolare, 1552-1614 (Milan and Rome: Jadi Sapi Editori, 1989), 7-8.), an earlier date must be given. This painting has been identified as Robusti's Self-Portrait since 1675, when Marco Boschini had Cardinal Leopold de'Medici buy it for his collection of art by renowned artists (Jacobs, The Renaissance Virtuosa, 153). Woods-Marsden suggests that this painting may not be by her because the quality of this work does not match Robusti's reputation as an accomplished artist (Woods-Marsden, 218). One must remember that Robusti would only have been about eighteen and so, like Anguissola, may not yet have reached her artistic maturity.

Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 1.

Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 43, and Woods-Marsden, 216. Woods-Marsden notes that white (the color of Fontana's sleeves and ruff) and red are also the Petrarcan colors of love.

Because of the collar, I do not see how this could be one necklace worn in a double loop.

Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 40-41 and 43, and Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 58 and 60.

This self-portrait may have been based on the c.1575 Self-Portrait drawing in red and black chalk. As in the Self-Portrait at a Keyboard with a Maidservant, she sits here in a chair in a three-quarter pose, facing
our right and with her right arm coming across with a slight curve. Other than the chair, however, there are no other objects, nor is there a setting. The drawing also has her in a red dress with wide, white sleeves and a lace collar. The hairstyle is similar moreover to that in the c.1577 painting. Indeed, like Anguissola, she seems to have kept a similar hairstyle in most of her works, perhaps as a way to help her public identify her.

There seems to be no signatures by women in Greek, the only language better regarded than Latin. Greek inscriptions were not popular with men either. Even the inscription in Antonis Mor van Dashort's Self-Portrait at the Easel (1558, Uffizi Gallery, Florence) is suspected to have been composed by a friend (Woods-Marsdeen, 202).

Harris and Nochlin, 24.

One exception are the few mid-sixteenth century portraits of well-educated women where they hold a book in their hand to show special status and special education. In works by both Andrea del Sarto and Bronzino, for example, we see the sitter holding a petrarchino, which was a book of sonnets by the great humanist Petrarch (Woods-Marsdeen, 202).

Woods-Marsdeen, 203. One can perhaps say that Anguissola's signature placed in the book of her Self-Portrait with a Book of 1554 also helped to indicate that this is not a religious text, as if it was, this might have been seen as sacrilegious.

I have not seen many self-portraits, if any, made in the sixteenth century or later in which a woman shows herself with a religious text.

Perlingieri, 44. The hand holding the book is not very good, but hands, like feet, are very difficult for even trained artists to properly represent. It is possible that Sofonisba and her sister Elena had another art teacher before Bernardino Campi, but I have not heard of any evidence that this was so.

Woods-Marsdeen, 201.

Woods-Marsdeen says it is the first self-image containing a book, but Anguissola's c.1548 drawing precedes it (Woods-Marsdeen, 201).

Anguissola also knew some Sicilian, as apparent in a letter she wrote to the Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1579 (Perlingieri, 170-171).

Anguissola's age was so advanced for this time that she had had a certificate proving that she was alive (fides vitae) made in 1605 and 1606 so that she could still receive her pension (Perlingieri, 193).

Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 56.

This is suggested for writing and playing music, and by the tone of the warning for caution, we may assume it applies to all other enterprises (Castiglione, Book I, section 44, and Book II, section 12).

Castiglione, Book I, section 49.

Castiglione, Book I, sections 49-52.

This is advantageous to them, as sculpture would have been more difficult to learn and practice for reasons of space, physical effort, and materials.

The case of Raphael is particularly interesting. While he died before The Book of the Courtier was published, he was considered as the quintessential courtier, and was possibly a model for Castiglione. It is therefore noteworthy that he never made a self-portrait at the easel. We can see him in some of his work, for example the Self-Portrait of 1506 (Uffizi Gallery, Florence) wearing sober dark clothes.

Anguissola here holds the brush in her right hand. The fact that she uses the left one in the c.1552 work may mean that she did not make adjustments copying her reflection for her work, or that she was ambidextrous.

Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 38.

Ibid. While it is written in Fontana's wedding contract that he was a painter, there has been much doubt on the veracity of this (Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 44). If he did paint at all, it seems quite possible that it was merely as a dilettante.

On the contract, see Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 43. It was written and signed on February 14, 1575.

Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 43-44.

Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 38.

Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 40. The identity of her second self-portrait is unknown (Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 40).

Severo wrote to his wife Gentile on February 13, 1575, that he would bring two self-portraits so that she could see Fontana and her work. For a translated copy of the letter, see Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 127.
Toy dogs can serve not only to show that the female sitter is fashionable, but also to symbolize fidelity, a very important statement to make in a wedding portrait.

McGill, A Painter and Her Patrons, 43.

Indeed, in the February 13 letter, it seems that one reason for choosing Fontana as a bride was that an old friend of the Fontanas, Orazio Sammachini, assured the Zappis that she would make a great deal of money from her work if she lived for at least a few more years. On the relationship between the Sammachinis and Fontanas, see Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 38-39.

In the Self-Portrait in the Studiolo, she holds a pen in her right hand. Like Anguissola, this may have been because she was ambidextrous, or the result of using a mirror and not altering the image for the painting.

Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 61.

Castiglione, Book II, section 13, and Book III, section 8. During the discussion about the courtier, wind instruments in general were also disapproved of because they distorted the face (Castiglione, Book II, section 13).


Harris and Nochlin, 105 (note 5).

Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 44.

Some have also identified the Self-Portrait at the Keyboard with a Maidservant as dating from 1551 (Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, "Plate 5," in Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Painter, eds. Sylvia Ferino-Pagden and Maria Kusche (Washington, D.C.: The National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1995), 28), but this seems most improbable by reason of the quality of the painting in comparison to the Self-Portrait of 1554, and because she wears the v-neck dress of the second half of the 1550s.


Ferino-Pagden, "Plate 5," 28. "Ami" may originally have been "Amilcare" (Harris and Nochlin, 108 (note 18)).

Woods-Marsdean, 124 and 210. Interestingly, Anguissola's other known double self-portrait, Portrait of Bernardino Campi Painting a Portrait of Sofonisba Anguissola, appears to have been made at the same time as this work. Anguissola also made many portraits with two or more sitters.

Woods-Marsdean, 217. It has also been suggested that the maidservant's inclusion in the portrait is post-mortem, and was made on the event of her death (Woods-Marsdean, 210). If Anguissola was making allusion to her home and of days gone by, it may explain why she is shown here wearing this dress instead of more courtly apparel.

Keeping any pronounced expression for a long time is quite difficult for a model, especially when the model is also the artist who is concentrating on his or her work and is continuously turning from the mirror to the painting. One should therefore not be very surprised that most expressions in self-portraits are rather bland. Painting oneself singing would have been particularly difficult. It could also be seen as distorting the face. It is probably for these two reasons that there are few self-portraits of men or women singing. One exception for women may be a work by Judith Leyster, The Concert (c.1633, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.). On the identity of the woman in this work as Leyster herself, see Cynthia Kortenhorst-von Bogendorf Rupprath and Irene van Thiel-Stroman, "Catalogue," Judith Leyster: A Dutch Master and Her World, eds. Pieter Biesboer and James A. Welu (Haarlem: Worcester Art Museum and, New York: Yale University Press, 1993), 187, (note 14).

Woods-Marsdean, 127.

Cheney, Faxon, Russo, 64.

Woods-Marsdean, 217.

On Robusti's music book and Verdelotti's madrigal, see Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 64; Jacobs, The Renaissance Virtuosa, 153 and; Woods-Marsdean, 217-218. Jacobs states that Robusti made this work for her husband (Jacobs, The Renaissance Virtuosa, 153). Robusti was only married on December 2, 1583, however (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 225 (note 101)).
273 Ibid.
274 Munrow, 63. I have not yet, however, seen one with the specific placement shown in this work.
275 Montague, 125.
276 This aspect has been changed in the 1570 print copy, where her hand is resting on the keyboard. This makes it difficult to determine if the order of the keys have been changed in this copy, but it is quite possible that this is so.
277 For this section, see Jacobs, The Renaissance Virtuosa, 20-22.
278 Unless otherwise stated, for this section, see Woods-Marsdeen, 23.
279 I disagree with Woods-Marsdeen that applying such a comparison to Irene di Spilimbergo would have been absurd.
280 Jacobs, The Renaissance Virtuosa, 18.
282 This includes Antonis Mor van Dashort who, in the inscription of his Self-Portrait at the Easel, states that his work surpasses that of Apelles and Zeuxis.
283 Woods-Marsdeen, 140 and 220.
284 Woods-Marsdeen, 220. Another is Bandinelli (Woods-Marsdeen, 140). Fontana was also compared to Apelles by Fra Filippo Barbieri in a letter of December 21, 1585 to Bianca Cappello, in which he stated that "a new Apelles has arrived in the form of a gentle and in this art most skilled creature of a gracious young woman called Fontana [...]." For a translated transcript of this letter, see Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 221.
285 Jacobs, The Renaissance Virtuosa, 24. Because of the way in which many people during the Renaissance spoke of female artists of the past and present, I disagree with Jacobs that the female geneology "carried little positive weight," and that these women were given no historical place.
286 Harris and Nochlin, 23, and Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 72.
288 Jacobs, The Renaissance Virtuosa, 19. I disagree with Jacobs that Pliny named the six female artists as an afterthought or endnote. On these women, see Pliny, Book 35, sections 147-148.
289 Pliny, Book 35, section 147. Most of Iaia's works spoken of by Pliny were either seen by him, or by the scholar Marcus Terentius Varro. Pliny used Varro's De Vita Populi Romani (The Lives of the Romans) as reference (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 7).
290 This first edition was in Latin. A printed edition was first made sometime during the 1470s. The earliest French versions were in 1493, 1538 and 1551, and those in Italian were made in 1506, 1545, 1547 and 1596 (Harris and Nochlin, 22 (note 52). We can therefore see that this book was relatively popular in the late fourteenth and throughout the fifteenth centuries.
291 Harris and Nochlin, 22.
292 Harris and Nochlin, 23.
293 De Pisan, Chapter I, section XI. De Pisan identifies Boccaccio as her source. Like other Renaissance authors, she uses his version of their names, as well as some of his modifications, such as having Varro as Marcia's father.
294 Harris and Nochlin, 23.
296 Some who were spoken of before this time include the illuminator Anastaise (late fourteenth - early fifteenth centuries). In de Pisan's The City of Ladies, the author followed her tale of the three classical female artists by speaking of this contemporary painter (de Pisan, Chapter I section, XI). No illumination by Anastaise has yet been identified, but it is possible that she is the author of at least some of the images in texts by de Pisan, as the author said Anastaise did some works for her. Interestingly, it is also thought possible that de Pisan made some of the illuminations herself, or at least participated in their design. Some of the images representing her could therefore be self-portraits (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 23-24, and Harris and Nochlin, 19).
297 There were of course other important texts, depending on the artist in question. Judith Leyster, for example, would have at least heard of Anguissola through a popular manual by Karel van Mander, Het Schilder-Boeck (1604) (Kortenhorst-von Bogendorf Rupprath and Thiel-Stroman, 164).
298 Gellman, 663.
In the case of Anguissola, the black paint may actually be dark blue as we see this color used on her canvas.

Fontana was also possibly influenced in a more general way by Samaritana Samaritani. Samaritana was a noblewoman who, more or less as Fontana came to be, was learned in both art and letters. She not only wrote orations and religious poetry, but also painted portraits as well as perhaps devotional paintings. As she and Fontana's father were of the same intellectual circle in Bologna, he may have taught her to paint, though there is no proof of this. She may have influenced how Prospero decided to raise his youngest daughter (Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 20).

Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 18.

Kusche, 32.

Kusche, 32, and Perlingieri, 63. Perlingieri is wrong in stating Anguissola rarely spells her name "Sophonisba" in her works' signature.

Perlingieri, 42. Amilcare's task in the San Sigismondo church seems to indicate that he himself had some interest in the fine arts. It was probably also at this time that Amilcare met Bernardino Gatti, who would later become Sofonisba's second teacher. Like Campi, Gatti was one of the artists chosen to make some of the church's frescoes (Perlingieri, 42).

Perlingieri, 42-43. Because of its date and technique, Sofonisba's c.1548 self-portrait drawing was probably done under Campi rather than being a presentation piece to him, as Perlingieri has suggested (Perlingieri, 44).

Kusche, 34.

Perlingieri, 56.

Perlingieri, 42.

For a translated transcript of the letter, see Perlingieri, 126.

Perlingieri, 48.

This work used to have an inscription in yellow at the lower right. All that can now be seen are the words "virgo" and "(Anguis)sola." Many details of this painting have disintegrated or are now hidden by an accumulation of grime, as this work has never been cleaned (Perlingieri, 49 and 52).

Kusche, 54. As it is difficult to work while traveling, she may have painted it once she had arrived in Spain, using sketches made in Milan. Perlingieri suggests that she painted the double portrait around 1550, before Campi left Cremona (Perlingieri, 49). Technically and stylistically, this seems impossible when the work is compared to her c.1548 drawing and the rather wooden c.1552 self-portrait. (It is possible that she had made sketches of him while he was her teacher, however, and later used them for this portrait.) Furthermore, the style of Bernardino Campi Painting a Portrait of Sofonisba Anguissola resembles that of her c.1558 Self-Portrait. She also wears a dress that strongly resembles that found in other works made around this time. Perlingieri also gives an earlier date because she claimed that the slightly lighter color of Sofonisba's hair would indicate that she was in her early teens (Perlingieri, 49-50). However, it is important to remember that artists can make mistakes, whether because of bad lighting, new paints, new paintbrushes, or various problems when preparing or mixing paints. If this work was made in Milan or Spain, the new environment and potentially new materials may have affected the result of her work. She may have decided not to try to fix a mistake as small as a lighter hair color, especially since one can make a bigger mess when trying to make a correction. It is important to remember that artists are not always in total control of what they are doing.

Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 54.

For example, see Woods-Marsdeeen, 208.

Campbell, 132.

Kusche, 54.


Campbell, 96-97.


Perlingieri, 49.

Interestingly, the pose also resembles that of the Bernardino Campi Painting a Portrait of Sofonisba Anguissola work of 1559-1560. In this painting, Campi's gesturing hand is in a similar position as Lucia's pointing one. One therefore wonders if Sofonisba was influenced by her little sister's own work.
Unless otherwise stated, for this section see Woods-Marsdeen, 31 and 136.

Perlingieri, 44 and 138. This distortion can also be seen in Self-Portrait (Round) of c.1559 (Florence, Uffizi Gallery), which has been identified as a self-portrait by Sofonisba since an 1890 inventory at the Uffizi (Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, "Plate 10" in Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Painter, eds. Sylvia Ferino-Pagden and Maria Kusche (Washington, D.C.: The National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1995), 44). While the mistake with the eyes leaves little doubt that this is a self-portrait, one once again wonders why Sofonisba would have made such a mistake at this time. The style of clothing and presence of jewelry (including a necklace) differs from that found in her self-portraits of this time. Furthermore, the facial features do not look like those of Sofonisba. As they also do not match those of Lucia or Minerva, and because Elena had then been a nun for some years, this work may have been made by Europa or Anna Maria.

Woods-Marsdeen, 133 and 137.

Vasari, vol. I, 934-935. It is interesting that Pietro Aretino, the work's owner at the time that Vasari saw it, had a portrait of himself engraved so that he also seems to be reflected in a convex mirror (Vasari, vol. I, 934-935).

In another Marcia illumination, this one from around 1403 (Marcia, MS Fr. 598, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris) she is using instead a small convex one hung to the wall. (Please note that Cheney, Faxon and Russo wrongly identifies the sitter as Thamyris. In the list of illustrations, they also indicate that this image is on folio 86r of MS Fr. 599 rather then on folio 100v of Ms Fr. 598. (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 12.)

Pliny the Elder's text was not illustrated until Medieval times. There is however a fresco of Marcia in Her Studio from Herculaneum made before 79 CE (Museo Archeologico, Naples). One does not see her making a self-portrait with her mirror, but the work does indicate that there was an interest in this artist as of an early date. It is also interesting that she seems to be portrayed with what may be female pupils. (Please note that in the caption and list of illustrations, Cheney, Faxon and Russo claim that the fresco was made by Marcia, although they mention nothing of this in the text.) (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 5, 11 and ix.)


The role of the mirror here is similar to that of the muse.

See also Woods-Marsdeen, 203.

De Pisan, Book I, section XI. As she was said to have remained unmarried, people in the Renaissance may have conceptually placed Marcia with the Virgin Mary and Prudentia, and would have associated the mirror she used with her chastity, and perhaps would even have seen it as a sign that she was wise.

I have not yet encountered an author who has correctly indicated the media of this work; it is varnished watercolor on parchment with a crystal glass covering. This covering was replaced in the early 1990s after being damaged, and despite Perlingieri's claim (Perlingieri, 61-63), the work itself was not damaged. Many thanks to Brooks Rich of the Boston Museum for this information.

It is possible that the reference to the chaste Marcia was wanted by Anguissola when she chose to indicate her maidenly-state in other signatures.

Perlingieri, 63.

Perlingieri, 62.


The "K" may be an "A" with a u-shaped accent or part of an "AE."

Some have suggested that it spells out "Amilcare," although this would not explain the presence of the "K" (Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, "Plate 3," in Sofonisba Anguissola: A Renaissance Painter, eds. Sylvia Ferino-Pagden and Maria Kusche (Washington, D.C.: The National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1995), 23, and Woods-Marsdeen, 203). Perlingieri claims that the letters stand, amongst other things, for the first letter of each of the Anguissola family members (save her mother Bianca): A for Asdrubale, Amilcare and Anguissola, E for Elena and Europa, L for Lucia, and M for Minerva. Yet while the C could stand for Cremona, Perlingieri's interpretation does not satisfactorily explain the presence of the "K" and "R" (she claims that the "R" stands for Rome, and that the "K" is not really there) (Perlingieri, 63-64). I have thought of the possibility that the letters spell out "Marcia (of ) Kyzikos." While the "O" and "S" are missing from the monogram letters, they can be found on the inscription surrounding it, in the "O" and "S" Anguissola hides under her fingers.

Ferino-Pagden, "Plate 10," 44.
Ferino-Pagden, "Plate 3," 23.

In this work, Durer holds a spring of eryngium. As this plant was associated with love, it can be said to resemble the coral love knots found in Fontana's wedding portrait. The eryngium has a direct sexual reference, however, as it is an aphrodisiac. On Durer's 1493 self-portrait, see Ames-Lewis, 227.

On the mirror as a document, including in van Eyck's work, see Shefer, 603-604.

Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 39. In his February 13, 1577 letter to his wife, Severo cites his satisfaction that Fontana has the "balanced" appearance that their friend Vincenzo Ghini claimed she had. Like Sofonisba Anguissola, she used the word virgo in many of the signatures of her work before she was married. This may have been a reference to Anguissola and/or Marcia. After her wedding, she signed as "Levinia Fontana de Zappi," or variations thereof. In letters, however, people kept referring to her simply as "Levinia Fontana" (Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 45).

Woods-Marsden, 136.

This resemblance, including in technical style, helps to support the Boston Museum's dating of c.1556 to the medallion self-portrait rather than that of c.1552 given by Perlingieri (Perlingieri, 61).

Another example of a self-portrait in a tondo is Fontana's 1579 miniature, Self-Portrait in the Studiolo.


One can see an Antwerp style in the small details and a careful finish in Peeters's work, which are unlike those found in works from other Netherlandish cities such as Utrecht and Haarlem.

It is important to know that many of the guild records during the years in which she painted are no longer extant.

One has to keep in mind that there may have been some idealization in her self-portraits.

Also, if we can learn from examples such as that of Judith Leyster, painters did not always inform the guild that they had students. On Leyster, see Ellen Broersen, "Judita Leystar: A Painter of 'Good, Keen Sense,'" in Judith Leyster, A Dutch Master and Her World, eds. James A. Welu and Pieter Biesboer (Haarlem: Worcester Art Museum and, New York: Yale University Press, 1993), 20.

Woods-Marsden, 33-34.


Peeters probably did not know of this work.

Two subsequent female still life painters, Maria van Oosterwijck and Rachel Ruysch, also painted their reflection on objects in their work and so may have wanted to refer to Peeters as a precedent.

Peeters may have known of this work.

Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 88.

Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 54. In the mid-sixteenth century, this example was cited, for example, in il discorso intorno alle imaginì sacre e profane (1582), a treatise on religious and secular art by Gabriel Paleotti, Bishop of Bologna (Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 52-54).

On Giovio, see Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 50-51.

Boeckl, 779.

Jacobs, The Renaissance Virtuosa, 131. This story was very important for the mythology of the male artist. Some, such as Vasari and later Rubens, even had this legend painted as a mural for their home. Angelica Kauffman, in the mid-eighteenth, was the first woman to portray this legend. In Zeuxis Selecting Models for His Picture of Helen of Troy (c.1764, The Annmary Brown Memorial, Brown University, Providence), the artist represented herself in a way in which she can be mistaken for one of the female models on display for Zeuxis. This comment on the position of women in the art world was not noticed until the second half of the twentieth century (Jacobs, The Renaissance Virtuosa, 131).

Harris and Nochlin, 107. Most authors state that the text says "[...] so that in a single work I can exhibit two marvels, one the work, the other the artist." It should be noted that Perlingieri has however (wrongly) translated it as "[...] so, in the future, I would be able to show two marvelous works together: one by Sofonisba and the other by her teacher [Campi]" (Perlingieri, 105).

Self-portraits by men, as well as portraits of famous people by male and female artists, could still be said to combine these three wonders but not in the same, symmetrical way; male artists were perceived as creative geniuses and men were not automatically connected to models.

Murphy, A Painter and Her Patrons, 49.
The benefit of sending a gift was that the receiver was then under the obligation, if the gift was accepted, of sending a gift in return. So as not to be outdone, especially if he or she was of higher rank, this second gift had to be more impressive. On Anguissola and the gift-giving culture of courts, see Woods-Marsdeen, 193-194.

Male self-portraits could also be considered odd and rare, and so be collected. For example, it is interesting to follow Parmigianino's Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror. This introduction piece for Rome was made to dazzle prospective patrons with its uniqueness. After being in the collections of Pietro Aretino, Valerio Belli, and Andrea Palladio, the painting changed hands for a fourth time in 1560: it went into the art collection of the sculptor Alessandro Vittoria, amongst his gathered works by artists such as Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, and Palma Giovane. When he died in 1608, it became part of Emperor Rudolf II's collection of bizarre works (Woods-Marsdeen, 137).

It was her father who chose prospective patrons, wrote them letters, and sent them the self-portraits on her behalf.

Jacobs "Anguissola, Sofonisba," 190, and Harris and Nochlin, 107. It has been suggested that the painting sent to Julius III in 1554 or 1555 was the c.1552 Self-Portrait although one wonders why an older work would be sent, especially since her technique had much improved by then. The same can be said of the suggestion that the work sent in 1556 to Duke Ercole d'Este II was the Self-Portrait of 1554 (Harris and Nochlin, 108 (note 20) ).

Jacobs, "Anguissola, Sofonisba," 189-190. Perlingieri suggests that the girl in Old Woman and Young Girl Studying the Alphabet is, like the c.1548 sketch, a self-portrait that may have been made before she was taught by Campi (Perlingieri, 44). Because of the complexity of this drawing, I believe that this work was made after she had met Campi. Because of this, and since it quite possibly may have been the drawing of the laughing girl sent to Michelangelo, a later date (1550s) would be more appropriate. The girl would more probably be one of her sisters, as making a self-portrait laughing is quite difficult, and there is no facial feature that identifies this sitter as Sofonisba herself.

Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 50. A similar exchange of self-portraits, portraits, or even works in general occurred with artists, for example between Giulio Clovio and Lavinia Teerlinc (King, "Teerlinc, Levina." 1359).

Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 51.

Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 56-57.

Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 49 and 72.

Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 49, and Murphy, "Fontana, Lavinia," 535.

Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 49.

Prospero had, for example, both painted the portrait of Paleotti, and, along with the scholars Ulisse Aldrovandi and Carlo Sigonio, helped the Bishop of Bologna with Il discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane. Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 9, 52 and 54.

Murphy, "Fontana, Lavinia," 535.

Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 72.

For a translated copy of these letters, see Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 220.

Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 49.

For a translated copy of the letter, see Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 219.

The print copies where paid for by Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, but it is unclear in the letter if the collection of painted portraits itself is that of Ciacon, or if he was gathering it for the Archduke. Ciacon first states in his letter that he has four hundred portraits, with two hundred being those of women. In a section further down, however, he says that her self-portrait would be made into a print and placed amongst those of five hundred people. One wonders if this second number refers to the quantity he was aiming to obtain, or if he meant that there were more works in the print collection than in the painting collection.

Ciacon also mentioned that he would give her something that would please her, although he does not mention what this is.

It is generally accepted that this is the work that was sent, although it is not certain (Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 73).

Fontana's Self-Portrait at a Keyboard with a Maidservant also has this resemblance: the keyboard is used instead of a desk, the maidservant replaces the student, and the room in the back seems to be her studio instead of a study/library.

The identity of this sitter as Senator Orsini has been brought into question (Murphy, An Artist and Her Patrons, 62).
392 Murphy, *An Artist and Her Patrons*, 60 and 62, and Murphy, "Fontana, Lavinia," 535.

393 Woods-Marsdein, 220.

394 Woods-Marsdein, 220. Based on a print copy of this work by Lasinio (1579, Castel Sforzesco, Raccolta Scelli, Milan), some have suggested that she showed herself wearing her wedding rings on her right hand, and that these have now faded (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 60). This is impossible, as the fingers in the original work are cut off of the picture plane before we can see any rings. The rings are therefore an addition of the printer.

395 Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 60, and Murphy, *An Artist and Her Patrons*, 73.

396 The contents of the shelves have in part been described by referring to the print copy, as some of the objects are difficult to identify in the painting. I do not know if these are fragments of original works or if they are casts.

397 Murphy, *An Artist and Her Patrons*, 73.

398 Murphy, *An Artist and Her Patrons*, 73-74.

399 Borzello, 27. It is important to note that Fontana was the first woman to paint female nudes, with the earliest one being the signed and dated *Venus and Cupid* of 1585 (private collection, Venice) (Murphy, "Fontana, Lavinia," 537).

400 Parker and Pollock, 115-116.

401 The other self-portrait from this year, *Self-Portrait (at an Easel)*, while having also the word *facibat*, uses "IX".

402 I do not know why she signed her name "Tappii" instead of "Zappi" in this work.

403 Murphy, *An Artist and Her Patrons*, 201 (note 45).

404 Murphy, *An Artist and Her Patrons*, 76.

405 Ibid.

406 The seventeenth century source Antonio di Paolo Masini said in his *Bologna Periustrata* (1666) that Fontana had received a degree in 1580 (Murphy, *An Artist and Her Patrons*, 76). Even if she did not have a degree at the university, it is significant that she was later thought to have had one.

407 It is also interesting that in c.1600, Anguissola also made a *Self-Portrait* in which she shows herself with a large ruff as well as a large jewel-incrusted cross that is tied to a pearl necklace by a piece of coral. It would still be interesting to know if Anguissola was influenced by Fontana's works, and perhaps wanted to show that she was the superior female painter of the time. I do find that the given date of c.1600 for this work seems too late when taking into consideration her youthful appearance here; her c.1610 self-portrait shows a much older woman. The cross and age makes one wonder if she painted this work when she was still at the Spanish court.

408 I was unfortunately not able to find details regarding the dimensions of the other two works. It is interesting that Ciacon would say that he would enlarge a portrait measuring about a meter square so as to make a life-size work, as a work of this dimensions can easily be life-size.

409 As mentioned, however, it is possible that this was not the self-portrait sent.

410 Murphy, *An Artist and Her Patrons*, 76.

411 On copper painting, including in Fontana's works, see Murphy, *An Artist and Her Patrons*, 30.

412 As already mentioned, there was also a self-portrait on copper made in 1571, which is now lost. Fontana continued to use copper as a support throughout her career. It is possible that her religious works were sent as promotional gifts (Murphy, *An Artist and Her Patrons*), 30.

413 For this paragraph, see Barry Wind, "A Foul and Pestilent Congregation": Images of "Freaks" in Baroque Art (England and USA: Asgate Publishing Limited, 1998).

414 Unless otherwise stated, for this paragraph see Jacobs, *The Renaissance Virtuosa*, 8-14.

415 At this time, it was believed that men and women each had been appointed by nature a set of behaviors that was proper to them. All behavior was therefore considered to be biological.


421 One must remember that truly ugly people are in fact rare, and that one can always find some physical aspect upon which to compliment. Some art historians, including Jacobs in her book *Defining the Renaissance Virtuosa: Women Artists and the Language of Art History and Criticism*, seem to want us to think that it was impossible that any praise of beauty was real.

Kloek, 62. Leyster may have been apprenticed at the de Grebber workshop by Maria's father, Frans Pietersz de Grebber, and so would have been learning to paint at the same time as Maria. That they were both in the same studio may have been one reason why these two "rare" women were paired together in Amping's text (Broersen, 19).

Indeed, as already noted, it was because of their rarity that male artists did not consider them competition, and their "sparse" existence meant that they were not seen as dangerous for the myth of the male artists.

People in Western Europe would also collect exotic animals (Wind, 1).

On *Wunderkammern*, see Harris and Nochlin, 34, and Hochstrasser, 1083.

Harris and Nochlin, 32 and 131. Still lifes in one form or another have been produced since Antiquity (Harris and Nochlin, 32).

Harris and Nochlin, 31. Independent flower pieces began in Antwerp, where they remained a specialty until at least the seventeenth century (Harris and Nochlin, 132).

Harris and Nochlin, 131. One could say that a more correct name for the breakfast piece would be "snack piece," as the Dutch term is "ontbijt," a light meal eaten at any hour (Harris and Nochlin, 132 (note 10) ).

Harris and Nochlin, 33.

Other female pioneers at this time include the Italian Fede Galizia (1578-1630) and the French Louise Moillon (1610-1696). The earliest positive date for a still life by Galizia is from 1602 (formerly in the Anholt Collection, Amsterdam), making it also the first dated still life by an Italian artist. Moillon's earliest still life is dated 1629 (private collection, Paris) (Harris and Nochlin, 116 and 141). Interestingly, Moillon, like Peeters, showed herself next to a still life in her work *At the Greengrocer* (1630, Musée du Louvre, Paris). By the eighteenth century, still life painting was considered rather a woman's genre (Hochstrasser, 1081).

Harris and Nochlin, 32, and Hochstrasser, 1081.

Ibid.

Harris and Nochlin, 34.

Brusati, 148.

Harris and Nochlin, 132. In everyday life, people probably did not display these rare blooms in vases because they would then quickly fade. So as to not waste money or their beauty, they would instead be left on the plant (Brusati, 148-150).

This knife was used in some of her works, including *Pie* (1611, Museo del Prado, Madrid) as a signature (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 88). It appears to be a silver bride's knife of the kind made in Antwerp in 1659 and 1600 (Hochstrasser, 1081). As it clearly has her name, it may indicate a later birth date than 1594.

Hochstrasser, 1081 and 1083. The letter "P" also appears in some of her signatures. For example, *Still Life with a Vase of Flowers, Goblet and Shells* of 1612 is signed "Clara P. Anno 1612." (Hochstrasser, 1083). The "P" can stand both for "Peeters" and *pintrix*, while the "A" is probably meant to mean "Antwerp" (Cheney, Faxon and Russo, 88). Like other female artists before her, it is significant that she may have chosen to emphasize in her signature her artistic identity.

Brusati, 151.

Hochstrasser, 1083. Peeters did tend to gather less species in a painting than her contemporaries, however (Harris and Nochlin, 132).

Hochstrasser, 1083.

Brusati, 151.

Peeters differs from her contemporaries in having a lower and closer point of view (Harris and Nochlin, 33, and Hochstrasser, 1081). One wonders if this was in part because she wanted to show her reflection in her work.

Suggested dates for this work include c.1610, c.1612 and 1610-1620. It seems to have been made before 1620, as after this date she tended to used more monochromatic colors (Harris and Nochlin, 133).

There is also something X-shaped behind the gold goblet.

This goblet resembles the central goblet in *Still Life with a Vase of Flowers, Goblet and Shells*, but does not have the same amount of knobs.
List of Works

24. Sofonisba Anguissola. *Self-Portrait*, c.1600 Oil on canvas, 22 x 17 cm. N/A.
34. Baccio Bandinelli. *Self-Portrait*, early 1530s. Oil on panel, 142.5 x 113.5 cm. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.
42. Albrecht Dürer. *Self-Portrait with a Spring of Eryngium*, 1493. Oil on panel, 56.5 x 44.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.
44. Jan van Eyck. *Arnolfini Double Portrait*, 1434. Oil on panel, 83.8 x 57.2 cm. The National Gallery, London.


61. Catharina van Hemessen. *A Lady with a Rosary*, c.1550. Oil on panel, 23.8 x 17.5 cm. National Gallery, London.


66. Catharina van Hemessen. *Young Woman Playing the Virginals*, 1548. Oil on panel, 32.2 x 25.7 cm. Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne.


75. Louise Moillon. *At the Greengrocer*, 1630, Oil on canvas, 120 x 165 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.


90. Attributed to Raphael. *Self-Portrait*, c.1505-06. Oil on panel, 37 x 40.5 cm. Royal Collection, Hampton Court.


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